

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



RECIPIENT: NREL

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE: Flatirons Campus Red Mountain Scientific Site Overview UAS Flights

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-AC36-08GO28308	NREL-19-031	GO28308

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

B3.2 Aviation activities	Aviation activities for survey, monitoring, or security purposes that comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.
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Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is proposing to use an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) to conduct photography and videography of the NREL Flatirons Campus (formally called the National Wind Technology Center) located in Jefferson County, Colorado. The activities are in support of NREL's communications office who would collect photographs and video footage of the site's buildings, wind turbines, environmental features, other installed equipment, and site layout for use in promotional brochures, reports, and briefings.

Flights are proposed to take place over a four-month period to capture images as specific needs are identified and during the change of seasons from early spring (starting May 31) to late summer. Multiple flights would be conducted as weather and UAS availability allows.

Flights would be piloted by Red Mountain Scientific (RMS), an authorized DOE Commercial Aviation Services provider. Flights would be conducted at or below the 400 foot allowable ceiling for UAS operations within the Class D airspace of Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport and in accordance with NREL policies, procedures, and safety requirements for conducting UAS missions on DOE facilities.

RMS would conduct the flights in compliance with their Small UAS Operating Policies and Procedures and with FAA Part 107 regulations. A risk assessment has been completed prior to flight activities; operational parameters, hazards, and controls are identified and set forth in an Aviation Safety Plan that was drafted in consultation with NREL Environment, Safety, and Health staff and the UAS Steering Committee. The Plan for this project has been reviewed and approved by the Golden Field Office's Aviation Manager and Office Director. Per the aviation manager, "the identified flight risks for the subject mission have been adequately identified and mitigated to moderate risk per the DOE Risk Assessment".

Flights would not occur inside the boundaries of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. In the event of accidental landing onto the refuge, DOE's Special Use Permit (61172-19-001) with the USFWS US Fish and Wildlife Service would allow for retrieval of the equipment.

Should flight conditions change or the documented mitigation factors are unable to be implemented the mission will need to be paused so a reevaluation of hazards can occur.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

NEPA review completed by Laura Margason on May 20, 2019.

FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) 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 proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposed action 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.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  **Electronically Signed By: Lori Gray** Date: 5/21/2019
NEPA Compliance Officer

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- Field Office Manager review not required
- Field Office Manager review required

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Field Office Manager