

**Tri-State Montrose-Nucla-Cahone
Transmission Line Improvement Project**

Draft Plan of Development

Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel, and Dolores Counties, Colorado

Appendix D

Draft Paleontological Resources Plan

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The objective of this Draft Paleontological Resources Plan is to detail practices designed to address potential impacts from construction of the Tri-State Montrose-Nucla-Cahone Transmission Improvement Project (Project). Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State) has developed this plan as part of the Plan of Development (POD) that accompanies its application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a Right of Way (ROW) grant. If the ROW grant is approved, the final POD and all appendices will be attached to the Decision Record. This plan provides guidance to construction and field personnel on measures identified by Tri-State, BLM and US Forest Service (FS) to minimize effects during construction activities associated with the Project. It will be the responsibility of Tri-State and its project contractors, working with designated environmental inspectors, to comply with measures identified in this plan.

Tri-State conducted an analysis of existing paleontological data in the vicinity of the project area. No previously recorded fossil localities are present within the Townships encompassing the project area on BLM lands. Tri-State also conducted a pedestrian field survey focused on areas of BLM and FS lands with bedrock exposures of Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 4 (high potential) and 5 (very high potential) geologic units, along with an examination of approximately 5 percent of exposures of PFYC 3 (moderate potential) geologic units.

One outcrop of Morrison Formation was identified on BLM or FS lands within the project area, but it was inaccessible due to steep terrain. Seven fossil localities were discovered, and all are located on BLM land. None of the fossil localities documented are considered to be significant because the fossils are poorly preserved (and hence unidentifiable), or are locally abundant (common) throughout the formation, and therefore redundant in museum collections.

While no significant paleontological resources were identified in the project area, unanticipated paleontological resources could still exist. Tri-State environmental inspectors will be responsible for reporting fossil discoveries. To this end, Tri-State will train the environmental monitor prior to construction to (1) understand what a fossil represents, (2) recognize a fossil, (3) know the procedures to be followed when fossils are discovered, and (4) refrain from collecting significant fossils, except as part of an emergency recovery procedure. This training will be conducted by a qualified paleontologist.

In accordance with BLM guidelines (IM 2009-011), if significant fossils are discovered, construction activity will cease in the immediate area of the discovery, and the discovery will be immediately reported to the Tri-State lead construction inspector and the environmental monitor for the Project. See Table D-1 below. The environmental monitor will fence off the site upon discovery and report the discovery to the appropriate BLM or FS authorized representative. The monitor will record the paleontological resource and the agency paleontologist will evaluate its significance to determine if additional mitigation (collection and curation) is required. Ground-disturbing construction activities will not resume in the immediate area of the paleontological resource until the BLM/FS determines that construction may resume. Agencies may inform the environmental construction monitor of any required mitigation measures by telephone, with

follow-up documentation by mail or email. The list of agency paleontological/archaeological contacts will be provided prior to construction.

Table D-1: Paleontological Mitigation

Paleontological Resources	
PA-1	In consultation with applicable agencies, a paleontological resource monitoring and mitigation plan will be prepared for locations (if any), where construction will disturb geologic units with high (PFYC 4) or very high (PFYC 5) resource potential. The plan will include specific monitoring locations, monitoring and fossil salvage and data collection procedures, notification procedures in the event of a scientifically significant discovery, and notification procedures in the event of a fossil discovery by construction personnel in areas that are not monitored.

References

Bureau of Land Management. (2008). *IM2009-011 Guidelines for Assessment and Mitigation of Potential Impacts to Paleontological Resources. BLM Instruction Memorandum, Attachment 1 Survey and Mitigation Protocols.*