BLM

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

Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0154-EA
August 2015

Northwest Pipeline, LLC's proposed cathodic protection deep well anode bed and Title V right-of-way UTU-91460 on it's existing right-of-way UTU-0-15664-VD 26-inch diameter Ignacio to Sumas natural gas pipeline in the following location:

Salt Lake Meridian,
T. 6 S., R. 24 E.,
sec. 8, SE¼NE¼.

PREPARING OFFICE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vernal Field Office
170 South 500 East
Vernal, UT 84078
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Environmental Assessment
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Chapter 1. Introduction

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This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze Northwest Pipeline, LLC's proposed right-of-way UTU–91460 to install a new cathodic protection deep well anode bed in order to ensure adequate cathodic protection on its 26-inch diameter Ignacio to Sumas natural gas pipeline (existing right-of-way UTU-0–15664–VD).

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. The EA assists the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any "significant" impacts could result from the analyzed actions. "Significance" is defined by NEPA and is found in regulation 40 CFR 1 508.27. 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 Decision Record (DR) which includes a FONSI statement, 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 (October 2008). If the decision maker determines that this project has "significant" impacts following the analysis in the EA, an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record may be signed for the EA approving the alternative selected.

1.1. Applicant Name

Northwest Pipeline, LLC
P.O. Box 58900
Salt Lake City, UT 84158-0900

1.2. Purpose and Need for Action

The BLM's need is to consider approval of the application in a manner that avoids or reduces impacts on sensitive resource values associated with the project area and prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the public lands.

Northwest Pipeline, LLC has requested to install a new cathodic protection deep well anode bed in order to ensure adequate cathodic protection on its 26-inch diameter Ignacio to Sumas natural gas pipeline.

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Chapter 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

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This chapter presents the Proposed Action Alternative, as submitted by Uintah County and the No Action Alternative.

2.1. Description of the Proposed Action

Northwest Pipeline, LLC proposes a new right-of-way, UTU-91460 to install a new cathodic protection deep well anode bed in order to ensure adequate cathodic protection on its 26-inch diameter Ignacio to Sumas natural gas pipeline (existing right-of-way UTU-0–15664–VD) in section 8 of Township 6 South and Range 24 East in Uintah County, Utah. An existing access road will be used to access the area during construction. No modification to this road is expected. The anode bed and associated facilities will be situated in a new 100-foot by 150-foot (0.34 acre) permanent area. The anode bed will be installed in a 190-foot long trench approximately 5-6 feet deep and 1-2 feet wide. Existing pipeline ROW UTU-0–15664–VD will be used for temporary workspace for storage of segregated topsoil and spoil, movement of the excavation equipment, temporary storage of construction materials for the anode bed, operator and inspector vehicle parking, a water truck, and a support vehicle for the work. See Appendix “A” attached.

2.1.1. Construction Operations

All project activities in the area would follow procedures specified by the BLM Vernal Field Office and according to Best Management Practices (BMPs). Installation of the cathodic protection deep well anode would be as specified in Appendix “C,” Plan of Development.

2.1.2. Government Agencies Involved

The proposed right-of-way is located on federal lands under the management of the BLM with no state or private lands involved. No additional agency would be applied to in association with this project.

2.1.3. Reclamation

Disturbance resulting installation of the cathodic protection site will be reclaimed according to BLM specifications and as noted in the Plan of Development, Appendix “C”.

2.1.4. Operations and Maintenance

All maintenance activities would be confined to the existing disturbed width and requested right-of-way width.

2.2. Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

Under this action, BLM would not approve the ROW grant amendment. Potential for accelerated pipeline erosion may result from this alternative.

2.3. Conformance

The proposed cathodic protection site and application for a amendment to the existing ROW would be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (October 31, 2008). The RMP/ROD decision also 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.

2.4. Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans

Utah's Standards for Rangeland Health (BLM 1997) address upland soils, riparian/wetlands, desired and native species, and water quality. These resources are analyzed later in this document or, if not affected, are listed in "Appendix B – Interdisciplinary Team Checklist."

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, U.S. Department of Interior requirements and guidelines listed in the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1. This EA assesses the environmental effects of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative.

State and Local Laws and Statutes

There are no comprehensive State of Utah plans for the vicinity of the Proposed Action.

