Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

Department of Energy
Naval Petroleum Reserve 3 / Rocky Mountain Oil Field Testing Center
907 N. Poplar Street, Suite 150
Casper WY 82601

October 8, 2008

DOE/EA 1604

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
For the
CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A POTABLE WATER LINE
AT THE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN OILFIELD TESTING CENTER/
NAVAL PETROLEUM RESERVE NUMBER 3
NATRONA COUNTY, WYOMING

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AGENCY: Department of Energy, Naval Petroleum Reserve 3, Rocky Mountain Oil Field Testing Center

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to construct and operate an underground water line to connect the Rocky Mountain Oilfield Testing Center (RMOTC) site, within the Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 3 (NPR-3), to an existing potable water line which runs between Casper and Midwest, Wyoming. The NPR-3 is a 3,837-hectare (9,481-acre) DOE facility located about 56 kilometers (35 miles) north of Casper, Wyoming. This action would provide potable water to site personnel who currently depend upon supplies brought to the site by truck (the No Action alternative).

In accordance with DOE and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations, DOE is required to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of DOE facilities, operations, and related funding decisions. Three alternative routes with sub-route options were evaluated by DOE in the *Construction and Operation of a Potable Water Line at the Rocky Mountain Oilfield Testing Center/Naval Petroleum Reserve No.3, Natrona County, Wyoming Environmental Assessment* (EA) (DOE/EA-1604).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The impacts under all alternatives would be limited to temporary surface and subsurface disturbance of 1 to 7 acres of land, depending upon alternative, along exiting right-of-ways (ROWs) or within existing roadways. From a biological perspective this impact would be small relative to the amount of undisturbed habitat available at NPR-3 for native species and grazing livestock. Some route alternatives and sub-route options would cross prairie dog colonies; however, the colonies have been devastated by disease over the past years and the impact to the existing colonies would be minimal. DOE will however, avoid impacting these habitats to the extent practicable.

Under all alternatives, disturbance would be temporary and mitigated by active reclamation with appropriate native seed mixes, and if necessary, weeds would be controlled under existing DOE reclamation procedures.

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DOE NEPA Compliance Officer
DOE RMOTC/NPR-3
U.S. Department of Energy
907 N. Poplar Street, Suite 150
Casper, WY 82601
Fax: (307) 233-4851
Toll Free Voice: 1-888-599-2200, Email: RMOTCSWEA@rmotc.doe.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE DOE NEPA PROCESS CONTACT:

Office OF NEPA Policy and Compliance
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585
(202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of the information and analyses presented in the EA, DOE has determined that construction and operation of a waterline within any alternative route would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, as defined by NEPA. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required, and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Based on this determination, DOE will contract with an engineering firm to provide design and cost information for each alternative. DOE will utilize the evaluations provided in the final EA, agency comments provided on the draft EA, and construction cost information to select a route in the near future when funding becomes available.

Issued in Casper, Wyoming this 8th day of October, 2008.

CLARKE D. TURNER
Director, NPR-3/RMOTC