



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
White River Resource Area  
220 East Market  
Meeker, Colorado 81641



In Reply Refer To:

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JUL 18 2014

**RECEIVED**

JUL 22 2014  
GRAND JUNCTION FIELD OFFICE  
DIVISION OF  
RECLAMATION MINING & SAFETY

Natural Soda Inc.  
Attention: Bob Warneke  
3200 County Rd. 31  
Rifle, Colorado 81650

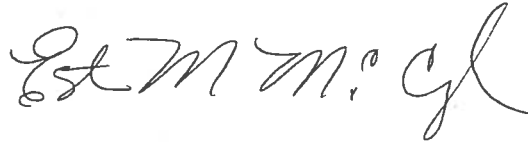
Dear Mr. Warneke:

We have reviewed your December 18, 2013 request to conduct a resource definition drilling program at up to 21 drill locations on Natural Soda Inc.'s existing sodium leases. The proposed project is located in Township 1 South, Range 98 West; Sections 15, 21, 23, 25, 26, and 27, of the 6<sup>th</sup> P.M. The drilling program is approved with the attached conditions of approval (COA). Also attached is a copy of the drilling program with topographic and aerial maps of the approved access routes and drill hole area locations including changes made to location areas and access routes from the original submission. Please take a careful look at the signed attached maps and conditions of approval; specifically the following:

- Relocation of the O, Q, and R drilling areas,
- Reduction in the size and change in the configuration of the F drilling area and COA Number 22 requiring a cultural monitor during soil disturbance for access and construction of the F pad,
- Relocation of the access route to the C, H, and N drilling areas,
- Reroute of access to the R area, the access route from R to the P, and the access route from P to the S,
- COA Numbers 16 and 26 specific to pad location L.

Additional bonding to include the estimated reclamation costs of the holes, pads and access is required. This additional bonding requirement will be determined in coordination with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety and sent to you at a future date. You will be also billed by our office for the wood products removed during the construction of the project. If there any questions, please contact Paul Daggett, Mining Engineer at (970) 878-3819.

Sincerely,



 Kent Walter  
Field Manager

Enc  
cc:

Travis Marshall  
Grand Junction Field Office  
Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety  
101 South 3<sup>rd</sup>, Suite 301  
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Daub & Associates, Inc.  
1985½ South Broadway  
Grand Junction, CO 81507-9649

## Natural Soda Resource Drilling Program Conditions of Approval

### Design Features

1. All operations would conform to Natural Soda's approved Mine and Reclamation Plans.

### Air Quality

2. The operator will limit unnecessary emissions from point or nonpoint pollution sources and prevent air quality deterioration from necessary pollution sources in accordance with all applicable state, federal and local air quality law and regulation.
3. The operator will treat all access roads with water during construction and drilling activities so that there is not a visible dust trail behind vehicles. The use of chemicals or treated produced water as a dust suppressant on BLM lands will require prior written approval from BLM.

### Soils

4. In order to protect public land health standards for soils, erosion features such as rilling, gullyng, piping and mass wasting on the surface disturbance or adjacent to the surface disturbance as a result of this action will be addressed immediately after observation by contacting the AO and by submitting a plan to assure successful soil stabilization with BMPs to address erosion problems.
5. Road maintenance on the access roads should be done as needed to maintain drainage features and reduce erosion on the road surface.

### Vegetation

6. For reclamation actions described in Section 8 (Reclamation) of NSI's approved Mine Plan seed mixture tables; replace pubescent wheatgrass with Bluebunch wheatgrass (Whitmar) and replace Russian wildrye with Needle and Thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata* spp. *comata*) as listed in the Tables below.

Reclamation Seed Species List

Species	Variety	Pounds Pure Live Seed/Acre
Grasses		
Thickspike wheatgrass	Critana	0.5
Streambank wheatgrass	Sodar	0.5
Western wheatgrass	Arriba	1.0
Bluebunch wheatgrass	Whitmar ( <i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i> spp. <i>inermis</i> )	1.0
Basin wildrye	Magnar	0.5
Needle and thread grass	( <i>Hesperostipa comata</i> spp. <i>comata</i> )	1.0
Green needlegrass	Common or Lodorm	2.0
Forbs		
Lewis flax	Appar	0.2
Cicer milkvetch	Monarch*	0.5
Alfalfa	50% Ladak*	0.75
	50% Nomad*	0.75
Scarlet globemallow	VNS or common	0.2
Palmer's penstemon	Cedar	0.2

Shrubs		
Fourwing saltbush	Rincon (dewinged)	1.5
Winterfat	VNS or common	0.5
Antelope bitterbrush	VNS or common	1.0
* preinoculated	<b>Total</b>	<b>12.1</b>

#### Monitoring Well Interim Seed Species List

Species	Variety	Pounds Pure Live Seed/Acre
Grasses		
Bluebunch wheatgrass	Whitmar ( <i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i> spp. <i>inermis</i> )	3
Thickspike wheatgrass	Critana	2
Forb		
Alfalfa	Ladak	2
* preinoculated		

7. Successful reclamation must reflect a plant community of at least five desirable plant species where no one species may exceed 70 percent relative cover and desired foliar cover, bare ground, and shrub and/or forb density must have 80 percent similarity in relation to the identified DPC.
8. Seed mixes for final abandonment of well pads and access retained for monitoring purposes will be based on the recommendations made by the BLM at that time.

