

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION**



RECIPIENT: NREL

STATE: WA

PROJECT TITLE : Yakima Training Center Wind Resource Assessment; NREL-14-010

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-AC36-08GO28308	NREL-14-010	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:

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| A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination | Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.) |
| B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring | Site characterization and environmental monitoring (including, but not limited to, siting, construction, modification, operation, and dismantlement and removal or otherwise proper closure (such as of a well) of characterization and monitoring devices, and siting, construction, and associated operation of a small-scale laboratory building or renovation of a room in an existing building for sample analysis). Such activities would be designed in conformance with applicable requirements and use best management practices to limit the potential effects of any resultant ground disturbance. Covered activities include, but are not limited to, site characterization and environmental monitoring under CERCLA and RCRA. (This class of actions excludes activities in aquatic environments. See B3.16 of this appendix for such activities.) Specific activities include, but are not limited to: (a) Geological, geophysical (such as gravity, magnetic, electrical, seismic, radar, and temperature gradient), geochemical, and engineering surveys and mapping, and the establishment of survey marks. Seismic techniques would not include large-scale reflection or refraction testing; (b) Installation and operation of field instruments (such as stream-gauging stations or flow-measuring devices, telemetry systems, geochemical monitoring tools; and geophysical exploration tools); (c) Drilling of wells for sampling or monitoring of groundwater or the vadose (unsaturated) zone, well logging, and installation of water-level recording devices in wells; (d) Aquifer and underground reservoir response testing; (e) Installation and operation of ambient air monitoring equipment; (f) Sampling and characterization of water, soil, rock, or contaminants (such as drilling using truck- or mobile-scale equipment, and modification, use, and plugging of boreholes); (g) Sampling and characterization of water effluents, air emissions, or solid waste streams; (h) Installation and operation of meteorological towers and associated activities (such as assessment of potential wind energy resources); (i) Sampling of flora or fauna; and (j) Archeological, historic, and cultural resource identification in compliance with 36 CFR part 800 and 43 CFR part 7. |

Rationale for determination:

This proposed project is for the installation and operation of a meteorological (met) tower and Sonic Detection and Ranging (SODAR) unit at the Yakima Training Center (YTC) operated by the Department of the Army (Army). The YTC is located in the south central portion of the State of Washington. It is bounded on the west by Interstate 82, on the south by the City of Yakima, on the north by the City of Ellensburg and Interstate 90, and on the east by the Columbia River. It comprises 327,000 acres (132,332 hectares) of land.

NREL entered into an Interagency Agreement to perform a Wind Resource Assessment at YTC. NREL would subcontract for the installation of a 60-meter met tower at YTC to collect data. The met tower would be at YTC for 12-24 months, depending on the viability of the wind resource.

The initial proposed location on Manastash Ridge was eliminated due to potential cultural resources at that location. Subsequently, two locations were identified, reviewed and selected on top of Boylston Mountain. The coordinates for the newly selected, preferred site location are: Lat 46.90378 N, Long 120.28319 W at an elevation of 1005 meters. Coordinates for the second choice are: Lat 46.91224 N, Long 120.29361 W at an elevation 930 meters (see attached Final Location Map). A trailer-mounted mobile SODAR meteorological unit would be added to the wind assessment that would run during months 7-24 of the met tower deployment. The SODAR unit would be moved approximately four times during the assessment to gather data.

The proposed met tower location at the YTC is characterized as a flat, previously disturbed mountain top. Site access would be provided by existing trails and roads. The "tilt up" met tower would be assembled onsite then lifted via a truck-mounted gin pole and winch. The tower would be anchored with guy wires and rebar anchors. Bird diverters would be installed on the guy wires. At the end of the project, the met tower would be dismantled and the rebar anchors would be removed. If the anchors cannot be removed, they will be cut just below ground surface and covered, in agreement with the Army. The project would involve minimal ground disturbance.

The Army has conducted its own Record of Environmental Consideration (REC 14-002) and indicated this project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion (CX). A CX determination by the Army was signed on November 13, 2013. The determination concluded that the project, in accordance with 32 CFR Part 651, requires no further environmental review. The specific CX used was D-4 (Studies, data collection, monitoring, and information gathering that do not involve major surface disturbance).

Per the Army CX determination, there would be no effect to federal or state listed species or designated critical habitat by the emplacement of the temporary met tower and SODAR unit at the selected area. The Army YTC Wildlife Program Manager was contacted by DOE to confirm that a site reconnaissance was performed for the selected area. DOE has independently reviewed the Record of Environmental Consideration and the additional information provided during a teleconference between DOE and the Army on April 18 and concurs there would be no effect to federal or state listed species or designated critical habitat.

The REC identified potential impacts to sage grouse, migratory birds and eagles and recommended that impacts would be mitigated by the installation of bird diverters on the guy wires.

There are no wetlands or floodplains identified in the vicinity of the selected area. This proposed project would not result in the utilization of hazardous materials, or generation of hazardous waste or air emissions. No grading or clearing would occur. Since land disturbance is minimal and less than one acre, an EPA stormwater permit is not warranted.

No cultural resources were identified within the selected project site. During the April 18 teleconference, the YTC Chief confirmed that the YTC Cultural Resources Manager determined that there are no historic or cultural resources present at the site location, based on site reconnaissance of the selected area and previously conducted surveys including:

- Cultural Resources Inventory of the Proposed Yakima Firing Center Expansion Area, East-Central Washington; James Benson, Jerry Jermann, Dennis Lewarch (URS, 1987)
- Results of a 34,316-acre Cultural Resources Inventory on Yakima Training Center, Kittitas and Yakima Counties, Washington; Trent DeBoer, James Carter, Connie Walker Gray, Meredith Wilson (HRA, 2002)
- Archaeological Inventory in Phases 2-5, 9-10, Yakima Training Center, Kittitas & Yakima Counties, Washington; Ryan Swanson (Stell, 2012)

Activities would be conducted in accordance with the Fort Lewis, Washington Regulation 200-1: Environmental Protection and Enhancement and the Fort Lewis Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP). YTC is a component of the Fort Lewis ICRMP. The plan states, if unidentified cultural resources are discovered during project activities, activities would cease and steps would be taken to prevent further disturbance. Range Control would be contacted immediately of the discovery. Range Control will inform the appropriate Environmental and Natural Resources Division (ENRD) personnel.

The tower height is less than 200 feet; therefore, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a "Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation." As a condition of the determination, the FAA has required obstruction lighting on the met tower.

Based on available information above, this project's impacts to the human and natural environment can be deemed less than significant and this project would qualify for DOE Categorical Exclusions A9 (Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination and B3.1(h) (Installation and operation of meteorological towers (such as assessment of potential wind energy resources)).

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 :

Completed by Amy L. Van Dercook, P.G., Environmental Specialist on 4/21/14

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____
Electronically Signed By: Lori Gray / *Lori Gray*
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 4/23/2014

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: _____