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.

Chapter 3. Affected Environment:

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The Interdisciplinary Team Checklist provides a brief description of the affected environment. The affected environment and environmental consequences of the alternatives were considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in "Appendix B – Interdisciplinary Team Checklist." The analysis indicates that resources of concern are either not present in the project area, or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis. The analysis and rationale for this conclusion is provided in "Appendix B." The below information describes the current state of the potentially affected resources in the project area.

3.1. Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds

The invasive plant species cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is densely distributed throughout the Project Area. In addition, the invasive species Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), and African purple mustard (*Malcolmia africana*) have been documented in the Project Area. No noxious weeds as designated by the State of Utah have been previously identified in the Project Area. Invasive plant species and designated noxious weed species are considered undesirable and would be controlled by the applicant. Any observed instances of noxious weed growth in the Project Area during the life of the project would also be controlled by the applicant.

Soils

The proposed project takes place on approximately 0.43 acres of native soils within a Semi-Desert Sandy Loam ecological site. The USDA-NRCS, in cooperation with the Agricultural Experiment Station, BLM, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), USFWS, and the Uintah and the Daggett Soil Conservation Districts, completed and published a soil survey for the County, excluding Duchesne County and any Ute Indian tribal lands (USDA-NRCS 2013). The survey identifies 5 soil map units (consisting of a dominate soil and co-dominate soils) within the Project Area. The soils typically associated with the allotment, but are not limited too are: Milok fine sandy loams, Mikim silt loam, and Montwell clay loam complex according to the available mapped soil survey data for the proposed area (USDA-NRCS 2013). According to available soil survey information these soils vary in texture across the project area and are typically loamy, to gravelly sandy loam, clay loam, sandy loam, with some fine sand type areas as well. Depth to bedrock varies across the project area and is typically more than 80 inches. However shallow bedrock outcrops are consistent across the proposed area. A majority of the parent material on the proposed area are alluvium from sandstone, shale, limestone, and quartzite (USDA-NRCS 2013). Typical landforms found in the area are starth terraces, hills, fan remnants, floodplains, and drainages. These soils are typically well drained, with a high runoff potential because of the nature of loam type soils, which are similar to clay soils. Clay soils can prohibit infiltration because pore spaces within clay particles are very close together compared too sandier soils, which have larger pore spaces and tend to have increased infiltration rates. These soils can also be slightly saline in lower areas, and contain gypsum and calcium carbonates throughout the proposed area. Biological soil crusts are throughout the area and crucial in these ecosystems for keeping erosion rates low. Erosion rates will vary across this allotment and the many soil types within, however most of these soils are highly prone to erosion by fluvial and eolian processes based on the nature of clays, loams, and sands. Mean annual precipitation is around 8 inches, with a mean elevation of around 5100 feet.

Biological Soil Crusts are the community of organisms living at the surface of desert soils. Major components are typically cyanobacteria, green algae, micro-fungi, mosses, liverworts

and lichens. These are essential to the ecosystem and keeping erosion rates low and increasing nutrient availability.

Vegetation

The Project Area would be located in an area that is predominantly alkaline flats and wetlands, mixed desert shrubs and badland. Canopy cover in the Project Area is composed of mixed desert shrubs, and the understory contains some bare ground along with scattered grasses and forbs. The U.S. National Vegetation Classification landcover macrogroups located in the Project Area and the dominant native vegetation associated with these macrogroups is found in the table below (USNVC 2015); in addition, this table lists the ecological site(s) and dominant native vegetation associated with the soil type(s) found in the Project Area (USDA-NRCS 1997). Overall, the most dominant canopy species in the Project Area include black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugata*), shadscale saltbush (*Atriplex confertifolia*),Gardner saltbush (*Atriplex gardneri*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), gray horsebrush (*Tetradymia canescens*), green Mormon tea (*Ephedra viridis*), and Torrey Mormon tea (*Ephedra torreyana*). Common understory species include Alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*), needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*), Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), and Mojave seabite (*Suaeda moquinii*).

