



NEPA Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Program or Field Office: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management (LM)

Project Title: Conduct pollinator studies at Bluewater, NM, UMTRCA Title II Disposal Site

Location: Bluewater, NM, Disposal Site

Proposed Action or Project Description:

DOE LM proposes to characterize monarch butterfly and other pollinator populations across the Bluewater, New Mexico, Disposal Site. The goal of the proposed action is to characterize monarch butterfly and other pollinator populations across the site. The following field activities are proposed:

- 1) A "beat sheet" with netting would be placed on the ground inside sampling quadrats, and the foliage would be shaken or struck to release and capture insects;
- 2) A sweep net would be used to catch insects across the upper quarter of the vegetation;
- 3) Captured insects would be identified in place or transferred to a plastic cooling chamber for identification before releasing;
- 4) Visual surveys would be performed at timed intervals; during these surveys, insects would be observed but not captured;
- 5) Without impacts to vegetation, line transects would be walked to quantify vegetation composition, height, basal cover, bare ground, ground cover, plant litter, and pollinator habitat; and
- 6) Photo monitoring and GPS mapping would be performed at select locations.

All-terrain vehicles, if used, would be limited to existing travel routes and the cell cover.. Cross-country vehicle travel and refueling vehicles or equipment are excluded from this work. All vehicles would be kept clean to minimize the potential for invasive species to spread. No ground-disturbing activities would occur.. The proposed action would be conducted during August 2021.. Activities may take place at any location at the disposal site. No access requirements or use permissions are required would be performed by LM Support contractor plant and wildlife specialists.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

- B3.1 - Site Characterization and Environmental Monitoring
- B3.3 - Research Related to Conservation of Fish, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of Title 10 *Code of Federal Regulations* Section 1021 (10 CFR 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 by the LM Director per DOE Policy 451.1), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified classes of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature and
Determination Date

JOYCE CHAVEZ Digitally signed by JOYCE CHAVEZ
Date: 2021.07.16 08:51:02 -0600