Floodplain Statement of Findings
for the
Technical Area 72 Expedited Vehicle Inspection Lane 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 National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), is proposing new construction in lower Sandia Canyon at Technical Area (TA) 72 at the Guard Post 10 vehicle inspection station at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The proposed project is intended to provide expedited inspection times for vehicles transporting time sensitive loads, such as concrete and asphalt. The project activities within the 100-year floodplain include: 1) installation of an expedited vehicle inspection lane, 2) relocation of a 4-strand wire fence, 3) possible relocation of at least one power pole, and 4) a laydown area (Figures 1 and 2).

An additional vehicle inspection lane is proposed on the west side of the existing TA-72 Guard Post 10 for expedited vehicle inspections. Approximately 500 ft. of vehicle lane in a loop would be constructed of a base course subsurface and an asphalt milling surface 22 ft. wide with a 4 ft. shoulder on both sides of the lane. An additional approximately 200 ft. long section would interface with East Jemez Road and provide a turning lane for large vehicles. The proposed expedited vehicle inspection lane area would be cleared and grubbed with heavy equipment. Base course and asphalt millings would be placed with a belly dump truck and front-end loader and compacted with a roller. Rock riprap would be installed along the west lane shoulder to prevent erosion from possible flooding. Vegetation and soil disturbance in the area interior to the loop would be minimized to the extent possible to maintain the vegetation and avoid soil compaction.

An existing 4-strand wire fence runs along East Jemez Rd and around to the north of the existing TA-72 Guard Post 10. A section of approximately 540 ft. of existing fence would be removed and relocated approximately 135 ft. north to the perimeter of the proposed expedited vehicle inspection lane (Figure 2). The fence would be installed either with a hand-held post driver or with a mechanical post driver mounted on a rubber tire vehicle. The 4-strand wire would be re-strung using hand tools.

An overhead electrical utility line running west to east is located on the north edge of the proposed project area. The proposed relocation for several power poles is to the east of the Sandia Canyon floodplain and no floodplain impacts are expected from this activity. However, one power pole is located very close to the northwest corner of the proposed vehicle inspection lane. The Project may need to move this pole approximately 10-20 ft. to the north. The pole would be removed and relocated using a rubber wheeled digger derrick truck with an auger attachment.

The proposed laydown area is a previously disturbed area on the south side of East Jemez Road south of the TA-72 Firing Range. The area is frequently used as an unofficial vehicle pull-out and consists of compacted soil and base course. The laydown area would support the construction of the expedited vehicle inspection lane by providing staging for heavy equipment such as dump trucks, loaders and graders. The area may also be used for staging materials such as asphalt millings. The project expects to keep all activities within the existing disturbed area.

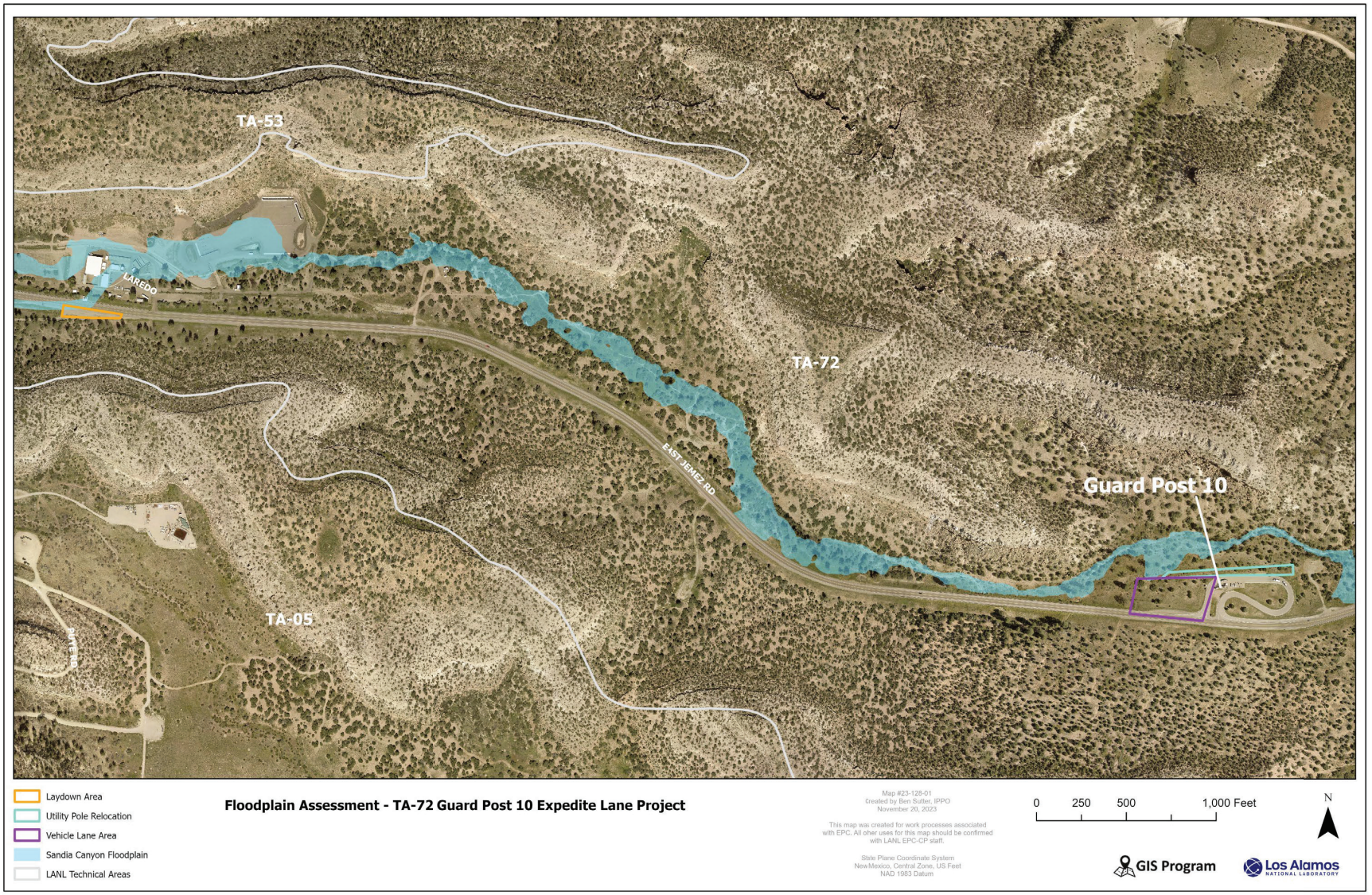

Figure 1. Proposed Expedited Vehicle Inspection Lane Project in Relation to the Sandia Canyon 100-year Floodplain.

