

NEPA REVIEW SCREENING FORM (NRSF) Categorically Excluded Actions	Document ID #: HFO/CX-00249, R0
I. Project Title: Third Two-Year Extension of U.S. Department of Energy, Hanford Field Office, Permit Issued to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, for use of Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve	
II. Describe the proposed action, including location, time period over which proposed action will occur, project dimension (e.g., acres displaced/disturbed, excavation length/depth), and area/location/number of buildings. Attach narratives, maps and drawings of proposed action. Describe existing environmental conditions and potential for environmental impacts from the proposed action. If the proposed action is not a project, describe the action or plan. BACKGROUND The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Hanford Field Office (HFO), acting as the federal agency with jurisdiction over the Hanford Site, has issued two permits to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), for use of land comprising portions of the Hanford Reach National Monument (the Monument). Specifically, the June 20, 1997, Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve Permit (ALE Permit) to manage the 77,000 acre ALE Reserve and the November 22, 1971, Wahluke Slope Permit for management and recreational use of the 57,000 acre former Wahluke Wildlife and Recreational Area, which is now part of the Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. The original ALE Permit had a twenty-five (25) year term and would have expired on June 20, 2022. However, per DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Procedures [Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 1021, Appendix B], DOE approved the first two year extension of the ALE Permit from June 20, 2022, to June 20, 2024, under a DOE Hanford NEPA Review Screening Form (NRSF) categorical exclusion (CX) determination DOE/CX-00217 (Revision 1). A second two year extension from June 20, 2024, to June 20, 2026, was approved under a DOE Hanford NRSF CX determination DOE/CX-00217 (Revision 2) on March 20, 2024. While the Wahluke Slope Permit contains a termination clause, it does not have a termination date and remains in effect until such time it is canceled by written agreement between the USFWS Regional Director and the DOE-HFO Manager. DOE-HFO proposes a third two-year extension of the ALE Permit from June 20, 2026, to June 20, 2028. No actions related to the Wahluke Slope Permit are proposed at this time. The third two-year extension of the ALE Permit, the subject of this DOE Hanford NRSF CX determination HFO/CX-00249 (Revision 0), would allow DOE-HFO and USFWS to continue developing and considering options for a long-term permit. DOE-HFO retains administrative jurisdiction of the ALE Reserve, grants USFWS access, and assigns USFWS as manager of the land (see attached map) in accordance with the terms, conditions, and other stipulations in the land use permit and related memorandum of understanding (MOU) executed between DOE-HFO and USFWS regarding management of land on the Hanford Site. The current MOU was signed on May 06, 2019, and replaced the June 14, 2001, and August 08, 2014, agreements addressing operation of the ALE Reserve including management of the land consistent with Presidential Proclamation 7319 establishing the Monument. In accordance with DOE letter 24-OCC-0018, the MOU is in effect indefinitely and is hereby incorporated by reference into this DOE Hanford NRSF CX determination HFO/CX-00249 (Revision 0). DOE-HFO and USFWS have authority to enter into agreements pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 7319. USFWS also has authority to enter into agreements pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. DOE-HFO also has authority to enter into agreements pursuant to the Department of Energy Organization Act, the Atomic Energy Act, and the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015. DOE-HFO and USFWS are committed to working together for the long-term protection and preservation of the Monument and its many resources. This includes managing the land pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 7319 and consistent with applicable Hanford Site land use planning documents and governing regulatory requirements. The federal agencies achieve this mutual commitment through collaboration, consultation, established roles and responsibilities, sharing technical expertise, and updating existing or developing new permits, MOUs, or other agreements, when necessary. HANFORD REACH NATIONAL MONUMENT The Monument was created from lands originally established to provide a safeguards and security buffer around operational areas at the Hanford Site and more recently to also support the DOE-HFO mission to remediate and manage waste treatment, storage, and disposal sites in a safe, secure,	