Table 3.1. Dominant Vegetation in the Project Area, Based on Landcover Macrogroup or Ecological Site

Landcover Macrogroup or Ecological Site	Dominant Trees/Shrubs	Dominant Grasses/ Graminoids	Dominant Forbs
Alkali Flat (Black Greasewood)	Black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), shadscale saltbush (*Atriplex confertifolia*)	Alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*)	Pursh seepweed (*Suaeda calceoliformis*), Mojave seabite (*Suaeda moquinii*)
M082: Warm & Cool Desert Alkali-Saline Wetland	big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*)	saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), basin wildrye (*Leymus cinereus*), beardless wildrye (*Leymus triticoides*), alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), seaside arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*)	verrucose seapurslane (*Sesuvium verrucosum*), Mojave seabite (*Suaeda moquinii*)

M093: Great Basin Saltbrush Scrub	fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugata*), Castle Valley saltbush (*Atriplex cuneata*), Gardner saltbush (*Atriplex gardneri*), budsage (*Picrothamnus desertorum/Artemisia spinescens*), black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), green Mormon tea (*Ephedra viridis*), Torrey Mormon tea (*Ephedra torreyana*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), shortspine horsebrush (*Tetradymia spinosa*), matrimony vine (*Lycium barbarum*)	Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*), saline wildrye (*Leymus salinus*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*), Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*)	N/A
M118: Intermountain Basins Cliff, Scree & Badland Sparse Vegetation	twoneedle pinyon (*Pinus edulis*), little Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), and ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), littleleaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus intricatus*), curl-leaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*), fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugata*), shadscale saltbush (*Atriplex confertifolia*),Gardner saltbush (*Atriplex gardneri*), greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), crispleaf buckwheat (*Eriogonum corymbosum*), spiny greasebush (*Glossopetalon spinescens*).	Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides)*	yellow spiderflower (*Cleome lutea*), Rocky Mountain beeplant (*Cleome serrulata*), and cushion buckwheat (*Eriogonum ovalifolium*)
M169: Great Basin & Intermountain Shrubland & Steppe	Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis*), basin big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. tridentata*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*),	Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides),* needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*), Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*)	

	four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), shadscale saltbush (*Atriplex confertifolia*), Nevada Mormon tea (*Ephedra nevadensis*), green Mormon tea (*Ephedra viridis*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), gray horsebrush (*Tetradymia canescens*)		

3.2. Paleontology

Paleontological resources on Federal lands are protected under provisions of the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C 470aaa et seq.), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as well as Federal regulations (43 CFR) and BLM policy. As a part of its policy, BLM uses a Potential Fossil Yield Classification system (PFYC) of geologic units which rates their potential to produce scientifically important fossils (lowest PFYC 1 to highest PFYC 5) (BLM Vernal Field Office Proposed RMP and Final EIS).

A survey of the project area carried out by Intermountain Paleo-Consulting (BLM Permit No. UT008–006C) identified outcrops of the Cedar Mountain Formation (PFYC 5b) and the Dakota Sandstone (PFYC 3b) adjacent to the site. The project area itself is covered in a layer of colluvium derived from these units. No paleontological resources were discovered by the survey (Sandau, 2015).

Chapter 4. Environmental Effects:

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DIRECT & INDIRECT IMPACTS

The Interdisciplinary Team Checklist provides a brief description of the affected environment. The affected environment and environmental consequences of the alternatives were considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in "Appendix B – Interdisciplinary Team Checklist." The analysis indicates that resources of concern are either not present in the project area, or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis. The analysis and rationale for this conclusion is provided in "Appendix B." The below information describes the current state of the potentially affected resources in the project area.

4.1. Proposed Action

4.1.1. Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds

No State of Utah designated noxious weeds have been documented in the Project Area, but the invasive plant species cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), and African purple mustard (*Malcolmia africana*) are present. The proposed project may encourage cheatgrass and other invasive species to establish on sites newly disturbed by this project. In addition, there is the potential for noxious weeds to be brought from outside the Project Area on trucks and equipment used for construction on the project. However, if the mitigation measures listed below are followed and prompt successful reclamation occurs where needed then the potential to create habitat for invasive species would be minimized.

