



U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form



Program or Field Office: Office of Legacy Management

Project Title and I.D. No.: Install six groundwater monitoring wells and perform general site actions at the Bluewater Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act site near Grants, NM. LM 5-12

Location: Near Grants, NM

Proposed Action or Project Description:

DOE proposes to install six groundwater monitoring wells, perform other actions related to use of existing monitoring wells, obtain a Light Detection and Ranging Survey (LiDAR), install a small weather station, and apply pesticide to control noxious weeds at the Bluewater Site. The wells would be drilled by a truck-mounted rotary drill rig. The 8 5/8-inch boreholes would extend to depths of 120 to 350 feet (ft) below ground surface. Mud pits to contain drilling fluids and drill cuttings would be required for some of the wells. The mud pits, where required, would be approximately 6 ft by 20 ft in size. Water and bentonite would be used for the drilling fluid; if additives are required by the drilling company, DOE would require the use of green products. No liner materials would be necessary because the bentonite clay in the drilling fluid would form a low permeability barrier and prevent drilling fluids from percolating into the subsurface. Drill cuttings, which would consist of ground up native rock with bentonite, would be scattered and left on the ground around each well; over time the cuttings would become a natural part of the environment. Upon completion of the well installation, the mud pits would be reclaimed by light grading of the disturbed area. No down-hole logging would be required for these wells.

In addition, two existing groundwater monitoring wells are in need of sediment removal; telemetry equipment would be installed at several of the existing monitoring wells; and three existing groundwater monitoring wells would be purged to improve sample collection. The purging process would result in the release of a total of approximately 1,500 gallons of water over a period of 2 days. Groundwater released to the surface would not exceed any standards and due to the desert climate, purged water would be rapidly absorbed by the soil.

A LiDAR survey would be conducted over the approximate 250 acre main disposal cell cover to obtain accurate surface topographic data. A helicopter or low-flight airplane may be used to obtain the data.

A small solar-powered weather station that would be mounted on two steel posts would be installed near proposed groundwater monitor well 16(SG), east of the disposal cell. The final proposed height of the station would be 6 ft above ground surface. The steel posts would be driven 2 ft below ground surface and secured with concrete. The data collected by the weather station would include wind, temperature, precipitation, and humidity.

Pesticides may be used by a licensed operator to control noxious weeds. The pesticides would be used to spot-treat noxious weeds. There is no possibility for any pesticide use to enter "waters of the US".

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

- B1.3: Routine maintenance
- B3.1: Site characterization and environmental monitoring

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

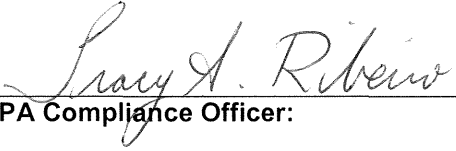
The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D

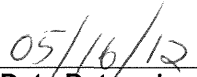
To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.


NEPA Compliance Officer:


Date Determined: