



## NEPA Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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

**Project Title:**

Install aerial survey quality control monuments and perform aerial surveys at Gunnison, CO, Disposal Site

**Location:** Gunnison, CO, Disposal Site; UMTRCA Title I

**Proposed Action or Project Description:**

Install aerial survey QC monuments, as described in the attached ERF, at 4 proposed locations near the Gunnison Disposal Site's engineered disposal cell to provide reliable control points for repeatable aerial surveys. Because the proposed locations have not been field checked, alternate locations within the site footprint would be used if, for example, adverse soil conditions or access limitations are encountered. All of the monuments would be located off of the disposal cell. Proposed work would include ground surveying of the locations and the placement of survey pins at all locations. A skidsteer loader or back-hoe would be used to dig the holes to construct the monuments. Efforts would be made to minimize areas of land disturbance during monument construction. Installation of each monument would involve setting a rod in PVC casing to a point of refusal. Each monument would be set in a 3 x 3 foot concrete pad. Care would be taken to drive the construction equipment on site roads or existing tracks to the extent possible. Refueling of equipment may occur on-site according to a fueling plan. Performance of aerial remote sensing surveys would occur on an as-needed basis. No aviation activities would commence until required Flight Safety Plans are approved by a certified DOE Aviation Manager and permission is received from the LM site manager to proceed with aviation activities. The need to perform follow-on aerial surveys would depend, in part, upon the results of the baseline aerial survey. Follow-on aerial surveys would require new Flight Safety Plans approved by a certified DOE Aviation Manager and LM site manager. All proposed work would be conducted by the LMS contractor or a subcontractor under LMS supervision. The aerial surveys are expected to be conducted by unmanned aerial vehicles (also called drones); however, there is potential for a manned aircraft or helicopter to be used to conduct the surveys. If an aircraft or helicopter were to be used, the takeoff and landing would occur from a nearby airport. The extent of the aerial survey boundaries are provided on the attached ERF. On-going maintenance of the aerial survey QC monuments would be performed in out years, as needed.

The installation of permanent aerial survey quality control (QC) monuments would provide improved spatial accuracy when conducting remote sensing surveys (e.g., LiDAR, ortho-photogrammetry, thermal scanner, multispectral scanner) of the disposal site. Regular collection of aerial survey data is also expected to facilitate long-term management of the disposal cell. The field work for the aerial survey QC monuments is planned for October or September 2022, but the work could occur later in the year. Field work would take approximately three to four days to complete. □ The baseline aerial survey would occur in Fiscal Year 2023. □ No work, including site visits or aerial surveys, would occur between March 15 and July 15.

The proposed work would not affect threatened or endangered species or their designated critical habitat, so no consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife is necessary. The proposed work would also not affect cultural resources; a concurrence letter from the State Historic Preservation Officer was received. Activities proposed under this categorical exclusion would be valid for a period of five years from the date of signature for the activities performed within the scope and limitations described above.

**Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:**

- B3.1 - Site characterization and environmental monitoring, and
- B3.2 - Aviation activities

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



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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.
- 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.

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**NEPA Compliance Officer Signature and  
Determination Date**

**JOYCE CHAVEZ** Digitally signed by JOYCE CHAVEZ  
Date: 2022.09.27 10:46:48 -06'00'

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