



**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.: Routine actions at the Central Nevada Test area. LM # 43 – 11

Location: Nye County, Nevada

Proposed Action or Project Description:

The Office of Legacy Management conducts routine activities at three parcels (UC-1, UC -3, and UC-4), which are collectively called the Central Nevada Test Area (CNTA). The sites are located in south-central Nevada in Nye County, approximately 30 miles north of Warm Springs. The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (predecessor agency to the DOE) acquired the CNTA in the early 1960s to develop alternative sites to the Nevada Test site for underground nuclear testing. Three emplacement boreholes (UC-1, UC-3 and UC-4) were drilled on the three parcels for underground nuclear testing. Only one underground nuclear test was conducted in borehole UC-1; the UC-3 and UC-4 boreholes were reclaimed.

Routine actions include an annual site inspection of UC-1, UC-3, UC-4 and two engineered mud pits located on UC-4 and UC-1. If any areas with significant surface erosion are found during the mud pit inspections, then bentonite is used as fill for cracks. Only minor surface disturbance may result from this activity. DOE also annually collects groundwater samples from eight wells at UC-1; no groundwater monitoring is conducted on UC-4 and UC-3. In addition to the routine groundwater monitoring, in 2012, DOE proposes to sample the re-entry well (UC-1-P-2SR) on UC-1. This well is located near ground zero. Water would be obtained using a depth discrete sampler from selected intervals within the well. There would be no well purging associated with this well. DOE prepared a Fluid Management Plan, which was approved by the Nevada Division of Environmental Quality, that provides a protocol to follow if unexpected levels of contaminants are found in groundwater.

None of the proposed activities would impact protected resources. These routine activities were found to be categorically excluded from further evaluation under the National Environmental Policy Act.

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.

Mary A. Ribeiro
NEPA Compliance Officer:

12/14/2011
Date Determined: