

**FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS
FOR THE
PROPOSED FIRE BREAK AT THE LOWER SLOBBOVIA FIRING SITE
AT
LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY
LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO**

March 5, 2018

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration, Los Alamos Field Office (NA-LA)

ACTION: Floodplain Statement of Findings

PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed project is located in TA-36 adjacent to the eastern section of Potrillo Drive in Potrillo Canyon (Figure 1). The firebreak will be approximately 60 ft. (18.2 m) wide and extend across the length of the canyon bottom, through the floodplain. The work within the firebreak may include, but is not limited to, removal of all vegetation, placement of compacted base course, erosion controls for stabilization, tree limbing around the site, and routine maintenance. Additionally, a number of ponderosa pines (*Pinus ponderosa*) outside the firebreak boundaries will be limbed to decrease chances of a crown fire starting. The existing ground cover is a grassland with an over story of ponderosa pine. Any soil disturbance outside of the firebreak will be reseeded at the completion of the project.

ALTERNATIVES: The only alternative evaluated was a no action alternative. DOE prepared the 2000 “Environmental Assessment for the Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Forest Health Improvement” (DOE-EA-1329) to (1) reduce the risk of damage and injury to property, human life and health, and biological resources from high-intensity wildfires at LANL and (2) enhance forest health at LANL. The no action alternative was not selected as it would not allow DOE to mitigate wildfire threats and comply with the environmental assessment Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The notification for actions within a floodplain area and request for comments was sent to appropriate government agencies, tribal , and groups and persons known to be interested in or potentially affected by the proposed floodplain action and posted February 15, 2018 in the Los Alamos National Laboratory Research Library Electronic Public Reading Room. Concurrently, access to the *Floodplain Assessment for the Proposed Fire Break at the Lower Slobbovia Firing Site at Los Alamos National Laboratory* was provided via <http://permalink.lanl.gov/object/tr?what=info:lanl-repo/lareport/LA-UR-18-20885> and hard copy placed at the Los Alamos National Laboratory Public Reading Room, located at 94 Cities of Gold Road, Pojoaque, New Mexico. No comments were received. This Floodplain Statement of Findings was prepared in accordance with Executive Order 11988: Floodplain Management and DOE implementing regulations 10 Code of Federal Regulations 1022, and provides a summary of the results of the Floodplain Assessment.

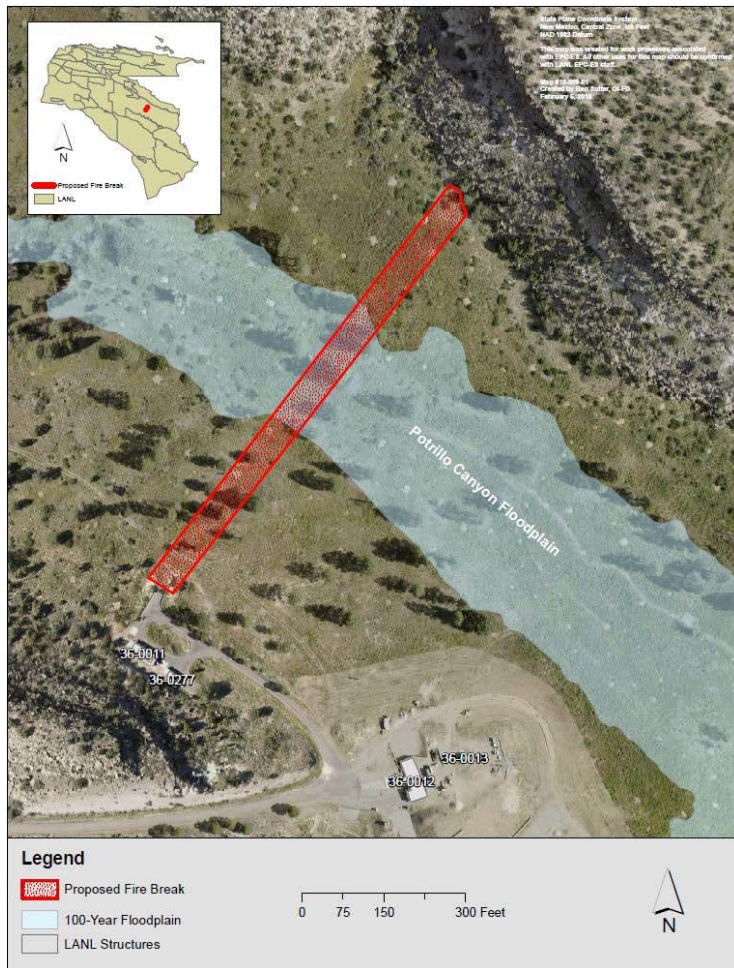


Figure 1. Proposed project areas in Potrillo Canyon in TA-36

FLOODPLAIN IMPACTS: No negative, long-term impacts to the floodplain are expected under the proposed project. The project area landscape is flat, with a slope less than 1.5 percent, and the canyon receives minimal flow from upstream drainages. Sheet flow dominates across the width of the canyon bottom so there is no defined channel. The firebreak will not change the elevations or flow paths; thus, the potential for erosion, sediment transport, and flooding following completion of this project will remain the same. Rock check dams will be constructed within the approximate flow lines as precautionary erosion controls for vegetation loss in the firebreak. This project will not reduce the effectiveness of the natural floodplain processes. No effects to lives or property associated with floodplain disturbance are anticipated.

Long-term, positive effects to the floodplain are associated with protection of vegetation upstream of the project area. Implementation of the firebreak would reduce the potential for adverse flooding effects, erosion, sediment transport, and water quality degradation that could result from a catastrophic wildfire.

The negative, short-term effects to the floodplain will be from vehicle and heavy equipment access that will compact the soil and cause vegetation loss. Trees, shrubs, and additional

vegetation will be removed across the firebreak to accommodate the project. Negative, short-term effects from the project will be mitigated and minimized by the implementation of the following best management practices for work in floodplains during construction.

- Any disturbed areas outside of the firebreak will be revegetated or stabilized with an appropriate stabilization method. Approved stabilization methods include revegetation with native seed mix and planting within 30 days or at the beginning of the growing season after construction is complete.
- Hazardous materials, chemicals, fuels, and oils will not be stored within the floodplain.
- Work in a floodplain will not take place when the soil is too wet to adequately support equipment.
- Equipment will be refueled at least 100 ft (30 m) from any drainage, including dry arroyos.

Compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act restricts vegetation removal during the peak bird breeding season, May 15 through July 31, unless biological resources staff at LANL have conducted a nest check to ensure that there are no nesting birds present. If active nests are found, the nest tree or shrub will be left in place until the nesting is complete.

This project will not affect the natural floodplain processes. DOE NA-LA has determined that this project will not result in long-term adverse impacts to the beneficial values of the 100-year floodplain. No negative effects to lives and property associated with floodplain disturbance are anticipated.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on this proposed floodplain action contact Ms. Kristen Dors via email at Kristen.Dors@nnsa.doe.gov; fax (505) 667-5948; or mail to Ms. Kristen Dors, NNSA Los Alamos Site Office, 3747 West Jemez Road, Los Alamos, NM 87544.