Mitigation

- As required by the Noxious Weed Act of 1974 as amended and Executive Order 131121999, noxious weeds would be controlled in the Project Area by the applicant on all surface disturbance associated with ROW UTU-91460 as well as infestations that occur as a result of the project. Noxious weed control in the vicinity of threatened, endangered, ESA proposed, or BLM sensitive species would be modified as specified by BLM to avoid impacts to those species.
- In an effort to ensure that project activities do not increase the existence of invasive or noxious weeds in the Project Area, the applicant would prepare a Weed Control Plan. Specific components of the plan may include:
    - Conducting a noxious weed inventory in the Project Area prior to surface disturbance or construction activities. This inventory would include examination of all proposed surface disturbance. The results of the inventory would include GPS locations indicating the type and size of each infestation, if applicable. This data would be formulated into a report and submitted to the BLM Authorized Officer (AO).
    - Preparation of a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) if required.
    - Following the completion of construction, all disturbed surface would be monitored annually for the presence of noxious weeds. If monitoring shows an increase in presence of noxious weeds, especially those species not present prior to surface disturbing activities associated with the project, the applicant would be responsible for treating the areas. Noxious plant

control measures (mechanical, cultural, chemical) would be conducted before seed set annually, or when most appropriate for the weed species involved. Monitoring and treatment would be conducted annually until reclamation and weed control efforts were deemed successful by the AO of the appropriate SMA.

- ○ All herbicide Chemical control would be in conformance with national and local guidance, including approved chemicals, rates, applied by an applicator licensed in the State of Utah, and appropriate best management practices.
- ○ Weed control would be in accordance with the VFO integrated weed management plan as directed by the AO.

- To prevent further spread of noxious weeds, all vehicles and equipment would be power washed at designated washing locations to remove seed and plant materials before entering the Project Area.

Soils

Direct impacts to soils in the following analyses are described as short-term and long-term impacts. In areas where reclamation is implemented vegetation and soil health could be re-established approximately seven to eight years following seeding of native plant species and diligent weed control efforts. Recent BLM monitoring in the area and on similar soils has documented that restoration efforts in these high desert ecosystems for any type development have largely been unsuccessful at re-establishing soil stability, vegetation, and subsequent forage for wildlife and livestock. The ongoing drought, level of impact from surface disturbing actions, coupled with the area's poor soil potential, has made successful reclamation efforts challenging. BLM field inspections indicate that short-term impacts may be more accurately portrayed as long-term impacts. Thus, while the following analyses distinguish between short-term and long-term soil losses, it is important to note that surface disturbance proposed under the alternatives could remain as long-term impacts on the landscape if restoration efforts do not take place. These long term impacts to soils and vegetation could increase invasive plant habitat, increase soil erosion, and further affect future ecosystem health.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would allow for surface disturbance on approximately 0.43 acres of native soils. Long-term impacts to soils are expected if reclamation requirements are not followed. Affects could be seen up to but not limited to 25 years or until restoration is successful depending on the level of impact and the time involved. This will vary across the proposed action and the various soil types as well.

The project could contribute an estimated 1-2 tons/acre/year of soil erosion. That number will increase or decrease depending on the soil type and available soil crusts in the area. Erosion rates are higher during runoff events and seasonal fluxes in precipitation. These rates are also higher in fine sands and loam environments and/or areas that are more prone to fluvial events. Typically clays are more resistant to erosion than sandier soils, because of a larger surface area associated with clay particles.

Direct impacts to soils from this action include but not limited to 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 re-vegetation success

of any seeded native species due to increased competition by the annual weed species in the area. Annual weed species are adapted to disturbed conditions, and have less stringent moisture and soil nutrient requirements than do perennial native species. Lack of reclamation practices can also reduce long term soil nutrient and organic matter levels. This can also affect the ecosystem over time and further affect the health of the soil and vegetation in the area.

Impacts to soils on the proposed allotment would be partially mitigated by reclamation requirements. A site specific reclamation plan is recommended to help address what will be done to reclaim the 0.43 acres of disturbance.

Vegetation

The surface disturbance associated with the Proposed Action would result in the removal of up to 0.43 acre of native vegetation. In addition, other native vegetation may be crushed or otherwise damaged by off-road vehicle travel and construction activities within the Project Area. The amount of surface disturbance associated with the Proposed Action is unlikely to result in an overall change in the plant community composition and density in the Project Area, but areas where vegetation is removed would remain disturbed until reclamation efforts are successful.