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and regulatory compliant manner. This buffer area has remained largely undeveloped but has been disturbed by wildfires. It is this remnant of the unique and biologically diverse shrub-steppe ecosystem that once covered the interior Columbia Basin that led to the signing of Presidential Proclamation 7319 on June 09, 2000, establishing the 195,000 acre Monument. The Monument is managed by DOE-HFO and the USFWS as defined under existing agreements. The Monument is superimposed over the outskirts of the 371,200 acre (580 square miles) Hanford Site. USFWS manages roughly 165,000 acres of the Monument as an overlay national wildlife refuge through permits, MOUs, and other agreements with DOE-HFO. DOE-HFO directly manages approximately 29,000 acres of the Monument, while the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) manages the remaining approximately 1,000 acres under a DOE-HFO permit. Under the auspices of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, USFWS issued their Hanford Reach National Monument Comprehensive Conservation Plan and NEPA Environmental Impact Statement (CCP-EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) in August 2008. The CCP-EIS and ROD provide guidance for USFWS management of the Monument and are used in conjunction with permits, MOUs, and other agreements with DOE-HFO. DOE-HFO manages its portion of the Monument and other areas of the Hanford Site not within the Monument consistent with existing regulatory agreements and environmental documents governing management and remediation of the DOE Hanford Site (i.e., Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order, commonly referred to as the Tri-Party Agreement), Final DOE Hanford Comprehensive Land-Use Plan NEPA EIS (HCP-EIS) and ROD (DOE/EIS-0222F), and Presidential Proclamation 7319. The HCP-EIS and ROD establish a map, designations, policies, and procedures for land use on the Hanford Site, which are implemented through various Resource Management Plans and Area Management Plans, as amended [e.g., DOE/RL-96-32, Hanford Site Biological Resources Management Plan (BRMP) and DOE/RL-98-10, Hanford Cultural and Historic Resources Management Plan (CHRMP)]. CULTURAL RESOURCES The Monument is one of few remaining archaeologically rich areas in the western Columbia Plateau with remnants of human history spanning more than 10,000 years. This largely arid environment contains extensive and well preserved artifacts of cultural and historic significance to the region. Areas upland from the Columbia River show evidence of concentrated human activity, and recent surveys indicate extensive use of arid lowlands for hunting. Hundreds of prehistoric archaeological sites have been recorded, including the remains of pit houses, graves, spirit quest monuments, hunting camps, game drive complexes, quarries, and hunting and kill sites. A number of area Native American tribes have cultural ties to the Monument. The Monument also contains historic structures and other remains from more recent human activities. Rattlesnake Mountain has been determined by DOE-HFO to be a historic property of cultural and religious significance to area Native American tribes, and a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Recognition of Rattlesnake Mountain as a TCP reflects its sacred status to area Native American tribes. The proposed third two-year extension of the ALE Permit would not change existing USFWS responsibilities to provide public access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain as directed by Section 3081 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015, which was signed on December 19, 2014. Such access was directed for educational, recreational, historical, scientific, cultural, and other purposes including motor vehicle, pedestrian, and other non-motorized access. Additionally, Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) or Programmatic Agreements (PAs) between DOE-HFO, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and area Native American tribes to resolve adverse effects resulting from undertakings on Rattlesnake Mountain should not be affected by extension of the ALE Permit. Furthermore, the MOU regarding protection of and tribal access to the DOE-managed portion of Rattlesnake Mountain, signed on December 01, 2023, by the Secretary of Energy and Secretary of the Interior, would not be affected by extension of the ALE Permit. Historic military installations are scattered mostly in the central portion of the DOE Hanford Site but also include several anti-aircraft artillery sites within the Monument, three Nike (Greek goddess of victory) missile sites on Wahluke Slope, and one Nike missile site at the base of Rattlesnake Mountain on the ALE Reserve. The anti-aircraft artillery sites and Nike missile sites provided defense of the Hanford Site's plutonium production facilities during the 1950's and early 1960's. The Nike missile site on the ALE Reserve has been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (authorized under the NHPA) as a contributing property within the Hanford Site Manhattan Project and Cold War Era Historic District. Potential archaeological	