#### Invasive, Non-Native Species

9. Application of herbicides must comply with the *Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environments Impact Statement* (EIS), and the WRFO Integrated Weed Management Plan (DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0005-EA).
10. All seed, straw, mulch, or other vegetative material to be used on BLM and split-estate lands will comply with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) state noxious weed seed requirements and must be certified by a qualified Federal, State, or county office as free of noxious weeds. Any seed lot with test results showing presence of State of Colorado A or B list species will be rejected in its entirety and a new tested lot will be used instead. All areas identified to be disturbed under this proposal will be monitored and treated for noxious weeds on an annual basis for the life of the project until Final Abandonment has been approved by the Authorized Officer.
11. Pesticide Use Proposals (PUPs) must be submitted to and approved by the BLM before applying herbicides on BLM lands. The PUP will include target weed species, the herbicides to be used, application rates and timeframes, estimated acres to be treated, as well as maps depicting the areas to be treated and known locations of weeds. The WRFO recommends that all PUPs be submitted no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year anticipating herbicide application.

#### Special Status Plants

12. Dust suppression is required on all road and work areas for access to site "U" using water only.
13. Construction within 600 meters of occupied Dudley Bluffs bladderpod habitat must occur outside of the growing season from August to March.

14. During construction, reclamation, and any ground disturbing maintenance activities within 600 meters of the Dudley Bluffs bladderpod occupied habitat, the operator shall install a silt fence on outer edges of disturbance to protect the special status plant species from construction activity. All silt fencing will be maintained until disturbance is stabilized and interim reclamation is completed. Silt fencing will be required for any new reclamation activities.

#### Migratory Birds

15. Development of pads and access, and well drilling/coring operations are not authorized during the core migratory bird nesting season (from May 15 to July 15).

#### Terrestrial Wildlife

16. Any pad constructed within site 'L' should remain outside of the perimeter of the woodland stand along its northern and northeasterly margin (involving less than 1 acre within the authorized area).
17. Vegetation clearing, pad and access construction, and well development activity would not be permitted within 200-meters of active raptor nests from April 1 through August 15, or until young are fledged and independent of the nest.
18. Locations A, B, C, N, and O through U are located in big game severe winter range and outside an area where winter timing limitations have been excepted in support of ongoing CPW research. Vegetation clearing, pad and access construction, and well development activity would not be permitted on these sites from December 1 through April 30.

#### Cultural Resources

19. NSI is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
20. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. NSI will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. NSI under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
21. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the NSI must notify the AO, by telephone and written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), NSI must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.
22. Due to the high site density near core Hole RDP-F, monitoring by a permitted archaeologist of initial soil disturbance for the access road and pad preparation will be required.

#### Paleontological Resources

23. NSI is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands.
24. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, NSI and/or any of his agents must stop work immediately at that site, immediately contact the BLM Paleontology Coordinator, and make every effort to protect the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The BLM or designated paleontologist will evaluate the discovery and take action to protect or remove the resource within 10 working days. Within 10 days, the operator will be allowed to continue construction through the site, or will be given the choice of either (a) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for stabilizing the fossil resource in place and avoiding further disturbance to the fossil resource, or (b) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for mitigating impacts to the fossil resource prior to continuing construction through the project area.
25. Any excavations into the underlying native sedimentary stone must be monitored by a permitted paleontologist. The monitoring paleontologist must be present before the start of excavations that may impact bedrock.
26. If NSI finds it necessary or desirable to drill the L core hole they shall be required to either do full mitigation and fossil collection on the fossil locality 5RB.8408 or be required to assume full site security and integrity monitoring of the site to deter unlawful collection of fossil resources during the life of the hole for core testing and monitoring should they convert the core hole to a monitoring well.

#### Visual Resources

27. Paint and maintain the paint on all permanent above ground structures (on-site for six months or longer) including tanks, associated production equipment, and any piping and valves be painted, Juniper Green according to the BLM Standard Environmental Chart CC-001: June 2008.