4.1.2. Paleontology

The Proposed Action involves earth moving activities that would directly impact colluvium derived from a sensitive geologic formation and may directly impact the formation itself. The bedrock of concern is the Jurassic age Cedar Mountain Formation, which has a PFYC of 5b (very high impact potential). Based on this, the Proposed Action may result in direct impacts to undiscovered paleontological resources. Indirect impact via illegal collecting and vandalism are also possible once fossil localities are exposed. However, these impacts can be mitigated below a level of significance by implementation of the following measures:

Mitigation

- A certified paleontological monitor will be present for all ground disturbing activities of previously undisturbed areas.
- If paleontological resources are uncovered during ground-disturbing activities, the proponent will suspend all operations which would further disturb such materials and will immediately contact the BLM Authorized Officer, who will arrange for a determination of significance and, if necessary, recommend a recovery or avoidance plan.

4.2. No Action

4.2.1. Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

The CIAA for soils, vegetation, and invasive plants/noxious weeds is the area within the Cliff Creek Hydrologic Unit Boundary. The CIAA encompasses approximately 106,235 acres, including the Project Area. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development within the CIAA has resulted in approximately 1,600 acres of long term surface disturbance. Surface disturbance within the CIAA is attributed mainly to roads, pipeline and transmission line

corridors, and oil and gas well pads. In addition, approximately 51,136 acres of public land within the CIAA has been allotted for livestock grazing, which can result in reduced soil quality and stability, increased erosion rates, reduced native vegetation, reduced native vegetation diversity, alterations in the composition of vegetative communities, and the introduction and spread of invasive plants and noxious weeds.

In addition to the impacts from livestock grazing, cumulative impacts to soils, vegetation, and invasive plants/noxious weeds typical of development within the CIAA include: removal of native vegetation and disturbance to soils which are generally very thin, slow to develop, and difficult to reclaim due to arid climate, low average precipitation per year, erosional forces, microbial breakdown, leaching of soils, and low organic content. Development activities can introduce noxious weeds and other invasive plant species into the CIAA, and can contribute to the spread of infestations within the CIAA. The Proposed Action would result in 0.43 acre of additional disturbance to soils and vegetation within the CIAA. The No Action Alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

4.2.2. Paleontology

The CIAA for paleontological resources is the Cedar Mountain Formation in the Uinta Basin. Damage to, and losses of, paleontological resources from surface disturbing activities, vandalism and theft have the potential to accumulate. However, required mitigation measures (pre-construction surveys, collection and curation of scientifically important fossils, avoidance and/or monitoring) are designed to avoid these impacts, and no accumulation is expected.

4.3. Cumulative Effects

4.3.1. Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

The CIAA for soils, vegetation, and invasive plants/noxious weeds is the area within the Cliff Creek Hydrologic Unit Boundary. The CIAA encompasses approximately 106,235 acres, including the Project Area. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development within the CIAA has resulted in approximately 1,600 acres of long term surface disturbance. Surface disturbance within the CIAA is attributed mainly to roads, pipeline and transmission line corridors, and oil and gas well pads. In addition, approximately 51,136 acres of public land within the CIAA has been allotted for livestock grazing, which can result in reduced soil quality and stability, increased erosion rates, reduced native vegetation, reduced native vegetation diversity, alterations in the composition of vegetative communities, and the introduction and spread of invasive plants and noxious weeds.

In addition to the impacts from livestock grazing, cumulative impacts to soils, vegetation, and invasive plants/noxious weeds typical of development within the CIAA include: removal of native vegetation and disturbance to soils which are generally very thin, slow to develop, and difficult to reclaim due to arid climate, low average precipitation per year, erosional forces, microbial breakdown, leaching of soils, and low organic content. Development activities can introduce noxious weeds and other invasive plant species into the CIAA, and can contribute to the spread of infestations within the CIAA. The Proposed Action would result in 0.43 acre of additional disturbance to soils and vegetation within the CIAA. The No Action Alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

4.3.2. Paleontology

The CIAA for paleontological resources is the Cedar Mountain Formation in the Uinta Basin. Damage to, and losses of, paleontological resources from surface disturbing activities, vandalism and theft have the potential to accumulate. However, required mitigation measures (pre-construction surveys, collection and curation of scientifically important fossils, avoidance and/or monitoring) are designed to avoid these impacts, and no accumulation is expected.

