



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

Sacramento District  
1325 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

# Public Notice

Number: 200675240

Date: July 26, 2006

Comments Due: August 25, 2006

**SUBJECT:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Williams Northwest Pipeline Erosion Protection project, which would result in impacts to approximately 1.71 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, in or adjacent to Douglas Creek and Salt Creek. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

**AUTHORITY:** This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

**APPLICANT:** Mr. Randy Miller  
Williams Gas Pipeline  
295 Chipeta Way  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84108  
801-584-6702

**LOCATION:** Four of the five project sites are located at Douglas Creek within Section 29 Township 1 South, Range 101 West, and in Section 18, Township 3 South, Range 101 West, Rio Blanco County, Colorado, and can be seen on the Philadelphia Creek and Texas Mountain USGS Topographic Quadrangles. The fifth site is located at East Salt Creek, within Section 16, Township 7 South, Range 102 West, Garfield County, Colorado, and can be seen on the Howard Canyon USGS Topographic Quadrangle.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Williams Gas Pipeline operates a 22 inch natural gas pipeline called the Northwest Pipeline (NWP). This pipeline parallels Douglas Creek and East Salt Creek in many places. Over the years these creeks have been down-cutting and have migrated laterally, subsequently leading to the near exposure of the NWP. The applicant is proposing to use stream relocation and bank stabilization structures at five locations in order to reroute the main channels away from the buried pipeline to prevent pipeline exposure and possible rupture. The proposal includes the installation of bendway weirs (Exhibit A, Engineering Plans), at four sites (Sites 269.44, 269.33, 259.00 and 233.00), to move the active channel into a former channel away from the pipeline and to create a reinforced embankment to prevent further streambank erosion near the pipe. At sites 269.44 and 269.33 the applicant is proposing to create a rock embankment on a 1:1 slope at the 40-50 foot cut banks. The proposed embankment at site 269.44 will use approximately 5,876 cubic yards of mixed size rock, site 269.33 will use approximately 5,220 cubic yards of mixed size rock. At site 259.49, the applicant is proposing to cut off a bend in the stream at grade and place a series of rock check dams in the existing channel to slow water velocity and decrease water volume passing through this bend in the stream.

Based on the available information, the project purpose is to prevent the NWP from being exposed and damaged. The applicant believes there is a need to protect this pipeline from damage because a ruptured natural gas pipeline poses great environmental and public health and safety hazards. The attached drawings provide additional project details.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Environmental Setting.** The environmental setting is characterized by palustrine emergent and scrub-shrub wetlands adjacent to Douglas Creek and East Salt Creek, tributaries to the White River and Colorado River, respectively. Both of these streams have been experiencing widespread channel incision, possibly exacerbated by the introduction of wide-ranging cattle grazing in the late 1800's. Most of the wetlands are dominated by tamarisk and willow species. At the proposed erosion protection sites Douglas Creek is a perennial stream ranging from 8 to 20 feet wide. East Salt Creek is a perennial stream about 10 feet wide at the proposed treatment site. At site 259.49 there is a seep and a spring supporting a palustrine emergent wetland in addition to scrub-shrub wetlands adjacent to Douglas Creek. There are no wetlands occurring at site 259.00.

**Alternatives.** The applicant has provided information concerning project alternatives. These are alternatives that were considered by the applicant and were not analyzed in detail.

1. Relocate the pipeline: The applicant considered relocating the pipeline away from the stream channel but states that there is no other location for the pipe at any of the sites.
2. Re-bury the pipeline: The applicant considered reburying the pipeline to a level below the current stream channel. The applicant states that this alternative is unfeasible because of the great depth that would be necessary, and because the stream would continue its lateral migration and expose the pipeline in the future.
3. Install riprap revetments: The applicant considered using riprap to armor the eroding banks. However the pattern of stream down-cutting followed by erosion of the toe of the slop would eventually undermine the riprap and lateral migration would continue.
4. Eliminate rock embankments from the design at sites 269.44 and 269.33: These embankments were deemed necessary because there are presently tension cracks in the ground surface on and near the pipeline at these two sites, suggestion that bank failure is imminent.
5. Allow the pipeline to become exposed: The U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Pipeline Safety, requires a minimum depth of cover over high-pressure gas pipelines (49 CFR 192.327). The applicant states that this alternative would be in violation of federal regulations.

Additional information concerning project alternatives may be available from the applicant or their agent. Other alternatives may develop during the review process for this permit application. All reasonable project alternatives, in particular those which may be less damaging to the aquatic environment, will be considered.

**Mitigation.** The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The applicant has proposed to create a minimum of 1.17 acres of self-sustaining scrub-shrub wetlands and waters of the United States to mitigate for 1.1 acres of wetland impacts and 0.61 acre of impacts to Waters of the United States. Of those impacts, 0.72 acre of wetland impacts and 0.45 acre of to waters of the United States impacts are proposed to be permanent.

**OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS:** Water quality certification or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is required for this project. The applicant has not indicated they have applied for certification.

**HISTORIC PROPERTIES:** Based on the available information, and our cursory review of the project location, cultural resources occur within the project's area of potential effect. All of the project sites, except site 233.00 on East Salt Creek, are located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered land, thus BLM will handle Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act issues at these sites.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** The project is not likely to affect any Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat that are protected by the Endangered Species Act. Any potential endangered species issues at the four sites on BLM land will be handled by Bureau of Land Management personnel.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant and our preliminary review.

**EVALUATION FACTORS:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement

pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

**SUBMITTING COMMENTS:** Written comments, referencing Public Notice 200675240, must be submitted to the office listed below on or before August 25, 2006:

Nathan Green, Project Manager  
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District  
Colorado/Gunnison Basin Regulatory Office  
400 Rood Avenue, Room 142  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81501-2563  
Email: [Nathan.J.Green@usace.army.mil](mailto:Nathan.J.Green@usace.army.mil)

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant or the Corps' project manager Nathan Green, 970-243-1199, extension 12, [Nathan.J.Green@usace.army.mil](mailto:Nathan.J.Green@usace.army.mil).

Attachments: 17 drawings