#### Hazardous or Solid Wastes

28. Comply with all Federal, State and/or local laws, rules and regulations addressing the emission of and/or the handling, use, and release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment. All spills or leakages of oil, gas, produced water, toxic liquids or waste materials, blowouts, fires, shall be reported by the operator in accordance with the regulations and as prescribed in applicable orders or notices.
  29. Where required by law or regulation to develop a plan for the prevention of releases or the recovery of a release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment, provide a current copy of said plan to the BLM WRFO.
  30. All substances that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment shall be stored in appropriate containers. Fluids that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, including but not limited to produced water, shall be stored in appropriate containers and in secondary containment systems at 110% of the largest vessel's capacity. Secondary fluid containment systems, including but not limited to tank batteries shall be lined with a minimum 24 mil impermeable liner.
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31. Construction sites and all facilities shall be maintained in a sanitary condition at all times; waste materials shall be disposed of promptly at an appropriate waste disposal site. "Waste" means all discarded matter including, but not limited to, human waste, trash, garbage, refuse, oil drums, petroleum products, ashes, and equipment.
32. As a reasonable and prudent lessee, acting in good faith, all lessees and right-of-way holders will report all emissions or releases that may pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, regardless of a substance's status as exempt or nonexempt and regardless of fault, to the BLM WRFO (970) 878-3800.
33. As a reasonable and prudent lessee and right-of-way holder, acting in good faith, all lessees and right-of-way holders will provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils contaminated by the emission or release of any substance that may pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, regardless of that substance's status as exempt or non-exempt. Where the lessee/operator or right-of-way holder fails, refuses or neglects to provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils contaminated by the emission or release of any quantity of a substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment, the BLM WRFO may take measures to clean-up and test air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils at the lessee/operator's expense. Such action will not relieve the lessee/operator of any liability or responsibility.

#### Fire Management

34. When working on lands administered by the BLM WRFO, notify Craig Interagency Dispatch (970-826-5037) in the event of any fire.
  - a. The reporting party will inform the dispatch center of fire location, size, status, smoke color, aspect, fuel type, and provide their contact information.
  - b. The reporting party, or a representative of, should remain nearby, in a safe location, in order to make contact with incoming fire resources to expedite actions taken towards an appropriate management response.
35. The applicant and contractors will not engage in any fire suppression activities outside the approved project area. Accidental ignitions caused by welding, cutting, grinding, etc. will be suppressed by the applicant only if employee safety is not endangered and if the fire can be safely contained using hand tools and portable hand pumps. If chemical fire extinguishers are used the applicant must notify incoming fire resources on extinguisher type and the location of use.
36. Natural ignitions caused by lightning will be managed by Federal fire personnel. The use of heavy equipment for fire suppression is prohibited, unless authorized by the Field Office Manager.
37. Piled vegetation retained for reclamation as part of forest management mitigations shall be located at least twenty five feet from other receptive fuels.

#### Forest Management

38. In accordance with the 1997 White River RMP/ROD, all trees removed in the process of construction shall be purchased from the BLM. Trees should first be used in reclamation efforts and then any excess material made available for firewood or other uses.
  39. Woody materials required for reclamation shall be removed in whole with limbs intact and shall be stockpiled along the margins of the authorized use area separate from the topsoil piles. Once the disturbance has been re-contoured and reseeded, stockpiled woody material shall be scattered across the reclaimed area where the material originated. Redistribution of
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woody debris will not exceed 20 percent ground cover. Limbed material shall be scattered across reclaimed areas in a manner that avoids the development of a mulch layer that suppresses growth or reproduction of desirable vegetation. Woody material will be distributed in such a way to avoid large concentrations of heavy fuels and to effectively deter vehicle use. Woody materials that are to be stockpiled along margins and not used in the topsoil should not exceed pile dimensions of 8 x 8 x 8 feet. Materials used in the stockpiles should be a variety of diameters, but should be no smaller than 6 inches in diameter. Additionally the piles should be no less than 30 feet apart.

40. Trees that must be removed for construction and are not required for reclamation shall be cut down to a stump height of 6 inches or less prior to other heavy equipment operation. These trees shall be cut in four foot lengths (down to 4 inches diameter) and placed in manageable stacks immediately adjacent to a public road to facilitate removal for company use or removal by the public.

#### Rangeland Management

41. Any range improvement projects such as fences, water developments, cattleguards, gates, or other livestock handling/distribution facilities that are damaged or destroyed either directly or indirectly as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action shall be promptly (at least prior to the livestock grazing permittee's need to utilize the range improvement) be repaired or replaced by the operator to restore it to at least its pre-disturbance functionality.
42. If the operator damages any range improvement project(s) the operator will notify the Authorized Officer through Sundry Notice (Form 3160-5) and identify the actions taken to repair the feature(s).

#### Realty Authorizations

43. NSI will effectively coordinate with existing ROW holders prior to construction activity.
44. A right-of-way is required for the newly constructed access road from BLM Road 1019A to lease boundary of COC0118327 for location M.
45. At least 90 days prior to termination of the ROW, NSI shall contact the AO to arrange a joint inspection of the ROW. The inspection will result in the development of an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan submitted by the holder. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, and surface material (e.g., gravel or concrete), as well as final re-contouring, spreading of topsoil, and seeding. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.
46. For the purpose of determining joint maintenance responsibilities, NSI shall make road use plans known to all other authorized users of the road. Upon request, the Authorized Officer shall be provided with copies of any maintenance agreement entered into.

#### Access and Transportation

47. All construction activity shall cease when soils or roads surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless approved by the Authorized Officer.
  48. Drilling pads will be located and constructed in a manner that does not restrict motorized use on existing routes beyond the drilling pads.
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