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Nemo to Duane from Paul.

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April 17, 1992



ENSR Consulting and Engineering 1716 Heath Parkway Fort Collins, Colorado 80524 (303) 493-8878 (303) 493-0213/FAX

Mr. Daryl Trotter Bureau of Land Management P.O. Box 970 Moab, UT 84532

Dear Daryl,

Enclosed are the revised "No Action Alternative" sections from the most recent preliminary draft EIS for the Ouray to interstate 70 Highway Project (dated March 1992). Changes are highlighted in bold text. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Bill Theisen

Assistant Project Manager

Bill Theisen

BT/dw

Ref: 3162-001.C56

Enc.

cc: Duane DePaepe



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Early stakes arouse road opponents

The premature staking of the Seep Ridge Road through a Wilderness Study Area in Uintah County has wilderness groups up in arms over the project.

A proposed route for the 90-mile road that will connect Ouray to Cisco, goes through about five miles of a Wilderness Study Area (WSA), Winter Ridge. The area includes 42,462 acres of public land, and was not recommended by the BLM for Wilderness designation. But the area can only be dropped from the designation by the U.S. Congress.

About two weeks ago it was discovered that the center line for the road through Winter Ridge WSA was already staked. In areas under study for wilderness an Environmental Assessment (EA) must be completed before any survey staking inside the area can take place. Comments for the EA on the survey staking of the Winter Ridge area will close to public Aug. 14.

Wardell, Special Transportation District director said he placed the six rebar stakes and lath on the center line so an archeological assessment of the area could be completed. Wardell said he believed BLM officials were aware of his actions. Once it was brought to the attention of the BLM, a letter ordering the removal of the stakes issued was to the Special

Transportation District. Wardell said he removed the stakes when he received the order.

Duane Depaepe, wilderness specialist with the BLM, said the stakes were removed before Thursday last week. Premature placement of the stakes was in "reality no big impact, but procedurally it was not correct," Depaepe said. The Special Service District can conduct its survey and be procedurally correct in placing survey stakes once the EA is complete and BLM recommendation approved. In the EA the BLM is recommending no permanent impact to the area by placing the survey stakes.

Meanwhile groups opposed to the road will likely use the mistake as political leverage against its completion.

To build that road on another route outside the Wilderness Area, it would cost about \$10 million more in construction cost. The Special Service District expects its cost of the total project to bring the road up to grade to be about \$19 million. The Utah Department of Transportation has pledged to pave the highway once it is brought to grade. The road goes through the energy-rich souther Uintah County. The area is also prime wildlife habitat and one of the last roadless areas of the county.

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