

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

On January 24, 2005, Wyoming Interstate Company, Ltd. (WIC), a subsidiary of El Paso Corporation, filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) in Docket No. CP05-54-000, to construct, own, and operate new natural gas transmission facilities in Colorado and Wyoming.¹ In its filing, WIC seeks a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (Certificate) under Section 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act (NGA) and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations. The Commission's environmental staff has prepared this environmental impact statement (EIS) to assess the environmental impacts resulting from construction and operation of the facilities proposed by WIC in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

WIC's proposal, referred to in this EIS as the Piceance Basin Expansion Project (Piceance Project), would involve construction and operation of about 141.8 miles of 24-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline, 1,650 horsepower of additional compression at an existing compressor station, four new metering stations, and related facilities. The pipeline would extend between the existing Colorado Interstate Gas Company (CIG) Wamsutter Compressor Station in Sweetwater County, Wyoming and the Greasewood Hub² in the Piceance Basin, terminating at the existing CIG Greasewood Compressor Station in Rio Blanco County, Colorado (**figure 1.1-1**).³ The Piceance Project would be designed to receive and transport up to 350,000 dekatherms per day (Dthd); (equivalent to about 341 million cubic feet per day [MMcfd]) from the Greasewood Hub to the CIG Wamsutter Compressor Station, where it would interconnect with two interstate transportation pipelines. This project would meet the needs of Williams Power Company, Inc. (Williams), a major Piceance Basin gas producer, to transport natural gas from the Piceance Basin to markets in the east or westward from Wamsutter.

WIC proposes to begin construction in October of 2005, with construction being completed by the end of January 2006. Based on this proposed schedule, WIC proposes to place the pipeline into service by February 1, 2006.

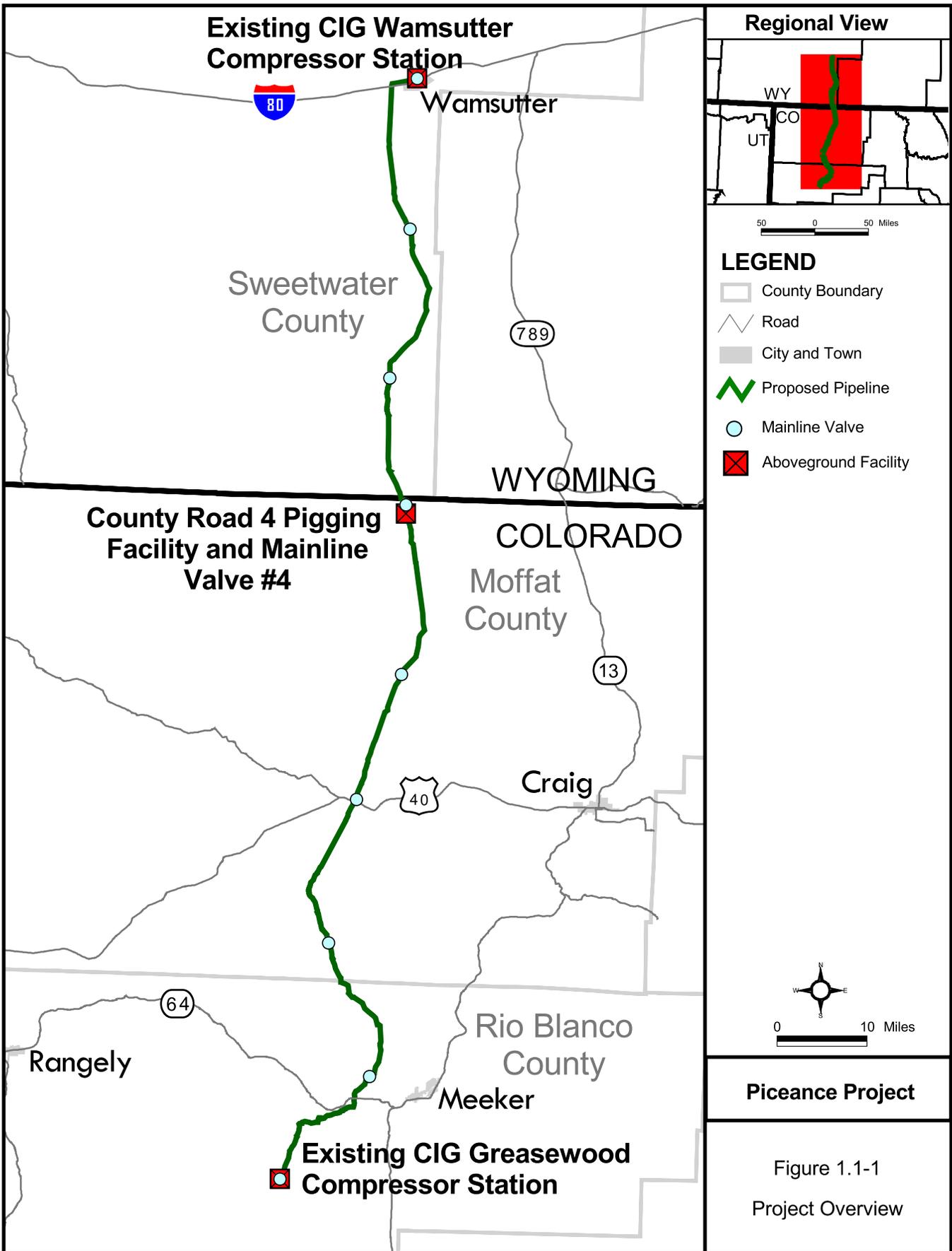
1.2 Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Piceance Project is to transport natural gas from supply basins in the central Rocky Mountains to interstate shippers at Wamsutter who would carry the gas to markets in both the western and central United States (U.S.). The need for the project is dictated by an increasing natural gas supply (production) in the Rocky Mountain region without a concurrent increase in pipeline capacity to transport this gas to market. Gas production in the Rocky Mountain region (New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Montana) is predicted to increase from 3.3 trillion cubic feet per year (Tcfy) in 2002 to 4.6 Tcfy in 2010 and

¹ During the FERC Pre-filing Process this project was assigned Docket No. PF04-13-000. When WIC filed its application with the Commission, the pre-filing docket was closed and a new docket number (CP05-54-000) was assigned to the Piceance Project.

