

**Floodplain Statement of Findings
for the West Road Post and Cable Fencing Project
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Los Alamos County, New Mexico**

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

ACTION: Floodplain Statement of Findings

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The NNSA, a semi-autonomous agency within the DOE, is proposing to install post and cable or in-kind barriers along West Road at selected locations near the Los Alamos County ice-skating rink in Los Alamos Canyon (Figure 1). The proposed project is intended to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety on West Road by reducing traffic hazards associated with unsafe roadside parking and reduce wildland fire hazards associated with vehicles driving and parking on vegetation. West Road crosses approximately 0.35 miles (mi.) (1,900 feet (ft.)) of the Los Alamos Canyon floodplain at the bottom of Los Alamos Canyon.

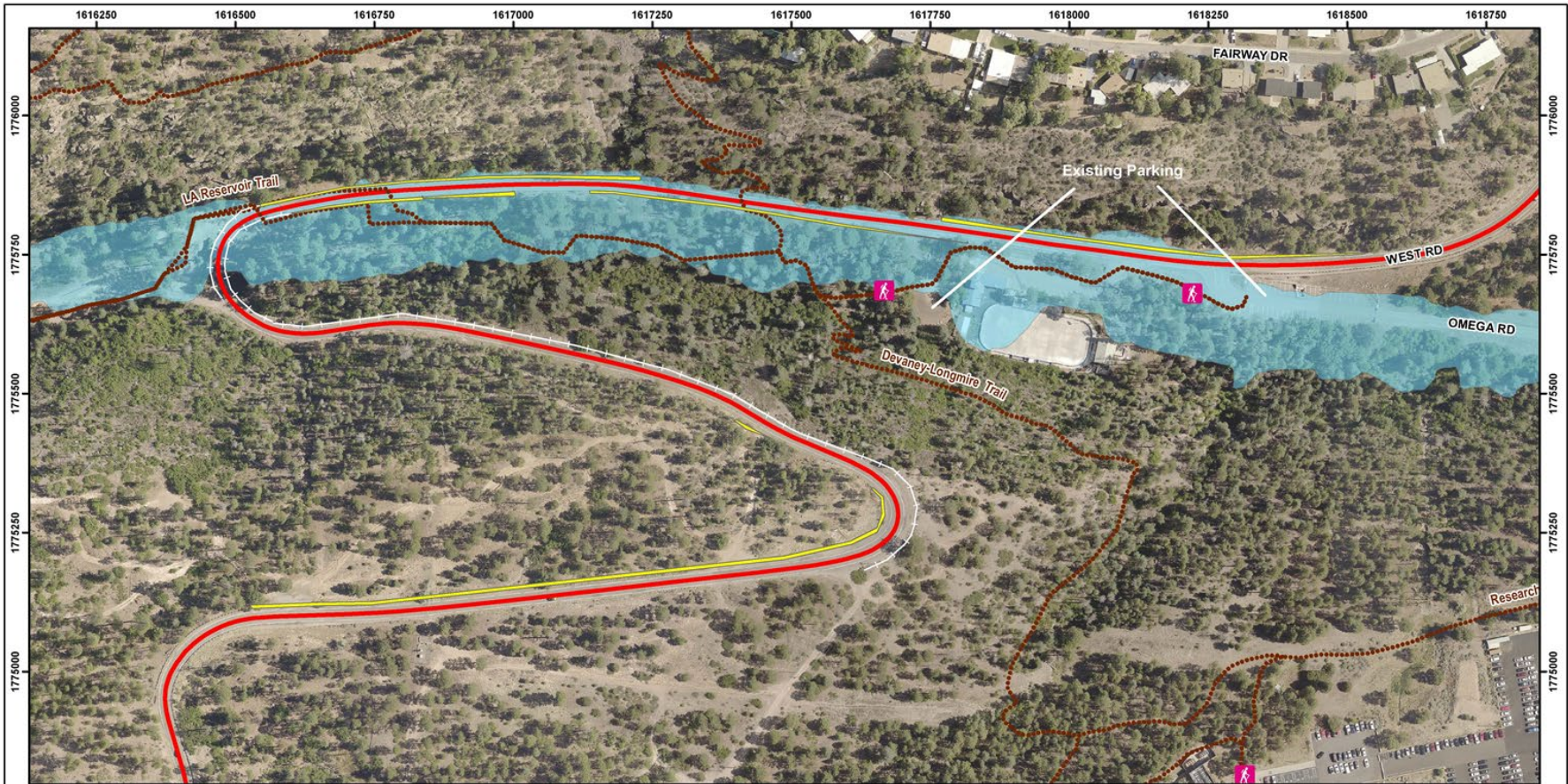
To better protect floodplain resources and control vehicle parking hazards, post and cable or other in-kind barriers would be installed on the road shoulders to block the informal parking. The current project identifies four areas in the floodplain; however, the floodplain assessment includes any additional informal parking barriers the project may need to install in the Los Alamos Canyon floodplain. The post and cable or other in-kind barriers would be installed on the north and south sides of West Road near the ice-skating rink. Post and cable or other in-kind barriers will also extend to the east from the guardrails at the hairpin road curve. The barriers would be installed using heavy equipment such as auger or mini-backhoe. Heavy equipment will remain on paved surfaces and established shoulders during installation. The installation activities are not proposed within the stream channel but instead in the upper riparian area of the floodplain.

Parking would be limited to the two existing parking locations (Figure 1), one on Los Alamos County (LAC) property and one on DOE property. The parking area located to the east of the ice-skating rink with approximately 50 paved parking spots is located on DOE property. The unpaved parking area on the west side of the ice-skating rink is located on LAC property along the Reservoir Trail and has space for approximately 10 vehicles.







LOCATION WITHIN A FLOODPLAIN EXPLANATION: Given that this portion of West Road is located within the Los Alamos Canyon 100-year floodplain, there are no practical alternatives that would avoid an action within the floodplain.

ALTERNATIVES: In addition to the Proposed Action, the alternatives available to DOE/NNSA include: (1) no action alternative, and (2) installing additional No Parking signs. These alternatives were not selected by DOE/NNSA because the potential for a traffic safety issue would persist if physical barriers were not installed and informal parking areas are not better controlled. In addition, the potential to start a forest fire close to an urban area from driving and parking on vegetation would not improve.

FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION STANDARDS: The Proposed Action will not result in a significant change, if any, to the floodplain values or functions. Short-term impacts will be avoided or minimized by adherence to permits and other requirements. Post construction, the floodplain would retain the same preconstruction floodplain values and functions as present prior to intersection modification. No impacts to human safety, health and welfare, or private property are anticipated as the natural and beneficial floodplain values will be preserved. The Proposed



Legend

-  Proposed kiosk
-  Guardrail
-  West Road Project Area
-  Trail
-  Proposed post and cable or other control
-  Los Alamos Canyon 100-yr Floodplain

Map #20-157-01, Floodplain Assessment
 Created by Ben Sutter, IFPROG Data Group
 January 19, 2022

This map was created for work processes associated with EPC. All other uses for this map should be confirmed with LANL EPC-CP staff.

State Plane Coordinate System
 New Mexico, Central Zone, US Feet
 NAD 1983 Datum



Action, with implementation of project mitigation measures, conforms to applicable floodplain protection standards.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL HARM TO OR WITHIN THE FLOODPLAIN:

Engineering and administrative controls to limit soil erosion, sediment loss, and spills and leaks will be in place during and after construction. Specific mitigations include the following:

- Hazardous materials, chemicals, fuels, and oils will not be stored within the floodplain.
- Since all road maintenance activities are adjacent to existing roads or parking areas, heavy equipment would not be used within the floodplain, especially if conditions are too wet to prevent damage to the soil structure.
- Equipment will be refueled at least 100 ft from the 100-year floodplain.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A Floodplain Statement of Findings was prepared in accordance with Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management* and DOE implementing regulations 10 Code of Federal Regulations 1022 *Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements* and provided a summary of the *Floodplain Assessment for the West Road Post and Cable Fencing Project at Los Alamos National Laboratory* (Floodplain Assessment) analysis and determination.

The notification for the availability of the Floodplain Assessment and request for comments was sent to appropriate government agencies, tribes, organizations, and persons known to be interested in or potentially affected by the proposed floodplain action via the GovDelivery system and published online on January 31, 2022, for a 15-day public review and comment period on the DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) website at

<https://www.energy.gov/nepa/articles/los-alamos-national-laboratory-floodplain-assessment-west-road-post-and-cable-fencing>. Two comments were received. One concern was that the project

would impact the parking capacity for the ice-skating rink. It was suggested to expand the current parking area on DOE property by moving the gate further down Los Alamos Canyon to increase the number of parking places. Any extension of parking further east into Los Alamos Canyon would have to be fully evaluated and has not been considered by NNSA. There are concerns for DOE – Environmental Management Consent Order (cleanup) sites right beyond the existing gate and the area is within buffer habitat for the Jemez Mountain salamander, an endangered species. The commentor should consider, working with LAC to address concerns about existing and potential future parking options in the DOE lot. The other concern was for bicycle safety. DOE does not anticipate the post and cable installation to increase any hazards for bicyclist. The post and cable will be installed at a minimum of three feet from the white shoulder stripe on the roadway. Additionally, the distance that is open between the post and cable and the roadway will allow bicycles an area to stop in if necessary.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information or questions regarding this Floodplain Statement of Findings 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 Field Office
3747 West Jemez Road
Los Alamos, NM 87544