

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: United States Geological Survey

STATE: NV

PROJECT TITLE: Earth MRI Walker Lane Mapping

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	TBD	GFO-USGSGTO-IAA	

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:

A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.)

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

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) through an interagency agreement (IAA) to support airborne LIDAR, magnetic, and radiometric data acquisition in western Nevada and eastern California. The Area of Interest (AOI) covers approximately 56,000 sq. km. The airborne surveys would be used to map topography and geophysical signatures of exposed and concealed rocks for use in the identification of hidden geothermal resources and the development of associated exploration technologies.

The USGS would select qualified contractors to perform airborne data collection and processing via the USGS Geospatial Product and Service Contracts (GPSC). Three types of surveys would be flown over targeted areas within the AOI: high resolution geophysics, medium resolution geophysics, and LIDAR. DOE would provide partial funding in support of the LIDAR survey and fully fund the acquisition of geophysical data. Under this IAA DOI/USGS will provide to DOE/EERE evidence that documents the vendor has been verified by the DOI/USGS, other federal agency or auditing entity to have safe and compliant aviation operations. This will be provided prior to performance.

The proposed aerial surveys would take place over portions of Federally-owned land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Department of Defense. The USGS would notify regional BLM and military authorities of survey plans and obtain any required flight permissions or clearances prior to the commencement of data collection over Federal lands.

The AOI also includes Tribal lands. The USGS would notify all appropriate Tribal authorities and complete any necessary consultations prior to the commencement of data collection over the respective Tribal lands. Historically significant resources are likely to exist within the study area. While no ground-based field activities are planned as part of the proposed data acquisition effort, it is possible that the locations of previously unknown cultural resources could be identified from the collected data. If federally recognized tribes object in writing to data collection over federally recognized tribal lands within the project area, no DOE funding would be used for LIDAR surveys of those areas and DOE would not receive or use LIDAR data collected over those areas. No geophysical data would be acquired over those areas.

Survey flights would be conducted with small aircraft maintaining collection altitudes of approximately 120 m (magnetic and radiometric data) or 2500 m (LIDAR) above topography. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) database indicates 13 threatened or endangered (T&E) animal species and 30 migratory bird species possibly occurring in the project's AOI. However, surveys would be flown at sufficient altitude and with minimal repetition over any given area such that disturbance of sensitive species is not expected to occur as a result of the proposed data acquisition IAA.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

[Geothermal Technologies Office](#)

[This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA Provision.](#)

[NEPA review completed by Whitney Doss Donoghue, 6/18/2020](#)

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: _____



Casey Strickland

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 6/30/2020

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: _____

Field Office Manager

Date: _____