² The Greasewood Hub is an existing convergence point for various interstate pipelines including CIG, TransColorado Gas Transmission Company (TransColorado), Questar Pipeline Company, as well as numerous pipeline gathering systems located in the Piceance Basin area.

³ Both WIC and CIG are affiliates owned by El Paso Corporation.



6.3 Tcfy in 2025 (U.S. Department of Energy 2004). This increase in production will offset declining production in other U.S. gas producing regions.

1.3 Purpose and Scope of this Document

The principal purposes for preparing an EIS are to:

- identify and assess potential impact on the natural and human environment that would result from the implementation of the proposed action;
- identify and recommend reasonable alternatives and specific mitigation measures, as necessary, to avoid or minimize environmental impacts; and
- facilitate public involvement in the environmental review process.

This EIS focuses on facilities that are under the FERC's jurisdiction, i.e., about 141.8 miles of natural gas pipeline, additional compression to be installed at an existing compressor station, and related ancillary facilities. The scope of the analysis of those facilities not under the jurisdiction of the FERC (e.g., facilities related to development, production, gathering, and processing of natural gas) is described in section 1.5.

The topics addressed in this EIS include geology (including hazards, mineral resources, and paleontological resources); soils; groundwater; surface waters (including water quality); wetlands; vegetation; wildlife and aquatic species; special status species; land use (including agricultural resources); transportation; recreation and special interest areas (including Areas of Critical Environmental Concern [ACEC], Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness Areas); visual resources; socioeconomics (including population, housing, and public services); environmental justice; cultural resources; Native American concerns; air quality and noise; reliability and safety; cumulative impacts; and alternatives. The EIS describes the affected environment as it currently exists, discusses the environmental consequences of the proposed project, and compares the project's potential impact to that of alternatives. The EIS also presents recommended mitigation measures and our⁴ conclusions.

The FERC is the "lead federal agency" for preparation of this EIS. This effort was undertaken with the participation and assistance of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which acted as a "cooperating agency" under NEPA. The EIS will provide a basis for coordinated federal agency decision-making in a single document, avoiding duplication between federal processes. In addition to the lead and cooperating agencies, other federal, state, and local agencies will use the EIS in approving or issuing permits or approvals for all or part of the proposed project (see section 2.8).

⁴ "We," "us," and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the Commission's Office of Energy Projects (OEP). Unless specifically identified otherwise, the recommendations and conclusions presented in this EIS are those of the FERC staff.

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1.3.1 FERC

The FERC is the federal agency responsible for regulating the transportation of natural gas in interstate commerce. Under the NGA, the FERC determines whether interstate natural gas facilities are in the public interest and, if so, grants a Certificate for construction and operation. As part of this determination, the FERC will consider the findings of this EIS as well as non-environmental issues in its review of WIC's application. The FERC will authorize the construction and operation of the proposed facilities only if it finds that the evidence produced on technical competence, financing, rates, market demand, gas supply, existing facilities and service, environmental impacts, long-term feasibility, and other issues demonstrate that a project is, or will be, required by the public convenience and necessity.

Environmental impact assessment and mitigation development are important factors in the overall public interest determination. Under NEPA, the FERC has a responsibility to consider the potential environmental impacts associated with proposals that come before it. This EIS has been prepared to fulfill that responsibility for WIC's proposal in compliance with the requirements of NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Parts 1500-1508 [40 CFR 1500-1508]), and the FERC's regulations for implementing NEPA (18 CFR 380).

1.3.2 BLM

WIC's proposed pipeline route crosses federal lands managed by the BLM. Because the BLM must comply with the requirements of NEPA before issuing right-of-way (ROW) grants across lands under its management, the BLM has elected to cooperate with the FERC in preparing this EIS.

As a cooperating agency, the BLM proposes to adopt this EIS per 40 CFR 1506.3 to meet its responsibilities under NEPA in considering WIC's application for a ROW grant. WIC's application was submitted to the BLM's Rawlins, Wyoming, Field Office (FO) on June 25, 2004. Under section 185(f) of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (MLA), the BLM has the authority to issue ROW grants for all affected federal lands. This action would be in accordance with 43 CFR 2800 and 2880, subsequent 2800 and 2880 Manuals, and Handbook 2801-1. For the Piceance Project, the BLM would consider the issuance of a new ROW grant and issuance of associated temporary use permits that would apply to BLM-managed lands crossed by the project. The BLM also would consider conformance with land use plans and impacts on resources and programs in determining whether to issue a ROW grant. The BLM's decision will be documented in a project Record of Decision (ROD) prepared by the BLM. BLM will consider any FERC approval or denial of WIC's proposal before issuing or denying a ROW grant for the proposed project.

The primary decisions to be addressed and made by the BLM include:

- Shall a ROW grant that includes mitigation and monitoring requirements be issued for a permanent pipeline ROW that will support pipeline construction and operation on federal lands?
- Shall Temporary Use Permits be granted for roads and extra workspaces needed for project construction on federal lands?

If the BLM decides to approve the Piceance Project, it will issue a ROW grant that would allow construction. ROW grants typically include standard agency stipulations, conditions imposed on the project as the result of the NEPA review, and a complete Plan of Development (POD).

