

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

Project/Activity: Collect Soil Samples near the Chariot, AK, Site

A. Brief Project/Activity Description

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management (LM) proposes to conduct a limited soil investigation in the vicinity of five Project Chariot test holes (Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog, and X1). The purpose of the investigation is to determine if diesel-range organics are present in the soils as a result of geologic characterization activities conducted at the site between 1959 and 1962. The investigation would be conducted in response to concerns of regional inhabitants that residual contamination may remain in site soils.

The soil samples would be obtained by a contractor to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), who would be on site conducting work for ACE. The samples would be collected using a shovel or auger to remove a 1-foot (ft) column of soil from 19 predetermined locations surrounding each of the 5 test holes. The locations would be modified as necessary according to field conditions. Rubber-tired vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles, would be used to access the sampling locations. There are no roads on the site. The ground surface is tundra, and permafrost is known to be present at various depths below 2.5 ft. The proposed soil investigation would take approximately 1 week.

Project Chariot was a part of the Plowshare Program that began in 1957 under the former U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). AEC proposed to use a nuclear explosive to excavate a harbor at the mouth of Ogotoruk Creek in the Cape Thompson area, which lies approximately 110 miles north of the Arctic Circle on the western coast of Alaska. Various experiments and surveys were conducted before Project Chariot was discontinued in 1962. The area is unpopulated, but residents of villages northwest and southeast of the site use the Cape Thompson area for subsistence hunting and fishing.

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Exposure/impacts to public or workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Need for public awareness/involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Solid waste generation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation/traffic control required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mixed waste management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Access to/use of DOE property	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemical storage on site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Visual resources impacted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pesticide/herbicide use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cultural/archaeological resources present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toxic substances management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wetland/floodplain impacted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Regulated quantities of petroleum used or stored on site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protected species present: federal, state, or tribe listed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radioactive materials/soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Migratory birds breeding or nesting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surface (ground) disturbance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wild/scenic rivers impacted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surface water use/contamination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Prime/unique farmlands present	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surface water quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Groundwater use/contamination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Groundwater quality affected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other considerations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

C. Explanation and Qualification of All “Yes” Responses

Surface (ground) disturbance: The removal of the soil samples would result in unavoidable minor surface disturbance.

Access to/use of DOE property: ACE would obtain all necessary access permits. None of the work for LM would be conducted on private land. The site would be accessed by plane and all-terrain vehicle.

Cultural/archaeological resources present: Cultural resource surveys have been conducted and surface features have been removed. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) approved work by the ACE in adjacent areas and has been contacted to approve the proposed LM work. If additional contact of the SHPO is required, LM would complete the contact before beginning the proposed work.

Protected species present: federal, state, or tribe listed: ACE contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for all proposed work (including the LM work). USFWS issued a Special Use Permit (dated May 24, 2010). The permit was issued in recognition of the need to collect data and the short-term duration and use of hand methods. There are no known listed species in the site area that would be affected by the proposed work.

Migratory birds breeding or nesting: There are known nesting colonies of birds along the nearby sea cliffs. Historical collection of the eggs from the nesting birds occurs seasonally. USFWS issued a Special Use Permit (described above) that allows the soil investigations during the nesting period.

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 soil sample collection is an allowable activity under Criterion B3.1 (f) of Appendix B to Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021: “Sampling and characterization of water, soil, rock, or contaminants.”

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

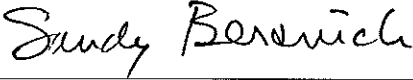


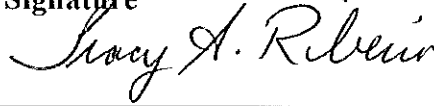
an Environmental Assessment

an Environmental Impact Statement

a Supplemental Analysis

Concurrences

Project/Activity: Collect Soil Samples near the Chariot, AK, Site

LM Site Name Chariot	LM Site Program Other Defense Activities – Nevada Off Sites Program	
Contractor NEPA Coordinator Sandy Beranich	Signature 	Date 6-29-2010
Contractor Site Lead Mark Plessinger	Signature 	Date 6-29-2010
LM Site Manager Mark Kautsky	Signature 	Date 6-29-2010
LM NEPA Compliance Officer Tracy A. Ribeiro	Signature 	Date 07/07/10

Distribution upon signature:

T. Ribeiro, LM NEPA Compliance Officer
M. Kautsky, LM Site Manager
S. Beranich, Stoller NEPA Coordinator
R. Hutton, Stoller Nevada Off Sites Project Manager
M. Plessinger, Stoller Site Lead
S. Osborn, Stoller Compliance Manager
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