



## NEPA Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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

**Project Title:** Applied Studies and Technology (AS&T) Soil Sampling for Analytical Studies, Lakeview, Oregon, Disposal Site

**Location:** Lakeview, Oregon, Disposal Site

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### Proposed Action or Project Description:

DOE LM is proposing to continue the disposal cell cover study work that was performed in fall 2017. The study evaluates soil-forming processes on cell cover engineering properties. During the 2017 work, an acceptable analog soil site (one that is located off of the cell and that has a clay layer similar to the clay layer in the disposal cell) could not be located within the area identified for the study. This follow-on action includes new study areas and would be focused on finding acceptable analog sites. Once located, researchers would characterize soil morphology and collect soil samples.

The proposed action would occur within two study areas. One study area is located entirely on DOE property; the other study area is located both on and offsite, with the adjacent offsite portion being located on privately owned property. During the study, several undisturbed areas would be selected within each study area and, a small-diameter test hole would be drilled to an approximate maximum depth of 6 feet below ground surface using a hand-held augur to screen for the presence of clay. The sampled locations with the most potential would be selected for further evaluation. These locations would then be hand excavated. If determined to be an acceptable analog site, a block-soil sample would be collected for offsite analysis, and the soil morphology would be characterized. The resultant excavation would be approximately 4 feet wide by 4 feet long by 4-feet deep. All excavating would be done under the supervision of an archeologist who would first conduct a survey of the ground surface at the selected locations to ensure that no potential cultural resources are present and then monitor during the excavation effort to ensure that such resources are avoided. Once a soil study is completed in an area, the removed material would be returned to the excavations and drill holes. Efforts would be taken throughout the project to minimize areas of ground disturbance. The use of mechanized equipment for excavating would not be allowed to comply with the natural-resources avoidance approach. Vehicles may be driven on all existing roads. Overland (off-road) travel is restricted to onsite locations. Refueling of equipment or vehicles in the field would not be performed.

Work is proposed for June 2018 and is expected to be completed in 3 to 5 days. The proposed field work would primarily be performed by LM Support (LMS) contractor's Applied Studies and Technology (AS&T) team members. The archeologist's services would be procured through a subcontract, and work would be performed with LMS contractor oversight. Scientists from the University of California at Berkeley and University of Wisconsin may also be onsite to participate and collaborate on the study. □

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### Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

- B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring
- B3.8 Outdoor terrestrial ecological and environmental research

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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.

U.S. Department of Energy  
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- 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.



Joyce E. Chavez  
2018.06.06 13:17:01 -06'00'

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NEPA Compliance Officer

Date Determined