1.4 Public Review and Comment

On June 29, 2004, the FERC approved WIC's request to use the FERC NEPA Pre-filing Process for the proposed Piceance Project and established Docket No. PF04-13-000 to place information filed by WIC and documents issued by the Commission into the public record.⁵ The intent of the NEPA Pre-filing Process is to initiate environmental scoping and review activities early in the project planning process. Starting our environmental review before an application is formally filed with the Commission enables early involvement by the public, governmental agencies, and other interested parties while the project is still being designed. In this manner, we can identify environmental issues early in the process and facilitate resolution among the stakeholders.

As part of the NEPA Pre-filing Process, WIC mailed letters to landowners, government officials, and the general public informing them about the project and inviting them to attend the combined open houses/scoping meetings. This forum provided stakeholders the opportunity to learn about the project and ask questions.

On July 14, 2004, the FERC issued a *Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Piceance Basin Expansion Project, Request For Comments On Environmental Issues, and Notice of Public Scoping Meetings and Route Inspection* (NOI). This document briefly described the project components, invited written comments from the public on the proposal, and listed the date and location of two public scoping meetings to be held in communities along the route. The NOI was sent to about 1,180 entities on a mailing list that included the landowners crossed and/or adjacent to the proposed ROW, federal and state agencies, Native American tribes, non-governmental and environmental organizations, libraries, the media, and other potentially interested citizens. The public scoping comment period for the Piceance Project closed on August 16, 2004.

We invited other federal agencies with jurisdiction and special expertise to be cooperating agencies during the project review. The BLM requested and received cooperating agency status. As part of this effort, we requested the cooperation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) because of their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA) and the Clean Water Act of 1972 (CWA), respectively.

We held public scoping meetings in Craig, Colorado (August 3, 2004) and Meeker, Colorado (August 4, 2004). An additional scoping meeting was held in Rawlins, Wyoming, on June 8, 2004, for a related project proposed by Entrega Gas Pipeline Inc. (Entrega) (Entrega Project, FERC Docket No. CP04-413-000), which shares the same pipeline route in Wyoming as the Piceance Project (the Entrega Project is described below

⁵ The request was made and the pre-filing docket was assigned in the name of El Paso Pipeline Group, Western Pipelines (WIC's affiliate). Both entities are subsidiaries of El Paso Corporation.

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below in section 1.6). The Craig and Meeker meetings were announced in the NOI and in local area newspapers. Transcripts of the public scoping meetings are part of the public record and are available for viewing at the FERC website for the WIC docket.⁶

During the same time period, we organized and conducted a separate “agency” scoping meeting with federal, state, and local agency officials to solicit input and coordinate our review of the proposed project. This meeting was held in Rifle, Colorado on August 5, 2004. A summary of the issues discussed was made part of the public record and posted on the FERC website.

In addition to oral and written comments received during agency and public scoping meetings, the Commission received written comments during and after the close of the public scoping period (August 16, 2004). In total, 43 written correspondences⁷ containing project comments were received from 30 parties, including items from federal and state government agencies; landowners; and environmental groups. Each letter was evaluated, and comments were divided into issue groups. When written comments were combined with oral meeting comments, 307 individual comments⁸ were received. Many of these comments addressed the same environmental issues. Of the comments received, about one-third were non-environmental in nature (e.g., project need, easement acquisition, compensation, and general statements of support or opposition). **Table 1.4-1** lists the environmental issues and concerns identified by commentors during the scoping process.

The draft EIS was filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and mailed to 511 federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, Native American tribes, newspapers, public libraries, intervenors to the FERC’s proceeding, and other interested parties. A formal notice indicating that the draft EIS was available for review and comment was published in the Federal Register (FR). The public was given 45 days from the date the EPA published a Notice of Availability in the FR to review and comment on the draft EIS both in the form of written comments and at public meetings held in communities along the pipeline route.

Three public meetings were held in the project area to receive comments on the draft EIS. These meetings were conducted in Craig, Colorado (June 7, 2005); Wamsutter, Wyoming (June 8, 2005); and Meeker, Colorado (June 9, 2005). Oral comments were received from only one local individual who was in support of the project. Written comments were received from two federal agencies, two state agencies, two local agencies, one organization and the project applicant. The comment period for receiving comments on the draft EIS closed on June 20, 2005. The oral and written comments and our responses to them are included as chapter 6.0 of this final EIS.

⁶ Public meeting transcripts and a summary of the issues discussed during agency scoping meetings are available for viewing on the FERC Internet website (<http://www.ferc.gov>). Using the “eLibrary” link, select “General Search” from the eLibrary menu, enter the selected date range and “Docket No.” (PF04-13-000), and follow the instructions. (For assistance, call 1-866-208-3676 or e-mail FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov.) Because scoping was conducted during the pre-filing review, PF04-13-000 must be used in the “Docket No.” field to view the public scoping transcripts.

⁷ Written correspondences included letters, return mailers (attached to our NOI), and electronic mail.

⁸ Due to the similarity of project location and timing between the Piceance Project and the Entrega Project, comments received during the Entrega Project scoping process from the areas where WIC proposes construction were considered relevant and included as part of the NEPA scoping process for the Piceance Project. The total reflects the sum of all individual comments, even if the same comment was received from the same person multiple times and in different formats (oral or written).

Table 1.4-1
Issues Identified and Comments Received
During the Public Scoping Process for
the Piceance Project

Purpose and Need

- Sources and suppliers of natural gas for the project.
- Existing regional pipeline transportation capacities.

NEPA Process

- Pipeline and ancillary facilities to be included in the EIS analysis.
- Consideration of a single combined EIS for the Piceance Project and the Entrega Project.
- Completion of the BLM Rawlins FO Resource Management Plan (RMP) prior to making ROW decisions for the Piceance Project.
- Jurisdiction for gathering pipelines that provide gas for the Piceance Project.

Geology

- Potential landslide risk on steep slopes.
- Potential pipe exposure at incised channel crossings.

Soils and Noxious Weeds

- Soil loss from wind and water erosion.
- Long-term loss of desirable vegetation caused by inappropriate species selection for revegetation; weed invasion; and difficult reclamation conditions (e.g., alkaline soils).
- Spread of noxious and invasive weeds in excavated soils.
- Loss of vegetation productivity from soil mixing and compaction.
- Restoration and monitoring of the ROW to original contour.

Water

- Increased sedimentation at river and stream crossings and irrigation ditches.
- Depletion of surface water sources used for dust control and hydrostatic testing.
- Potential reduction in water quality at hydrostatic test water discharge locations.
- Storage of hazardous materials at refueling sites.

Vegetation

- Long-term loss of native species and structural diversity in areas with high wildlife habitat values (sagebrush communities, mountain shrublands, riparian areas).

Fish and Wildlife

- Potential loss of wildlife individuals and reproductive success because of human activity, construction surface disturbance, and compressor station operational noise during critical periods of the year. Primary species of concern: big game and migratory birds (including raptors).
- Potential loss of fish individuals and reproductive success because of construction disturbance in waterways during critical periods of the year.
- Increased habitat fragmentation from expansion of surface disturbance caused by existing and new pipeline ROWs.
- Indirect effects (increased human activity and noise).

Special Status Species

- Potential loss of wildlife species individuals and reduced reproductive success because of human activity, construction surface disturbance, and compressor station operational noise during critical periods of the year. Primary species of concern: bald eagle and other special status raptors, sage grouse, prairie dog colonies and associated species, and other BLM special status species.
- Potential loss of fish individuals and reproductive success because of construction disturbance in waterways during critical periods of the year. Primary species of concern: native Colorado River system fish.

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Table 1.4-1 (Continued)

Special Status Species (Continued)

- Depletion effects on surface water regimes and habitats for downstream listed species (Colorado River system).
- Potential loss of plant species individuals and reduced reproductive success because of construction surface disturbance. Primary species of concern: Dudley Bluffs twinpod, Dudley Bluffs bladderpod, BLM special status plants.
- Potential natural gas or condensate leaks and impacts on fish.

Land Use, Recreation, and Visual Resources

- Loss or delay of agricultural production and potential interference with livestock management, including fence and irrigation system repairs.
- Construction noise, human activity, and surface disturbance near residential areas and farms.
- Effects of heavy loads on county and private roads, and plans for repair.
- Visual impacts from new pipeline surface disturbance and aboveground ancillary facilities on nearby residential areas and Key Observation Points.
- Increased public access to public and private lands from new road construction.
- Potential conflicts between big game hunting and pipeline construction.
- Potential for precluded future land uses.
- Decommissioning plans for temporary access roads.
- Protection measures for unique or sensitive areas.

Cultural Resources

- Consultation with potentially affected Native American tribes.
- Identification and protection of cultural resources in and near construction areas.
- Identification and protection of traditional cultural properties in the area.
- Identification and protection of the Overland and Cherokee historic trails.

Socioeconomics

- ROW easement negotiations.
- Potential reductions in property value and changes in future use because of a new pipeline.
- Adequacy of temporary housing and camp sites during construction.
- Short- and long-term fiscal benefits and costs to local communities and counties.
- Carpooling or busing crews to work sites.
- Limited emergency medical and fire fighting capabilities in Rio Blanco County, Colorado.

Air and Noise

- Increased fugitive dust generation and need for control on access roads.
- Compressor station combustion emissions compliance with air quality standards.
- Compressor station noise impacts on nearby residences and potential mitigation.

Public Safety

- Proximity of adjacent pipelines.
- Construction practices around electrical transmission lines.
- Ensure pipe strength sufficient for heavy vehicles.
- Properly mark the location and ownership of underground utilities.
- Electrical grounding of the pipeline.

Cumulative Impacts

- Growth induced by increase in local pipeline capacity.
- Relationship to other oil and gas development activities.
- Inclusion of the proposed Entrega Project and its associated facilities.
- Disruption and loss of agricultural production from two pipelines (Piceance Project and Entrega Project) constructed sequentially.

Table 1.4-1 (Continued)

Cumulative Impacts (Continued)

- Cumulative impacts from multiple pipelines in nearby, but not abutting, ROWs.
- Cumulative pipeline impacts (surface disturbance, restoration, and precluded land use) on nearby landowners.
- Cumulative impacts on wildlife and their habitats.
- Conversion plans for the existing soda ash pipelines.

Alternatives

- Single pipeline for the Piceance Project and Entrega Project where the two projects overlap.
- Construction of Piceance and Entrega pipelines within a single, common ROW.
- Simultaneous construction and restoration of Piceance project and Entrega project.
- Construction of the Piceance Project pipeline in an alternative corridor between the CIG Greasewood Compressor Station (project end milepost [MP] 141.7) and approximate MP 106.

The final EIS was filed with the EPA and mailed to approximately 535 federal, state, and local agencies; elected officials, Native American tribes; newspapers; public libraries; intervenors to the FERC's proceeding; and other interested parties who provided scoping comments, commented on the draft EIS, or wrote to the FERC asking to receive a copy of the document. The distribution list for the final EIS is presented in appendix K. A formal notice indicating that the final EIS is available was published in the FR.

