

NEPA REVIEW SCREENING FORM 3A
Actions Likely to be Categorically Excluded

Document ID #:
DOE/CX-00180

I. Project Title:

Activity-Specific Categorical Exclusion for Installation of Artificial Burrows for Burrowing Owls on the Hanford Site

II. Describe the proposed action, including location, time period over which proposed action will occur, project dimension (e.g., acres displaced/disturbed, excavation length/depth), and area/location/number of buildings. Attach narratives, maps and drawings of proposed action if doing so will assist in DOE's evaluation. Describe existing environmental conditions and potential for environmental impacts from the proposed action. If the proposed action is not a project, describe the action or plan.

The Department of Energy (DOE), Richland Operations Office (RL), Site Stewardship Division (SSD) proposes to install new and replace existing artificial burrows for burrowing owls at selected locations on the Hanford Site. Existing artificial burrows are early designs and near their life expectancy. Modern designs would facilitate maintenance and provide longer life expectancies. Artificial burrows would serve to protect, restore, and improve wildlife habitat for burrowing owls in accordance with the "Hanford Site Biological Resources Management Plan" (BRMP, DOE/RL 96-32, Revision 2, Section 5.3.5).

The burrowing owl is a Washington State candidate species that is currently a BRMP Level 3 Resource experiencing regional decline. DOE's management goal is to conserve and sustain existing species and provide for overall enhancement of habitats.

During FY 2003, compensatory mitigation for construction of the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) at the Patrol Training Academy resulted in the installation of thirty-three (33) artificial burrows for burrowing owls at or near the EVOC. The Proposed Action would include the removal and replacement of damaged or inoperative artificial burrows within these previously disturbed areas.

The Proposed Action also includes construction of artificial burrows at twenty-four (24) new locations. The methods for installation would follow guidelines found in the Global Owl Project developed "Users Guide to Installation of Artificial Burrows for Burrowing Owls," Version 2.0, issued on January 8, 2013. New locations were determined in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The proposed project would include revegetation of disturbed areas with low growing bunchgrass or similar species planted in accordance with the "Hanford Site Revegetation Manual" (DOE/RL-2011-116, Revision 1).

The artificial burrows would undergo maintenance, monitoring, research, and repair; and would require access ports to be exposed by removing wind-blown sand, as needed (potentially multiple times a year). Areas around the openings of the artificial burrows would be maintained to keep the entrance vegetation-free and require occasional dirt moving and displacement to simulate a fresh mammal dig using spades, flat shovels, and rakes.

Monitoring of the artificial burrows would include setting drift fences and catch cans in the ground within the "Area of Potential Effects" (APE) to determine prey species in the area. Drift fences would be installed using solid aluminum or plastic fencing buried into the ground surface a few inches and held in place by stakes. Catch cans would be buried at the ends of the drift fence using 2.5-gallon buckets. Small mammal traps would be placed on the surface throughout the APE. Trapping of burrowing owls or other bird species in the APE would be performed during monitoring efforts using tunnel traps, mist nets, or other trapping devices.

Although no burrowing owls were found during preparation of DOE's "Environmental Assessment (EA) for Proposed Conveyance of Land at the Hanford Site, Washington" (DOE/EA-1915), DOE considered mitigation measures to better achieve an environmentally-preferable outcome. These mitigation measures included the following:

"Install burrowing owl boxes in a location to be determined in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, for the purposes of supporting new colonies or enhancing existing colony habitat on the Hanford Site."

LAND USE - The Proposed Action would occur in areas of the Hanford Site designated for "Preservation" and "Conservation (Mining)" land uses in the "Final Hanford Site Comprehensive Land Use Plan Environmental Impact Statement" (HCP-EIS, DOE/EIS-0222-F) and "Record of Decision" (ROD). These areas are reserved for management and protection of archaeological, cultural, ecological, and natural resources. The Proposed Action would be consistent with the land use map,

NEPA REVIEW SCREENING FORM 3A
Actions Likely to be Categorically Excluded (Continued)

Document ID #:
DOE/CX-00180

designations, policies, and procedures established in the HCP-EIS and serve to protect, restore, and improve the burrowing owl habitat and population on the Hanford Site.

ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES (ECR-2017-612, ECR-2018-635) - DOE Environmental Compliance performed a survey of project areas on March 8-9, 2017 and May 30, 2018. Habitat and wildlife observations were documented for the 33 existing artificial burrows at the EVOC and the 24 proposed new locations.

At the EVOC, the vegetation community is comprised of various native and non-native plant and animal species. DOE Environmental Compliance observed evidence of burrowing owls (tracks, feathers, pellets) at 11 of the 33 existing artificial burrows. Care would be exercised to avoid disturbing burrowing owls during the breeding season (February 27th through September 5th) and DOE Environmental Compliance would conduct a burrowing owl survey prior to initiation of work. Project management would instruct workers to park vehicles and equipment on existing paved or graveled roadways and walk into the artificial burrow sites.

Installation of the 24 new artificial burrows would involve clusters located along Highway 24, 100 B/C Area, 100 D/H Area, Halocek Farmstead, Pre-Hanford Orchards, Highway 240, and the 400 Area. These areas contain native and non-native plant and animal species, Townsend's ground squirrels, burrowing owls, and noxious weeds. Project management would instruct workers to avoid impacts to Big Sagebrush and Antelope Bitterbrush. Impacts to Townsend's ground squirrel colonies would be minimized by keeping excavations a minimum of 35-feet from burrow openings. Impacts to burrowing owl colonies would be minimized by restricting work activities within 330-feet of active burrows. The undercarriages of vehicles or equipment that travel off-road in noxious weed areas would be washed to remove seeds prior to moving to new locations.

No plant or animal species protected under the "Endangered Species Act," candidates for such protection, or species listed by Washington State as threatened or endangered were observed in the project area. Birds can nest within the project area on the ground, buildings, or equipment and the nesting season is typically from mid-March to mid-July. Project management would instruct workers to watch for nesting birds. If any nesting birds are encountered or suspected, or bird defensive behaviors are observed within the project area, then project management would contact DOE Environmental Compliance to evaluate the situation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES (HCRC-2017-600-007) - For the existing 33 artificial burrows at the EVOC, a Hanford Cultural Resources Review (HCRC-2001-600-030) was conducted on July 19, 2001 to address a proposed 190-acre expansion at the HAMMER Training Facility as analyzed in DOE/EA-1412, "Environmental Assessment for Expansion of the Volpentest Hazardous Materials Management and Emergency Response (HAMMER) Training and Education Center, Hanford Site, Washington." Several construction activities (including the EVOC) were proposed and the 33 artificial burrows were installed as a mitigation measure. The cultural resources review concluded that no historic properties would be adversely affected by the HAMMER expansion undertaking. On August 12, 2001, the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with this review.

For the 24 new artificial burrows, a cultural resources review of the Proposed Action was conducted by the DOE Cultural and Historic Resources Program. An "Area of Potential Effects" (APE) notification was sent to the SHPO and regional Tribes on December 8, 2016. A cultural resources survey was conducted on March 1 through March 7, 2017. The survey determined that portions of the APE overlap with the recorded boundary of three historic properties and one unevaluated archaeological site. No additional historic properties are present or are expected to exist within any portion of the APE. A Cultural Resources Review (CRR), with a "No Adverse Effects Finding," was prepared and submitted to the SHPO and Area Tribes for a 30-day comment period on June 27, 2017. The SHPO concurred with the finding of the CRR on August 2, 2017. DOE provided a notice of compliance with Section 106 of the "National Historic Preservation Act" (NHPA) for this project on August 10, 2017.

No cultural resources are expected; however, the potential exists to discover subsurface archaeological deposits. Archaeological monitoring would be performed for excavation activities inside the boundary of Historic Property 45BN922 (Samuel Fanning Farmstead). The DOE Cultural and Historic Resources Program would provide cultural resource awareness training for project personnel prior to initiation of work.

No impacts to cultural resources are anticipated; however, project management would direct workers

NEPA REVIEW SCREENING FORM 3A
Actions Likely to be Categorically Excluded (Continued)

Document ID #:
 DOE/CX-00180

to watch for cultural materials (e.g., bones, stone tools, mussel shell, cans, and bottles) during work activities. If any cultural materials are encountered, work in the vicinity of the discovery would stop until a DOE Cultural and Historic Program Archaeologist has been notified, the significance of the find assessed, appropriate Tribes notified, and if necessary, arrangements made for mitigation of the find.

CONCLUSION - The Proposed Action is addressed by 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, Categorical Exclusion B1.20, "Protection of Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Habitat" that makes provisions for small-scale activities undertaken to protect, restore, or improve wildlife habitat that would be conducted in accordance with an existing natural resources plan. Any changes to the Proposed Action would require DOE NEPA Compliance Officer approval.

III. Existing Evaluations (Attach them):

Ecological Review Report No. and Title:

ECR-2017-612, "Ecological and Cultural Clearance for Burrowing Owl Artificial Burrow Installation in the 600 Area, Hanford Site, Benton County, Washington"; ECR-2018-635, "Ecological Clearance for Removal and Replacement of Artificial Burrow Systems for Burrowing Owls at the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course."

Cultural Review Report No. and Title:

HCRC-2001-600-030, "Cultural Resources Review of HAMMER 190-Acre Expansion"; HCRC-2017-600-007, "Ecological and Cultural Clearance for Burrowing Owl Artificial Burrow Installation in the 600 Area, Hanford Site, Benton County, Washington."

Maps:

N/A

Other Attachments:

N/A

IV. Integral Elements and Extraordinary Circumstances

Yes No

Does the proposed action fall within one or more of the actions listed in Appendixes A or B to Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021 and is thus categorically excluded (CX)? List applicable CX(s):

B1.20, "Protection of Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Habitat"

Are there extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, such as those set forth in 10 CFR 1021.410(2)? If yes, describe them.

Is the proposal connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, or that could result in cumulatively significant impacts? If yes, describe them.

Would the proposed action threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements related to the environment, safety, health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders?

Would the proposed action require siting, construction, or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities?

Would the proposed action disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or natural gas products already in the environment such that there might be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases?

Would the proposed action have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources? See examples in Appendix B(4) to Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021.

Would the proposed action involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, such that the action is not contained or confined in a manner designed, operated, and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements to prevent unauthorized release into the environment?

If "No" to all questions above, complete Section V, and provide NRSF to DOE NCO for review.

If "Yes" to any of the questions above, contact DOE NCO for additional NEPA review.

NEPA REVIEW SCREENING FORM 3A
Actions Likely to be Categorically Excluded (Continued)

Document ID #:
DOE/CX-00180

V. Responsible Organization's Signatures:

Initiator:

Jerry W. Cammann, MSA NEPA-SME
Print First and Last Name

Jerry W. Cammann
Signature

8/2/2018
Date

Cognizant Program/Project Representative:

Annabelle L. Rodriguez, DOE-RL/SSD
Print First and Last Name

Annabelle L. Rodriguez
Signature

8/2/2018
Date

VI. DOE NEPA Compliance Officer Approval/Determination:

Based on my review of information conveyed to me concerning the proposed action, the proposed action fits within the specified CX(s): Yes No

Diori L. Kreske, DOE-NCO
Print First and Last Name

Diori Kreske
Signature

8/14/18
Date

NCO Comments: