

**U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management
National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Checklist**

Project/Activity: Cotter Corporation Exploratory Drill Hole on Lease Tract C-SR-13A

A. Brief Project/Activity Description

Cotter Corporation proposes to conduct exploratory drilling on Lease Tract C-SR-13A, located in western San Miguel County, CO. The exploratory drilling would consist of boring one 5- to 6-inch-diameter hole adjacent to an existing road to an estimated depth of 750 feet (ft). A truck-mounted air rotary drill rig would be used for this action. In addition, a 10-ft by 10-ft by 3-ft-deep excavated area would be used to contain drill cuttings. The removed soil would be bermed around the edges of the pit. It is not anticipated that water would be required during the drilling or plugging process; however, a water truck would be available if needed. After the borehole has been logged, it would be backfilled with cuttings. The mineralized materials would be placed at the bottom of the borehole, followed by non-mineralized cuttings to within about 5 ft from the surface. Above the fill materials, approximately 3 ft of a polyurethane foam plug would be used to seal the hole. The remaining 2 ft would be filled with cuttings mixed with soil recovered from excavating the adjacent pit.

Other surface disturbance would be associated with approximately 75 ft of off-road travel. Vehicles would need to travel off the main dirt road to access the borehole location. The existing area contains scattered piñon pine, juniper, sage and rabbit brush, and snake weed; there are no protected resources present. The area is grazed by cattle.

Disturbed surfaces associated with this activity would be graded, and an approved seed mixture would be broadcast sown.

B. Environmental Concerns

Evaluate the following elements and indicate by checking "yes" or "no" if any phase of the project/activity would result in a change or impact that is subject to regulatory permits, controls, or plans or that would require additional evaluation. If the "yes" column is checked, provide a brief explanation below and attach sheets with additional detail as necessary or appropriate.

Element	Yes	No	Element	Yes	No
Air emissions/air quality	X		Exposure/impacts to public or workers		X
Noise	X		Need for public awareness/involvement		X
Solid waste generation		X	Transportation/traffic control required		X
Mixed waste management		X	Access to/use of DOE property		X
Chemical storage on site		X	Visual resources impacted		X
Pesticide/herbicide use		X	Cultural/archaeological resources present		X
Toxic substances management		X	Wetland/floodplain impacted		X
Regulated quantities of petroleum used or stored on site		X	Protected species present: federal, state, or tribe listed		X
Radioactive materials/soils		X	Migratory birds breeding or nesting		X
Surface (ground) disturbance	X		Wild/scenic rivers impacted		X
Surface water use/contamination		X	Prime/unique farmlands present		X
Surface water quality		X	Groundwater use/contamination		X
Groundwater quality affected		X	Other considerations		X

C. Explanation and Qualification of All "Yes" Responses

Air emissions/air quality: The use of a rotary air rig to drill the hole would result in minor fugitive dust that would be present during the drilling process. Although unlikely, if conditions require a dust suppressant, water would be used to control fugitive dust.

Noise: Noise levels would be elevated above background levels during operation of the rotary air rig. The area is remote, and no human habitation is nearby.

Surface (ground) disturbance: Minor ground disturbance would be associated with excavation of the pit used to contain the drill cuttings, overland travel to the borehole location, and drilling the borehole. After completion of logging, cuttings would be returned to the drill hole, and disturbed areas would be graded and seeded with an approved seed mixture. Less than 0.5 acre would be disturbed by these actions.

D. Eligibility/Conditions

The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D of Title 10 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 1021 (10 CFR 1021); DOE has determined that these classes of actions do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment (see 10 CFR 1021.410). There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposed action, and the proposed action is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts. Finally, the action is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

E. Recommendation

The proposed action to conduct exploratory drilling on lease tract 13A by the lessee would be considered categorically excluded from further environmental evaluation under 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B to Subpart D, B3: Categorical exclusions applicable to site characterization, monitoring, and general research: B3.1 (f) "Sampling and characterization of water, soil, rock, or contaminants." The proposed reclamation of all areas after completion of the drilling project is an allowable activity under Criterion B1.3 (k) "Erosion control and soil stabilization measures (such as reseeded and revegetation)".

Meets Criteria

Does Not Meet Criteria

Unsure

F. NEPA Determination

The scope of actions proposed under Section A of this Environmental Checklist, and the information relevant to the potential for environmental impacts in Section B have been reviewed, and the following has been determined:

The proposed actions meet the criteria for categorical exclusion.

The proposed actions do not meet the criteria for categorical exclusion; therefore, I recommend that the LM NEPA Planning Board be convened based on my recommendation (see attached rationale) to complete:

an Interim Action




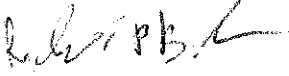
an Environmental Assessment

an Environmental Impact Statement

a Supplemental Analysis

Concurrences

Project/Activity: Cotter Corporation Exploratory Drill Hole on Lease Tract C-SR-13A

LM Site Name Lease Tract C-SR-13A	LM Site Program Uranium Leasing Program	
Contractor NEPA Coordinator Sandra Beranich	Signature 	Date 11-05-2009
Contractor Task Manager Edward Cotter	Signature 	Date 11-05-2009
LM Site Manager Steven Schiesswohl	Signature  2009.11.05 16:19:18 -07'00'	Date
LM NEPA Compliance Officer Richard Bush	Signature 	Date 11/9/09

Distribution upon signature:

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