In accordance with CEQ regulations implementing NEPA, no agency decision on the proposed action may be made until 30 days after the EPA publishes a Notice of Availability of the final EIS in the FR. However, the CEQ regulations provide an exception to the rule when an agency decision is subject to a formal internal appeal process that allows other agencies or the public to make their views known. This is the case at the FERC, where any Commission decision on WIC's proposal would be subject to a 30-day rehearing period. Therefore, the agency decision may be made at the same time that notice of the final EIS is published by the EPA, allowing the appeal periods to run concurrently.

For the BLM, the date the EPA's Notice of Availability appears in the FR initiates a 30-day period before the decision to issue or amend a ROW grant is made. Comments received on the final EIS during the 30-day period will be reviewed to determine if they have merit (e.g., identify significant issues not previously addressed or introduce significant new information). If no changes are warranted, a ROD is prepared that documents the selected alternative as well as mitigation measures. No action concerning a proposal may be taken on federal land until the ROD for the ROW grant has been issued.

1.5 Nonjurisdictional Facilities

Under Section 7 of the NGA, the FERC is required to consider, as part of its decision to authorize interstate natural gas facilities, all factors bearing on the public convenience and necessity. The facilities for the proposed Piceance Project that would be under the FERC's jurisdiction include approximately 141.8 miles of natural gas pipeline, additional compression at the existing CIG Greasewood Compressor Station, four

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interconnections with existing pipelines, nine mainline valves (MLVs), and three pigging facilities.⁹ These facilities are discussed in detail in section 2.1. Many of the proposed aboveground facilities would be located within existing compressor station facility sites.

Occasionally, proposed natural gas pipeline projects have associated facilities that do not come under FERC jurisdiction. These “nonjurisdictional” facilities may be integral to the need for the proposed project (e.g., a new or expanded power plant at the end of a FERC-jurisdictional pipeline) or they may be merely associated as a minor, non-integral component of the proposed jurisdictional facilities.

Natural gas for the Piceance Project pipeline would be derived from existing, previously permitted TransColorado and Williams pipelines. There are multiple sources of gas for these existing pipelines. On a regional scale, there are existing and planned nonjurisdictional facilities, such as natural gas development, production, gathering, and processing facilities that have been or will be constructed and operated by Williams or other producers in the basin, regardless of the status of the Piceance Project. These facilities are located upstream of the proposed Piceance Project facilities at the Greasewood Hub in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. **Table 1.5-1** lists currently identified nonjurisdictional facilities and the status of their environmental review. **Figure 1.5-1** illustrates these nonjurisdictional facilities.

We carefully considered the relationship between these nonjurisdictional facilities and the Piceance Project. Although many of these facilities would be functionally attached to the Piceance Project pipeline, we have concluded that these facilities do not represent actions that must be addressed at the same level of detail as the Piceance Project in this EIS. In addition, the facilities identified in **table 1.5-1** are existing facilities.

1.6 Related Actions

On January 6, 2005, TransColorado filed an application with the FERC in Docket No. CP05-45-000 to construct its North Expansion Project that would consist of constructing a new compressor station (the TransColorado Greasewood Compressor Station¹⁰) and a new 2,200-foot-long interconnecting pipeline between the new compressor station and CIG’s Greasewood Compressor Stations (**figure 1.6-1**). TransColorado’s new compressor station would contain three compressors with a combined total of 4,670 horsepower (International Organization for Standardization [ISO] rating) and metering facilities. We consider the North Expansion Project to be a related action since it directly provides natural gas supply for the project.¹¹ However, the North Expansion Project is not a connected action because the compressor’s function is to compress gas that is being transported northward, serving multiple northbound shippers. While

⁹ A pipeline “pig” is a device used to clean or inspect the pipeline. A pigging facility may include a pig launcher, receiver, or combined launcher/receiver. A pigging facility is an aboveground facility where pigs are inserted into and/or retrieved from the pipeline.

¹⁰ TransColorado’s proposed and CIG’s existing compressor stations at the Greasewood Hub are both named “Greasewood Compressor Station.” To avoid confusion, this EIS refers to the compressor stations as “TransColorado’s Greasewood Compressor Station” and “CIG’s Greasewood Compressor Station.”

¹¹ Williams’ existing gathering facilities would deliver up to about 70,000 Dthd at the Greasewood Hub and Williams has arrangements with TransColorado to deliver the remaining volumes (280,000 Dthd) at the Greasewood Hub. Together these volumes comprise WIC’s proposal to transport 350,000 Dthd to Wamsutter.

**Table 1.5-1
Nonjurisdictional Facilities**

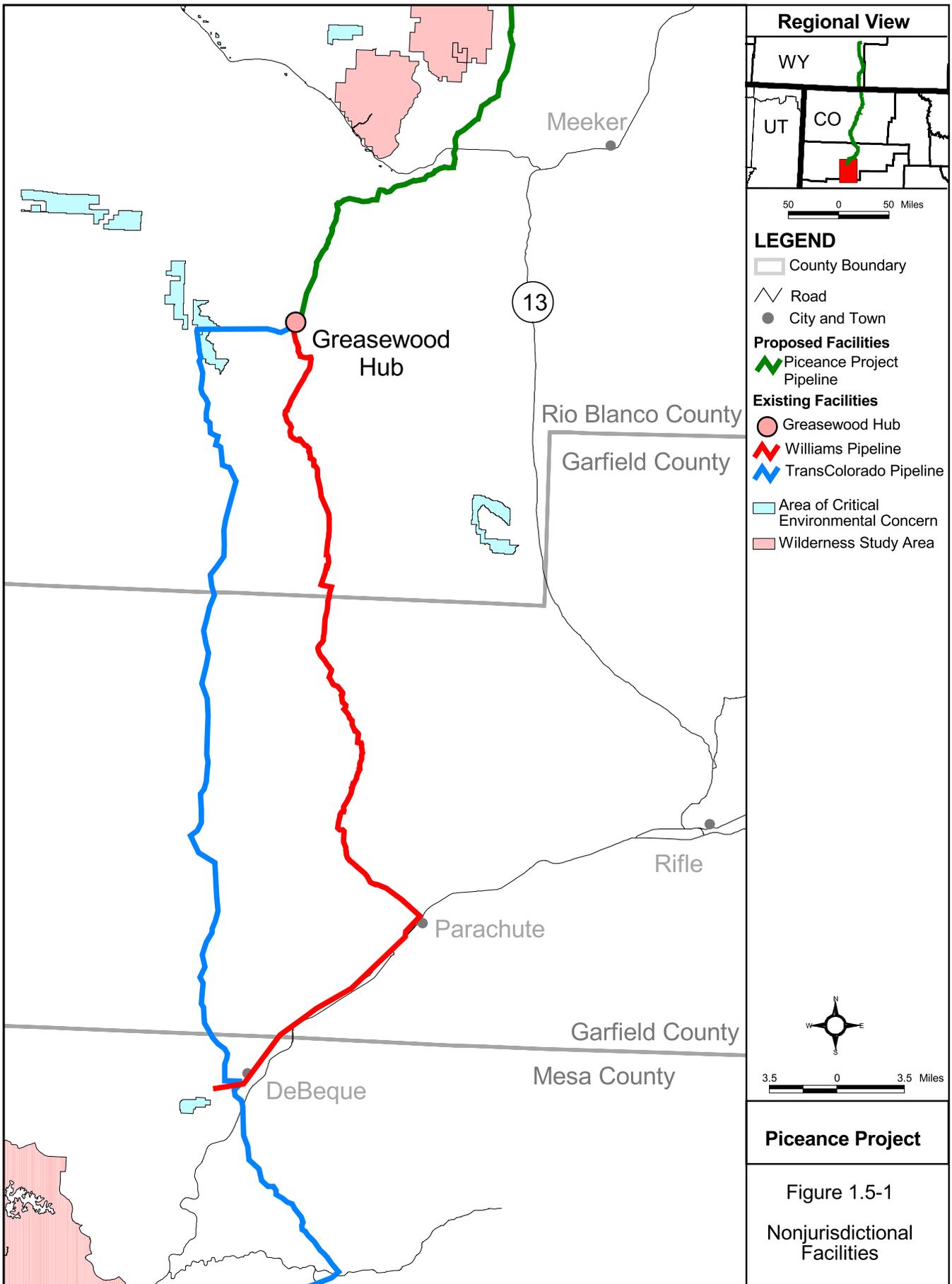
Facility (see figure 1.5-1)	Status	Location	Interconnections	Facility Description	Environmental Review Status
Natural Gas Fields	Existing	Mesa, Garfield, and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado	Multiple small diameter interconnecting pipelines with larger diameter gathering trunklines that feed gas to existing gas plants.	Natural gas wells on variable spacing (20, 40, 80 acres) that are connected to gathering pipelines.	Wells individually approved on a site-specific basis by the BLM on federal, state, and private lands with federal ownership of oil and gas rights. Wells individually approved on state and private lands under Colorado Oil and Gas Commission requirements where oil and gas rights are state or privately held.
Williams Processed Natural Gas Pipeline 16-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline (Initial transportation volumes of up to 68 MMcf/d or 70,000 Dth/d)	Existing	Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado	From the Garfield County production field to the CIG Greasewood Compressor Station.	Existing 16-inch-diameter pipeline would flow processed gas to the CIG Greasewood Compressor Station.	Approved and operational.
Williams Processed Natural Gas Pipeline 24-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline (Initial transportation volumes of up to 273 MMcf/d or 280,000 Dth/d)	Existing	Mesa and Garfield, Counties, Colorado	From the Garfield County production field to the interconnection on the TransColorado Pipeline near DeBeque, Colorado.	Existing 24-inch-diameter pipeline would flow processed gas to the interconnection with TransColorado Pipeline.	Approved and operational.

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Table 1.5-1 Continued

Facility (see figure 1.5-1)	Status	Location	Interconnections	Facility Description	Environmental Review Status
TransColorado Processed Natural Gas Pipeline 24-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline (Initial transportation volumes of up to 273 MMcfd or 280,000 Dthd)	Existing	Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado	TransColorado Pipeline near Debeque, Colorado, to the proposed TransColorado Greasewood Compressor Station.	Existing 22-inch-diameter interstate pipeline would deliver processed gas to the proposed TransColorado Greasewood Compressor Station.	Approved and operational.

Note: Conversion factor is Dthd = 1027 x MMcfd.



Non-Internet Public

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE PICEANCE BASIN EXPANSION PROJECT
Docket Nos. CP05-54-000

Pages 1-14
Figure 1.6-1

Public access for the above information is available only through the Public Reference Room, or by e-mail at public.referenceroom@ferc.gov.

the North Expansion Project would include service to the Piceance Project, it is not limited to providing compression to the Piceance Project. The North Expansion Project also would provide shippers on TransColorado's system the ability to deliver their gas into the existing interstate pipeline systems of CIG, Questar Pipeline Company, and Northwest Pipeline Company at the Greasewood Hub. As proposed, TransColorado requested approval of the North Expansion Project by the end of May 2005, with construction in the summer of 2005, and with a projected in-service date of January 2006. The North Expansion Project is on an earlier construction schedule than the Piceance Project (WIC's proposed construction would commence in the fall of 2005). The FERC analyzed the North Expansion Project separately in an environmental assessment that was issued on May 20, 2005, and this project was authorized on May 27, 2005. Remaining pipeline facilities that connect to the gas fields have already been constructed.

On October 28, 2003, EnCana Oil and Gas USA (EnCana) filed an application with the Rawlins BLM FO to construct and operate a new interstate natural gas pipeline and related facilities in Colorado and Wyoming. The name of the applicant was later modified on the BLM application to Entrega, an affiliate of EnCana. On September 17, 2004, Entrega filed applications with the FERC to construct and operate a new interstate natural gas pipeline and related facilities in Colorado and Wyoming.¹² As proposed, the Entrega Project would include:

- about 328.1 miles of 36- and 42-inch-diameter new natural gas pipeline, extending between a proposed Meeker Hub in Rio Blanco County, Colorado (about 7 miles west of the Greasewood Hub) and northward into Wyoming, where it would interconnect with two existing interstate natural gas transportation pipelines at Wamsutter, Wyoming. From Wamsutter, the pipeline would head southeast, where it would interconnect with other existing pipelines at the Cheyenne Hub in Weld County, Colorado;
- 66,020 horsepower of compression at three new compressor stations;
- seven new metering stations; and
- twenty-two MLVs.

The Entrega Project would receive natural gas from EnCana's proposed gas processing plant near the "Meeker Hub," as well as other natural gas pipelines. EnCana's proposed facilities, known as the Meeker Pipeline and Gas Plant Project, are currently being evaluated by the BLM using a preliminary environmental

¹² On March 19, 2004, Entrega requested that the FERC initiate the NEPA Pre-filing process for the Entrega Project. The FERC granted Entrega's request and assigned Docket No. PF04-7-000 to the proceeding. On May 3, 2004, the FERC issued a *Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the planned Entrega Gas Pipeline Project, Request for Comments on Environmental Issues, and Notice of Public Scoping Meetings and Route Inspection* (Entrega NOI). The Entrega NOI invited public participation in stakeholder and public scoping meetings which were held in Cheyenne, Wyoming (June 7, 2004), Rawlins, Wyoming (June 8, 2004), Craig, Colorado (June 9, 2004), and Meeker, Colorado (June 10, 2004). On September 17, 2004, Entrega formally filed its application for the Entrega Project with the FERC. On that date, Entrega's Pre-Filing docket was closed and Docket Nos. CP04-413-000, et al. were assigned to the Entrega Project. The Entrega Project draft EIS was issued on February 25, 2005, and the final EIS was issued on July 1, 2005.

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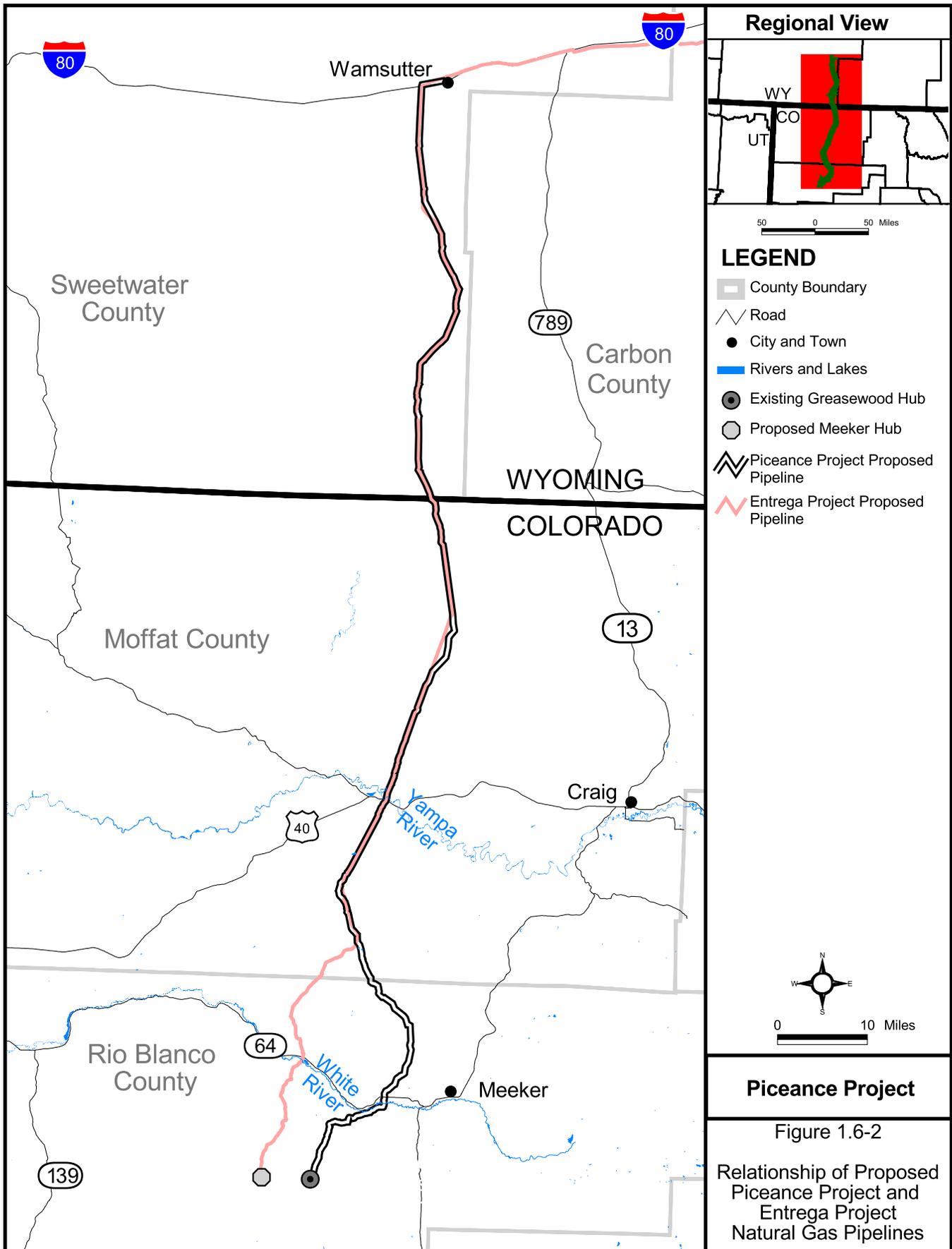
assessment (EA) which was issued on March 25, 2005. The final EA for this project is expected to be issued in July or August 2005.