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

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The proposed action was posted to the public Environmental Notification Bulletin Board with its assigned NEPA number on August 13, 2015. A public comment period was not offered due to the proposed action being similar in nature to other projects in the immediate area.

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

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Chapter 6. List of Preparers

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United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). 1997. Soil Survey of Uintah Area, Utah – Parts of Daggett, Grand, and Uintah Counties.

United States National Vegetation Classification (USNVC). 2015. USNVC Explore the Classification and NVCS Database. http://usnvc.org/explore-classification/ Accessed August 24, 2015.

Sandau, Stephen D., 2015, *Paleontological Reconnaissance Survey Report, Survey of Northwest Pipeline's Proposed "CPS 635" (Sec. 8, T 6 S, R 24 E), Cliff Ridge Topographic Quadrangle, Uintah County, Utah*, IPC #15-04.

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Appendix A. Interdisciplinary Team Checklist

Project Title: Northwest Pipeline LLC's proposal to Install Cathodic Protection (UTU-91460) on Existing Pipeline Right-of-way UTU-0–15664–VD
NEPA Log Number:DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0154-EA
File/Serial Number: UTU-91460
Project Leader: Denise Ohler

DETERMINATION OF STAFF: (Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)
NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions
NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required
PI = present with potential for relevant impact that need to be analyzed in detail in the EA
NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section D of the DNA form. The Rationale column may include NI and NP discussions.

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
RESOURCES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED (INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES APPENDIX 1 H-1790-1)				
NI	Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Dust emissions currently occur from vehicles utilizing the subject roads. Emissions will also occur from vehicles during the construction process. Air quality impacts are encompassed within the Greater Natural Buttes air quality model. Overall, air quality in the Basin was modeled as being within attainment of the NAAQS. Air quality monitoring is ongoing beginning in July 2009. Monitoring results are showing exceedances of the ozone NAAQS in the Uinta Basin during the winter when snow cover is present. Ozone formation from its component parts (NOx and VOCs) is a non-linear, photo-reactive process, and no models exist to predict the formulation of winter-time ozone. It is anticipated that the incremental emissions of NOx and VOCs from this project's alternatives would be so small as to be undetectable by both models and monitors. No standards have been set by EPA or other regulatory agencies for greenhouse gases. In addition, the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is still in its earliest stages of formulation. Global scientific models are inconsistent, and regional or local scientific models are lacking so that it is not technically feasible to determine the	Stephanie Howard	8/15/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		net impacts to climate due to greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that greenhouse gas emissions associated with this action and its alternative(s) would be negligible.		
NP	BLM Natural Areas	None are present in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP and GIS review.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NP	Cultural: Archaeological Resources	No historic properties affected for the proposed undertaking. Due to the size of the project area, and the determination of no historic properties affected, coordination for the outlined undertaking will be completed with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office in accordance with the 2014 Utah Statewide Programmatic Agreement.	David Christensen	9/22/2015
NP	Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	Consultation was initiated on 9/30/2015. At this time there are no Native American Religious Concerns.	David Christensen	9/30/2015
NP	Designated Areas: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Not present in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP and GIS review.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NP	Designated Areas: Wild and Scenic Rivers	Not present in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP and GIS review.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NP	Designated Areas: Wilderness Study Areas	Not present in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP and GIS review.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NI	Environmental Justice	No minority or economically disadvantaged communities or populations are known to occur in the project area, and consequently none would be disproportionately adversely affected by the proposed action or alternatives.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NI	Farmlands (prime/unique)	No prime or unique farmlands, as identified by the NRCS, based on soil survey data for the county are located in the project area; therefore, this resource will not be carried forward for analysis.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NP	Fuels/Fire Management	Not present in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP and GIS review.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NI	Geology/Minerals/ Energy Production	Area is open mineral material disposal, however there are no active sales contracts within the project area. There are no adverse affects to geology/minerals/energy production.	Rick Goshen	8/19/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
IP/NW: PI Soils-PI Veg: PI	Invasive Plants/ Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation	IP/NW: No noxious weeds have been previously documented in the Project Area, per BLM NISIMS data and BLM GIS data review. Construction activities and surface disturbance associated with the Proposed Action could result in the introduction and spread of invasive plants and noxious weeds in the Project Area. The applicant would be responsible for controlling invasive plant/noxious weed infestations that occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action. **Soils:** The Proposed Action would involve the removal of up to 0.43 acres of native soils. These native soils have been mapped as Milok-fine-sandy-loam, with Mikim silty loam, and Montwell clay loam throughout. Some sandy complexes also exist within the area. These soils are typically mixed alluviums, and eolian deposits. Biological Soil Crusts are expected essential in these high desert ecosystems for erosion control. Veg: The Proposed Action would involve the removal of up to 0.43 acre of native vegetation. The site would remain disturbed until reclamation efforts are successful.	IP/NW: Christine Cimiluca Soils: James Hereford II Veg: Christine Cimiluca	CC: 8/19/ 2015 JHII: 8/24/ 2015 CC: 8/19/ 2015
NI	Lands/Access	BLM notified the potentially affected ROW holders via notice letter of the proposal and provided Uintah County the contact information of the ROW holders. Uintah County will coordinate with the ROW holders if any possible reroutes are anticipated, and the BLM will be notified of the reroutes. Revised maps will be submitted to the BLM with the proposed reroute, and include the length and width identified on the maps. If reroutes are outside of the proposed analyzed area, those areas will be analyzed and all documentation (clearances, permits, maps, reports, etc.) will be included in this EA so approval of the reroutes can be authorized.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NP	Areas with Wilderness Characteristics	Not present in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP and GIS review.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015

