



Department of Energy

Golden Field Office
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Golden, Colorado 80401-3393

DOE/EA 1656

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE MISSOURI ALTERNATIVE RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY (MARET) CENTER AT CROWDER COLLEGE NEOSHO, MISSOURI

AGENCY: Department of Energy, Golden Field Office

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), through its Golden Field Office, has provided Congressionally Directed federal funding and will authorize the expenditure of funds to Crowder College in support of the design and construction of the Missouri Alternative & Renewable Energy Technology (MARET) Center (Project). Granting of financial assistance for this Project constitutes a major federal action as defined by National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). DOE has considered the possible environmental impacts from the Project before committing to authorize the expenditure of funds.

In accordance with DOE NEPA implementing regulations, DOE prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzed the potential impacts associated with the construction of the MARET Center. The Final EA includes all discussions, analyses and findings related to the potential impacts of the Project. The Final EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

This Finding of No Significant Impact was prepared in accordance with NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, as amended, 40 CFR 1500 to 1508, and DOE NEPA regulations 10 CFR 1021.322.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: In compliance with NEPA and the DOE NEPA implementing regulations, the EA examined the potential environmental impacts of DOE's decision to authorize expenditure of federal funding by Crowder College and also examined a No-Action Alternative. Under the No-Action Alternative, DOE would not fund the Project and the MARET Center would not be constructed with federal funds.

Stage I of the MARET Center will involve the construction of a new Crowder College facility, approximately 9,000-square feet in size, that will include space for the school's

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construction technology program; an incubation center for new businesses; renewable-energy laboratories or workshops; and faculty office space. Stage I construction for the Project will also include the installation of roof mounted solar technology, a geothermal/radiant system for heating and cooling, a 35 space parking lot and numerous pedestrian paths. Although, only planning and design for Stage II will be funded by DOE under the Proposed Action, it is analyzed in this EA as a connected action under NEPA. Stage II will include the addition of a 21,000-square foot conference center attached to the MARET Center facilities constructed during Stage I.

The resource areas evaluated in the EA include: Land Use, Geology and Soils, Water Resources, Wetlands, Biological Resources, Air Quality, Noise, Hazardous Materials and Waste Management, Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, Human Health and Safety, Aesthetics, Cultural Resources, Infrastructure, and Traffic and Transportation (see Chapter 3, Existing Conditions and Environmental Consequences). After conducting the analysis for the Project, DOE has concluded that the design and construction of the MARET Center would have no significant direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on human and natural environment.

The Missouri SHPO was contacted for consultation per requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The SHPO concurred with DOE's finding of no adverse affect to cultural resources (see Section 3.13 of the Final EA).

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) were consulted, consistent with requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), to aid in determining potential effects to wildlife. The MDC and USFWS indicated that the site is within the recharge area of the Ozark Cave Fish (*Amblyopsis rosae*) (see Section 3.5 of the Final EA).

As requested by USFWS, a Biological Assessment letter was completed by DOE that included the addition of three applicant committed measures that will further reduce potential impacts to the Ozark Cavefish. The measures that will be implemented by Crowder College and their contractors for the Project include: drilling test wells prior to the installation of geothermal wells to fully characterize the conditions below the project site to determine whether karst features or large voids exist beneath the surface at the site; using sleeves during the drilling/grouting process and in areas where karst topography and voids exist (as determined by the preliminary test wells), the sleeves will be left in place to prevent any grout from entering voids that have the potential to serve as habitat for the Ozark Cavefish; providing drillers with specifications on the amount of grout necessary for each well and if that thresholds are exceeded, grouting would stop immediately minimizing the risk of grout entering voids that have the potential to serve as habitat for the Ozark Cavefish; and implementing Standard Operating Procedures and safeguards to control groundwater pollution per Missouri Department of Conservation recommendations (Cave, 2009).

The USFWS concurred with DOE's findings and consultation is complete. The comment letters are included in Appendix B and responses to comments are included in Appendix E of the Final EA. All comments have been addressed in the EA.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) identified the Pools Prairie Superfund Site and the Former Fort Crowder Chemical Warfare Material Site as potential sources of site contamination (MDNR, 2010). The Pools Prairie Superfund Site is an EPA lead site (MDNR, 2009b) and is one mile from the MARET Center site. The Former Fort Crowder Chemical Warfare Material Site is approximately 1,000 feet south away from the site. Although construction of the MARET Center could disturb hazardous materials if located on the Project site, the potential appears to be slight based on information provided by MDNR. If hazardous materials are disturbed or found at the Project site, applicant committed measures will be implemented by Crowder College to further reduce any impact associated with the potential contaminants (see Section 2.4 of the Final EA). These measures include materials handling protocols, reporting, permitting, grouting, site education awareness, asbestos handling, petroleum monitoring, worker safety and health, Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance, and best management practices.

The location and layout of the MARET Center and its supporting infrastructure will not encroach on any wetlands, surface waters or their existing buffers. As no 100- or 500-year floodplains were identified at the project site, construction would not occur within any designated floodplains, and therefore, would have no impact on upstream floodplain elevations or downstream flood conveyance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE EA PROCESS: In accordance with applicable regulations and policies, DOE sent scoping notices to potentially interested Federal, state, and local agencies, tribal representatives, businesses, and individuals, and published the notice in the local newspaper. The scoping letters described the Proposed Action and requested assistance in identifying potential issues that could be evaluated in the EA. In response to the scoping notice, DOE received comments from the MDC, the MDNR, and the Missouri SHPO. The SHPO concurred with DOE's finding of no adverse affect to cultural resources (see Section 3.13 of the Final EA) and consultation under Section 106 is complete.

DOE sent notices announcing the availability of the Draft EA for public comment to the same agencies, representatives, businesses, and individuals as received the scoping notice. The Draft EA was also made available for public review and comment on the DOE Golden Field Office reading room website. Comments on the Draft EA were received from MDNR and the USFWS. MDNR provided comments on their concerns pertaining to hazardous waste, air quality, solid waste management, and geology. The USFWS provided comments on potential impacts to the Ozark Cavefish. All comments were addressed to the approval of all agencies for the Project (see Appendix E of the EA).

DETERMINATION: Based on the information presented in the Final EA (DOE/EA 1656), DOE determines that authorizing the expenditure of federal funding in order to support the construction of the MARET Center will not constitute a major Federal Action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, as defined by NEPA. The preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required and DOE is issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact.

The applicant's commitment to obtain and comply with all federal, state and local permits required for construction and operation of the MARET Center, and to minimize potential impacts through the implementation of the applicant-committed environmental protection measures identified in the Final EA, shall be incorporated and enforceable through DOE's financial assistance agreement. Applicant committed measures and necessary permits can be found in Section 2.4 of the EA.

Copies of the Final EA are available at the DOE Golden Field Office Public Reading Room website at:

http://www.eere.energy.gov/golden/Reading_Room.aspx, or from:

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