The proposed Entrega Project pipeline would be constructed in approximately 8.5 miles of new ROW along Piceance Creek from a proposed Meeker Compressor Station to an intersection with the existing 20-inch-diameter CIG Uinta Basin Lateral pipeline. The Entrega Project pipeline would parallel the Uinta Basin Lateral (and other existing pipelines) the remainder of the distance to Wamsutter, Wyoming (**figure 1.6-2**). The proposed Piceance Project pipeline would be in the same utility corridor with the Entrega Project pipeline from approximate WIC's MP 0 to MP 105.1, where they are generally parallel with the Uinta Basin Lateral. For 98 miles the two projects very closely parallel and share the same utility ROW with other existing pipelines (WIC MP 0 to MP 98). For an additional 15 miles the two projects share a broader utility corridor, but do not plan to share the same ROW (WIC MP 65 to MP 73 and WIC MP 98 to MP 105.1). Entrega proposes to begin construction in 2005, with a desired in-service date of January 2006.

Because the Entrega Project would be located in the same utility corridor as the Piceance Project over a distance of approximately 105 miles, and both projects are proposed to be constructed in nearly the same timeframe between the Piceance Basin and Wamsutter, the FERC and BLM considered whether to analyze both projects together in the same EIS. This approach was rejected because the planning for the Piceance Project was several months behind that of the Entrega Project. We determined that if either project were delayed, development of a single EIS would potentially penalize the other project by imposing unnecessary NEPA processing delays. If WIC's project development caught up with the Entrega Project prior to release of a draft EIS, the issue of a single EIS covering both projects would have been revisited. However, the Entrega Project draft EIS was issued on February 25, 2005.

Consequently, each project is being analyzed in a separate EIS; however, the combined environmental effects of both projects are being considered together where the two projects overlap. In some instances, the decisions to be made for the Entrega Project could affect the location and construction procedures for the Piceance Project. To account for the joint environmental and construction issues for both projects, route alternatives were developed in which both projects would be located together for all or part of the pipeline segment between the Piceance Basin and Wamsutter. The purpose of these alternatives is to examine options to reduce the overall surface disturbance for both projects and a consequent reduction in resource effects. Another purpose is to determine whether one applicant's proposal would yield greater environmental protection benefits than the other proposal where the two proposed routes are geographically separate (south of MP 105.1). The rationale and scope of the route alternatives are presented in chapter 4.0. The FERC and the BLM are encouraging the two companies to work together to closely collocate their facilities wherever possible and to conduct joint construction planning with the goal of minimizing environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable.

On February 18 and March 1 and 2, 2005, the BLM hosted meetings with both Entrega and WIC to discuss construction and reclamation procedures that each company would employ while constructing across federal lands. The FERC and BLM staff prefer that both companies use similar construction and reclamation procedures to ensure consistency between the projects and to facilitate environmental monitoring. Also



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discussed during these meetings were the topics of access road use and traffic management. The FERC and BLM staffs are encouraging the two companies to coordinate their traffic management plans so that impacts on traffic flow would be minimized.

1.7 Changes Since Issuance of the Draft EIS

Since publication of the draft EIS in May 2005, WIC has made some refinements to its proposed action and provided supplemental information. These refinements are reflected in our analysis as presented in the EIS text and tables. Notable changes include:

- Pipeline Realignment: WIC has made eight minor realignments and route variations to portions of its proposed route to accommodate landowner concerns, additional engineering, or to avoid or minimize environmental impact on sensitive resources (**table 1.7-1**). By making adjustments to the proposed route, WIC would be able to avoid impact on a rock outcrop, a cultural site, a wetland, and two springs. As a result of the realignments, the proposed route is now about 141.8 miles long (0.06 mile-long increase).

Table 1.7-1
Summary of Pipeline Realignments

Approximate Milepost	Name	Approximate Change in Length (miles)	Rationale
18.1	Barrel Springs	0	Reroute to avoid cultural site
33.2	Church Butte	-0.01	Reroute to be closer to pipeline corridor
42.4	Sand Creek	-0.01	Reroute to be closer to pipeline corridor
87.1	Yampa River	0	Reroute to avoid known grave site
105.6	Keystone Ranch	-0.01	Reroute to avoid drainage and wetland
132.9	Wetland 29 Spring	0.04	Reroute to avoid spring
133.5	Wetland 30 Spring	0.05	Reroute to avoid spring
134.7	Rocky Knob	0.02	Reroute to avoid large rock outcrop

- Additional Temporary Workspace Areas: WIC has made minor changes to the location of the temporary workspace areas as a result of the pipeline realignments. The acreage of temporary workspace areas affected during construction has decreased by about 4 acres from 330 to 326 acres as a result of the change.
- Access Roads: WIC has reduced the length of access roads they expect to grade in Wyoming from 6.7 miles to 0.75 mile. The reported disturbance related to access roads in Wyoming has been changed from 24.2 acres to 2.7 acres throughout the document.
- Communication Towers: The EIS has included discussion of the proposed Magnetic Mountain and Juniper Mountain microwave communication towers associated with the Piceance Project in Chapter 2,

Proposed Action, and identified the acreage affected during construction and operation of the communication towers. The impacts associated with construction and operation of the towers is discussed under the appropriate affected resources in Chapter 3.