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NI	Livestock Grazing & Rangeland Health Standards	Canal Allotment # 15816, and West Huber Allotment #15803. There will be no impact to the grazing allotments due to this project.	Denise Ohler	9/30/2015
PI	Paleontology	There is potential to impact paleontological resources considering the following: ● Intermountain Paleo-Consulting (BLM permit No. UT08-006C) performed a survey of the project area (Sandau, 2015). No paleontological resources were discovered, however, due to the known sensitivity of bedrock present (including the Cedar Mountain Formation, PFYC 5b), paleontological monitoring of all ground disturbing activity of previously undisturbed areas was recommended. ● BLM-VFO finds the survey's findings and recommendations reasonable. ● The proponent has not committed to paleontological monitoring in the proposed action.	Justin Snyder	8/27/2015
NI	Plants: BLM Sensitive	Suitable habitat for UT BLM Sensitive plant species is not present in the Project Area, per BLM soils modelling and GIS data review, and no BLM Sensitive plant species have been previously documented in the Project Area. BLM Sensitive plant species are unlikely to be impacted as a result of the Proposed Action.	Christine Cimiluca	8/19/2015
NP	Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate	The project is not located within suitable habitat for TECP plant species, and no TECP plant species have been previously documented in the area, per BLM GIS review. There is no potential for shrubby reed-mustard, clay reed-mustard, Graham's penstemon, White River penstemon, Pariette cactus or Uinta Basin hookless cactus to occur within the Project Area, per U. of Wyoming habitat models and soils models. Wetlands or riparian areas that may be suitable habitat for Ute ladies' tresses are not present in the Project Area, per BLM GIS data review.	Christine Cimiluca	8/19/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Plants: Wetland/Riparian	Wetlands or riparian areas are not present in the Project Area, per BLM GIS data review. The nearest inventoried riparian area is Cliff Creek, located approximately 1000 feet from the Project Area, per BLM GIS data review, and would not be impacted as a result of the Proposed Action. However, vegetation associated with wetland/riparian areas is present in the Project Area due to its proximity to Cliff Creek.	Christine Cimiluca	8/19/2015
NI	Recreation	No SRMA or Rec Sites in the Project Area per GIS data reviewed.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NP	Socio-Economics	No impact or change to the social or economic status of the county or nearby communities would occur from this bridge replacement project due to its small size in relation to the ongoing projects in the rest of Duchesne and Uintah Counties.	Stephanie Howard	8/15/2015
NI	Visual Resources	The proposed project is in a VRM Class IV area, per the Vernal Field Office GIS Data Base & RMP/ROD. A contrast rating worksheet was not completed as the area has not been identified within class III sensitive areas, which are the current standard for site visits VRM evaluations to take place. Class IV objective states: The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements. The proposal will follow existing form, line and texture in the landscape, but will contrast in color temporarily with the landscape. The contrast in color, form, line and texture is within the class IV objectives.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015

