

PMC-EF2a

(2.04.02)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
EERE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER
NEPA DETERMINATION**



RECIPIENT: NREL

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE : STM Visitor Center Upgrade: NREL Tracking No. 13-006

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-AC36-08GO28308	NREL-13-006	GO28308

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

B3.14 Small-scale educational facilities	Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of small-scale educational facilities (including, but not limited to, conventional teaching laboratories, libraries, classroom facilities, auditoriums, museums, visitor centers, exhibits, and associated offices) within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Operation may include, but is not limited to, purchase, installation, and operation of equipment (such as audio/visual and laboratory equipment) commensurate with the educational purpose of the facility.
DOE/EA 1440 (NREL STM)	Final Site-Site Wide Environmental Assessment of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) South Table Mountain Complex (February 2003)

Rational for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) proposes improvements to existing Visitor's Center building and grounds at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) South Table Mountain (STM) campus located in Golden, Colorado.

PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the proposed Visitor's Center improvements would be to update the facility and transform it into the Education Center. The proposed improvements, as described in the uploaded Statement of Work for Construction Services would include:

- Demolition of south entrance sidewalks and stairway from Denver West Parkway to the top of the stairs.
- Demolition of exterior site features and landscaping.
- Installation of new sidewalk approach to the south entrance that is handicap accessible (i.e. ADA compliant).
- Reuse existing site bollard lights
- Design and construction of new site amenities, such as sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, irrigation, retaining walls, and exhibit area.
- Repair and paint the exterior of the Visitor's Center.
- Installation of a drywall partition and glass doors inside the Visitor's Center to enclose the interior exhibit area.
- Removal of existing renewable energy exhibits. Exhibits may be stored for future use, relocated, or recycled.

Most of the landscaping and interpretive features along the south, southeast and west sides of the Visitor's Center would be redesigned, reworked or removed. New landscaping (e.g. sod, shrubs, trees, flowers, xeriscaping, etc.) would be installed and new sidewalks would be constructed. The new sidewalks would enhance ADA access, but still maintain multiple access points per the attached plans.

Upon completion of the proposed improvements, new exhibits related to renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainability in building design and landscaping, resource conservation, or similar topics may be installed. NREL would continue to use the facility for public outreach and education into renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

PREVIOUS NEPA DETERMINATIONS

The Visitor Center is located in Campus Development Zone 5 – East Campus. Development in Campus Development Zone 5 and modifications to the Visitor Center were within the scope of the Proposed Action analyzed in the July 2003 NREL STM Site-Wide Environmental Assessment (DOE/EA-1440). DOE/EA-1440 and its Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are hereby incorporated by reference.

IMPACTS OF PROPOSED ACTION

Stormwater quality and erosion impacts would be minimal. The proposed project, including all phases of the project, would disturb approximately 0.5 acres of previously disturbed areas. Industry standard construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater management would be utilized and maintained. The construction and subsequent restoration activity on the NREL STM site would abide by established procedures, specifications, and processes of NREL Lab Level Procedure 6-2.15 Stormwater Pollution Prevention for Construction Activities: South Table Mountain Site. USEPA NPDES construction stormwater permits would be obtained as needed. New landscape features would incorporate sustainable design elements to minimize the amount of irrigation water required.

There are no floodplains, wetlands, or Waters of the United States in the vicinity of the proposed project area. NREL has received a Jurisdictional Determination from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the ephemeral drainages on the STM site.

Fugitive particulate air emissions from the construction would be controlled in accordance with the existing STM land disturbance air permit (APCD# 08JE0889L), including mitigation measures like dust suppression as necessary. The construction phases would require the utilization of mobile point emission sources, such as front-end loaders, pavers, excavators, dump trucks, etc., but these emissions would be negligible given the size and duration of the construction activity.

In the 2010-2011 site-wide wildlife survey, no threatened, endangered, or candidate wildlife species were observed at STM, nor was habitat for such species identified. Similarly, the vegetation survey during the same time period found no rare plants or habitat that may support federally protected plant species in the area proposed for this project. A migratory bird nesting survey would be conducted prior to any ground or vegetation disturbing activities if these activities are conducted after March 15th and before September 15th. If nests or eggs are found, the particular area would be cordoned off with a proper buffer until nestlings fledge. This would ensure that no migratory birds, nests or eggs are destroyed during construction.

Archeological and cultural resources on STM site were assessed in DOE/EA-1440 and its two subsequent Supplemental Environmental Assessments (DOE/EA-1440-S-I and DOE/EA-1440-S-II), including Section 106 consultations with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer. The proposed project would not impact known cultural resources at the STM site. Furthermore, construction contractors would be briefed on the possibility of resources being unearthed, and to stop work and contact NREL EHS should any features or structures be discovered during excavation or trenching activities.

There would be noise typical of construction equipment during construction. Work would be conducted only during daylight hours. Construction-related noise would consist of a short-term increase in ambient noise levels. Noise impacts would vary with the phase of construction and occur intermittently. Construction activities would comply with applicable noise ordinances. Traffic impacts would be minimal and coordinated with the proper agencies of jurisdiction.

The new Education Center would enhance the public outreach and education capabilities of NREL and therefore would have a positive impact on the community.

NEPA DETERMINATION

DOE has determined based upon the information above, there are no extraordinary circumstances presented by this proposed action. DOE has determined modifications and improvements to the Visitor's Center to transform it into the Education Center and the continued operation of this facility is consistent with the actions contained in DOE categorical exclusion B3.14 "Small-scale Educational Facilities," and therefore is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If you intend to make changes to the scope or objective of your project you are required to contact the Project Officer identified in Block 11 of the Notice of Financial Assistance Award before proceeding. You must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved.

Note to Specialist :

EF2a prepared by Rob Smith on 06/27/2013.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____

 Electronically
Signed By: Lori Gray
NEPA Compliance Officer

Lori Gray

Date: 6/28/2013

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

Field Office Manager review required

NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____

Field Office Manager

Date: _____