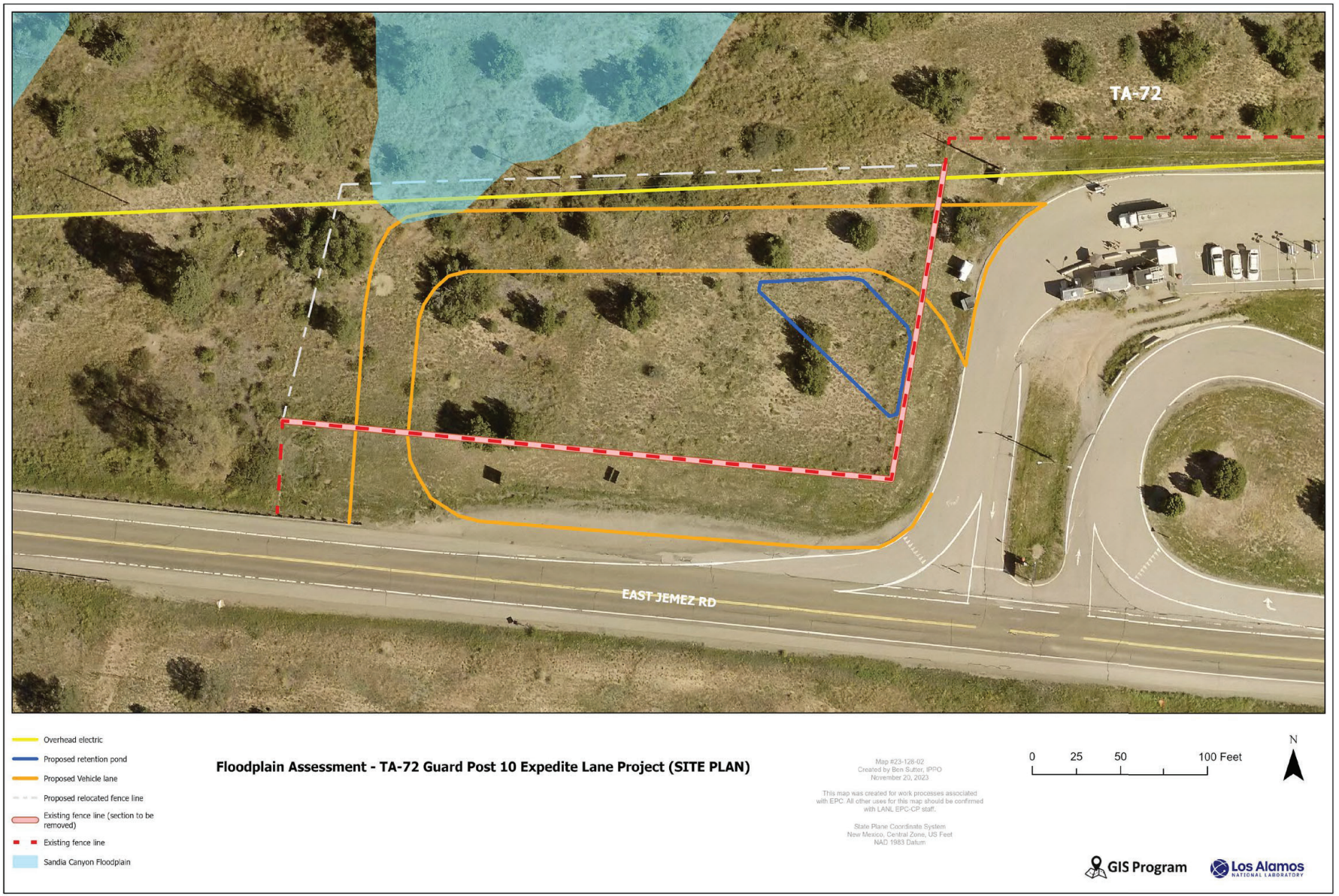

Figure 2. Location of Proposed Expedited Vehicle Inspection Lane Elements

A retention pond would be constructed in the northeast corner inside the vehicle lane area. The pond would be sized to capture stormwater runoff from the crown of the lane to the inside shoulder and vegetated area inside the lane. An excavator would be used for excavating and grading the pond.

LOCATION WITHIN A FLOODPLAIN EXPLANATION: The existing Guard Post 10 vehicle inspection station is bounded by the floodplain to the west, north, and east and bound by East Jemez Road to the south. There are no practical alternatives that would avoid an action within the floodplain.

ALTERNATIVES: The alternatives available to DOE/NNSA include the no action alternative. The no action alternative was not selected by DOE/NNSA because time sensitive loads, such as concrete and asphalt, are expiring while waiting for vehicle inspections and the material becomes waste. The loss and waste of material impacts overall programmatic costs and schedules.

The alternative of converting an existing vehicle inspection lane at the TA-03 Vehicle Access Portal (VAP) at the intersection of East Jemez Road and Diamond Drive for expedited inspections was not selected. This alternative is not feasible because resources for Security Officers and canines are limited and are currently dedicated to the current vehicle inspection location at TA-72 Post 10. Vehicles attempting to reach the TA-3 VAP would also experience delays during heavy traffic times.

FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION STANDARDS: The proposed project would result in limited and minor direct and indirect impacts to the Sandia Canyon 100-year floodplain and would not result in adverse impacts to the floodplain values or functions. Temporary disturbance within the floodplain would cease following completion of installation activities. Best management practices would be implemented. This proposed project would not significantly modify flow paths within the floodplain from pre-project conditions to post project conditions. No effects to lives and property associated with floodplain modifications are anticipated.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL HARM TO OR WITHIN THE FLOODPLAIN: Potential short-term direct and indirect floodplain impacts from release of pollutants to the floodplain and exposure to stormwater would be avoided or minimized through implementation of the following best management practices:

- Hazardous materials, chemicals, fuels, and oils would not be stored within the floodplain.
- Heavy equipment would not be used within the stream channel, especially if conditions are too wet to prevent damage to the soil structure.
- Equipment would be refueled at least 100 ft. from the Sandia Canyon floodplain.

The following requirements were identified and reviewed to avoid potential impacts.:

- The total project is over one acre; therefore, would require National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit coverage. This permit requires controls to limit soil erosion, sediment loss, and spills and leaks during and after construction. Controls would include temporary perimeter controls to reduce sediment transport during construction, final stabilization to control erosion after construction activities are completed, and pollution prevention measures such as housekeeping and spill prevention. Any required vegetation stabilization will be completed in accordance with the LANL Seeding Specification (LANL 2021).
- The project will require compliance with the Energy Independence and Security Act, Section 438, which requires Federal facility development or redevelopment projects to maintain or restore, to the maximum extent technically feasible, the predevelopment

hydrology of the site including using design and construction strategies for stormwater runoff. Proposed activities will result in an increase in impervious surfaces. However, the engineering design minimizes clearing/grubbing activities to minimize soil compaction and requires stabilization and revegetation using LANL approved best management practices. The engineer design also specifies installation of a pond to retain additional stormwater runoff generated from the expedited vehicle inspection lane.

- There will be no soil-disturbing activities in the watercourse; therefore, this project will not require Clean Water Act Section 404 permit coverage or 401 certification.
- Based on LANL surveys and procedures, no historical or archeological sites are located in the areas of proposed disturbance. No impacts are expected to occur to cultural resources; however, the project must follow the proper procedure for inadvertent discoveries.
- The proposed project is not located in threatened or endangered species habitat; therefore, no impacts will occur to current listed species in the Los Alamos County area.
- The proposed project will involve minimal disturbance of the Sandia Canyon Area of Concern1 (AOC) C-00-007 and Solid Waste Management Unit2 (SWMU) 20-001(a). Any disturbed soil from the AOC or SWMU would be stabilized and managed on site. The project is required to take precautions to avoid inadvertently transporting potentially contaminated soil from the sites. If any soil is removed from the AOC or SWMU, it must be disposed of in accordance with the LANL Waste Management Procedure P409 (LANL 2022).

No long-term impacts to the floodplain are anticipated as a result of this project. Flow paths within the floodplain would not be significantly modified from pre-project conditions to post project conditions. The part of the expedited vehicle inspection lane within the floodplain will be monitored after high flow events in case debris becomes entrapped on structures. In the event this occurs, maintenance activities will be scheduled in addition to upstream culvert inspection and maintenance.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A Floodplain Statement of Findings was prepared in accordance with Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management* and DOE implementing current regulations 10 Code of Federal Regulations 1022 *Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements* and provided a summary of the *Los Alamos National Laboratory Floodplain Assessment for Technical Area 72 Expedited Vehicle Inspection Lane Project* (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 4, 2024, 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/technical-area-72-expedited-vehicle-inspection-lane-project-floodplain-assessment. No comments were received.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS STATEMENT OF FINDINGS 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