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NP	Wastes (hazardous/solid)	*Hazardous Waste:* No chemicals subject to reporting under SARA Title III in an amount equal to or greater than 10,000 pounds will be used, produced, stored, transported, or disposed of annually in association with the project. Furthermore, no extremely hazardous substances, as defined in 40 CFR 355, in threshold Wastes (hazardous or planning quantities, will be used, produced, stored , solid) transported, or disposed of in association with the project. *Solid Wastes:* Trash would be confined in a covered container and hauled to an approved landfill. Burning of waste or oil would not be done. Human waste would be contained and be disposed of at an approved sewage treatment facility.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NI	Water: Floodplains	The proposed project takes place in an area that has a 100 year mapped floodplain called Cliff Creek. This environment will not be affected to a degree that would require detailed analysis since the nature of the proposed action is 0.43 acres of surface disturbance on an existing ROW. This amount of soil disturbance is not expected to reach the floodplain environment since reclamation/restoration work is required that will prevent soils from leaving the area affected.	James Hereford II	8/24/2015
NI	Water: Groundwater Quality	No impact to groundwater should be expected .	Rick Goshen	8/19/2015
NI	Water: Hydrologic Conditions (stormwater)	The current proposed action takes place in a area with mainly dry ephemeral washes that flow during runoff events and seasonal precipitation in the area. The action will not affect the current hydrologic conditions to a degree that would require detailed analysis since 0.43 acres of surface disturbance within a existing ROW is not expected to create large amounts of surface erosion. Reclamation/restoration work is expected and this will help prevent soils from leaving the site by erosion factors.	James Hereford II	8/24/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Water: Surface Water Quality	There are no perennial surface waters in the project area. There are ephemeral washes that flow during peak runoff and precipitation events. These will not be affected to a degree that would require detailed analysis since very little surface disturbance is proposed to take place.	James Hereford II	8/24/2015
NI	Water: Waters of the U.S.	The current proposed action will not affect water of the U.S. to a degree that would require detailed analysis. The area does have many dry ephemeral washes that flow during runoff events and seasonal fluxes in precipitation. These washes are protected under the Clean Water Act, but the level of dirt work within an existing ROW will not contribute to any affect of Waters of the U.S. downgradient of the project area.	James Hereford II	8/24/2015
NP	Wild Horses	None are present in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP and GIS review.	Denise Ohler	8/15/2015
NI	Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including raptors)	The project area is located immediately adjacent to existing disturbance (buried pipeline) and within 100 feet of Hwy 40. Less than 1 acre of disturbance is proposed. Migratory birds may be foraging within the project area; however, is unlikely to be nesting given the adjacent disturbance. In addition, there are no documented raptor nests within 1/2 mile of the project area. Impacts to migratory birds and raptors are not anticipated.	Brandon McDonald	09/02/2015
NI	Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated	The BLM does not identify crucial habitat for any given species. However, the project area is located within white-tailed prairie dog habitat. Less than 1 acre of disturbance is proposed. White-tailed prairie dogs may be temporarily displaced, but impacts are not anticipated to cause a decline in population or to the extent further analysis is needed.	Brandon McDonald	09/02/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate	In review of district files and a field visit there are no threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species within the project area. However, black-footed ferrets have been documented in the Snake John prairie dog complex for several years. The BLM and UDWR conduct surveys annually in the spring and fall of which includes areas of where the project is proposed. The last surveys for black-footed ferret were conducted within and surrounding the project area August 24–28, 2015. The nearest black-footed ferret was documented 10 miles to the east of the project area. Impacts are not anticipated to black-footed ferret.	Brandon McDonald	09/02/2015
NP	Woodlands/Forestry	None present.	David Palmer	9/2/2015

FINAL REVIEW:

Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator	Stephanie Howard	10/13/2015	
Authorized Officer	Jerry Kenczka	10/13/2015	