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resources at these sites include former gun emplacements, launch and radar sites, concrete foundations and pads, pathways and sidewalks, debris scatters, small arms firing ranges, and ammunition caches. Parts of the western slope of Rattlesnake Mountain are privately owned ranch land, while the eastern slope is under federal ownership as part of the ALE Reserve. No adverse effects to historic resources or cultural resources would be anticipated as a result of extending the ALE Permit. Resources would continue to be protected and preserved in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and implementing regulations including the Presidential Proclamation establishing the Monument. Furthermore, potential effects would be mitigated in accordance with applicable USFWS and DOE-HFO NEPA reviews including, but not limited to, the CCP-EIS/ROD, HCP-EIS/ROD, and implementing resource management plans. Finally, effects to resources would be mitigated in accordance with the terms, conditions, and other stipulations of the ALE Permit, MOU, and other agreements between DOE-HFO and the USFWS. This includes MOAs and PAs between DOE-HFO, SHPO, and area Native American tribes to resolve adverse effects resulting from undertakings on the ALE Reserve. ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES The ALE Reserve was recognized as a valuable area for plant conservation and scientific study in 1967 due to the rich and relatively undisturbed nature of its native shrub-steppe ecosystem. As a result of this recognition, the ALE Reserve was designated a Federal Research Natural Area in 1971, which is a land designation establishing areas with predominantly natural conditions and processes for research and educational purposes. Major wildfires in 2000 and 2007 impacted vast areas of the ALE Reserve that contained one of the largest remaining undisturbed shrub-steppe vegetation communities in Washington State. As a result of these wildfires and historic grazing practices, many areas of sagebrush have been replaced by extensive areas of cheatgrass and other invasive plant species. Rattlesnake Mountain is reputedly the highest "treeless" mountain in the continental United States. Ecological conditions on the ALE Reserve improve with increasing elevation and more northerly aspects on Rattlesnake Mountain. The ALE Reserve has the largest expanses of loamy soils and north-facing aspects in the Monument. Plant communities above 900 feet in elevation support the largest contiguous expanses of shrub-steppe in the Monument and the single largest element occurrence (i.e., needed component of an ecosystem of natural areas) of bluebunch wheatgrass grassland in the Columbia Basin. Two major spring systems, Snively and Rattlesnake, cross the western half of the ALE Reserve. These relatively lush, isolated aquatic and riparian areas contrast greatly with the surrounding dry shrub-steppe vegetation. Three abandoned fields located in the Snively Basin still contain large areas of grass, which are dominated by black rye planted by landowners in the early 1940's. The crest of Rattlesnake Mountain supports high quality, low growing lithosol communities on the shallow rocky soil and scattered areas of sagebrush including three-tip sagebrush. The most ecologically important element occurrences in the ALE Reserve are the big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass and three-tip sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass or Idaho fescue plant communities that cover nearly 40,000 contiguous acres on Rattlesnake Mountain. Other element occurrences that add to the diversity and uniqueness of the site include more than 1,000 acres of winterfat/Sandberg's bluegrass on the lower slopes of Rattlesnake Mountain, the big sagebrush/Sandberg's bluegrass occurrences on the flats in the Dry and Cold Creek Valleys, the willow riparian complex associated with the springs and creeks, a degraded but uncommon example of black greasewood/alkali saltgrass, and a small occurrence of bitterbrush/dune complex at lower elevations. Other parts of the ALE Reserve that contain significant areas of big sagebrush are those along State Highway 240. No adverse effects on ecological resources are anticipated as a result of extending the ALE Permit. Ecological resources would continue to be protected and preserved in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and implementing regulations including the Presidential Proclamation establishing the Monument. Furthermore, ecological resource effects would be mitigated in accordance with applicable USFWS and DOE-HFO NEPA reviews including, but not limited to, the CCP-EIS/ROD, HCP-EIS/ROD, and implementing resource management plans such as the Hanford Site BRMP, as amended. Finally, impacts to ecological resource would be mitigated in accordance with the terms, conditions, and other stipulations of the ALE Permit, MOU, or other agreements between DOE-HFO and the USFWS.	

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CONCLUSIONS The DOE-HFO proposed action for a third two-year extension of the ALE Permit has NEPA coverage under DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures at 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, Categorical Exclusion (CX) B1.25, Real Property Transfers for Cultural Resources Protection, Habitat Preservation, and Wildlife Management. This CX provides for the transfer, lease, disposition, or acquisition of interests in land and associated buildings for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, or fish and wildlife management, provided that there would be no potential for release of substances at a level, or in a form that could pose a threat to public health or the environment. The DOE-HFO proposed action meets the requirements and conditions that are integral elements for categorical exclusion under DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, Paragraph B) without extraordinary circumstances where a normally excluded action would have significant effects. The proposed action would not have an individually or cumulatively significant impact on the human environment, fits the class of actions described in CX B1.25, has not been segmented into small projects to avoid significance of the total action, and is not connected to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. The proposed action would not violate applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements and would not involve siting, construction or expansion of treatment, storage, or disposal facilities. Additionally, the proposed action would not disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or preexisting Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) - excluded petroleum or natural gas products such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases. Furthermore, the proposed action would not have significant adverse impacts on natural resources (i.e., air, water, etc.), cultural/historic resources, ecological resources, or specially designated areas. The proposed action would have beneficial effects by continuing to protect and preserve natural, cultural/historic, and ecological resources on the ALE Reserve and serve to implement the provisions of the Presidential Proclamation establishing the Monument. Finally, the proposed action would not result in the unauthorized or uncontrolled release of genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, noxious weeds, or invasive species because they would be contained or confined in a manner prescribed by applicable requirements and using best management practices, as necessary. Any changes in the proposed action as described herein may require further review and approval as determined by the DOE-HFO NEPA Compliance Officer.	
III. Existing Evaluations (Provide with NRSF to DOE NCO):	
Maps: Attachment - August 2017 DOE-RL and USFWS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Map	
Other Attachments: N/A	
IV. List Applicable CX(s) from 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, "Categorical Exclusions Applicable to Specific Agency Actions" or Appendix C, "Categorical Exclusions Adopted Pursuant to NEPA Section 109": B1.25, "Real Property Transfers for Cultural Resources Protection, Habitat Preservation, and Wildlife Management"	

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V. Extraordinary Circumstances [10 CFR 1021.102(b)(2)] and Integral Elements (10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, Paragraph B).		Yes	No
REQUIREMENTS			
Would the proposed action fail to fit one or more classes of actions listed in 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B and/or C (see Section IV)? If yes, please describe.	☐	☒	
Has the proposed action been segmented by breaking it into smaller parts to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion and avoid the appearance of significance of the total action? Segmentation does not include proposals developed and implemented over multiple phases where each phase results in a decision to proceed with subsequent phases.	☐	☒	
Are there extraordinary circumstances that may affect the environmental impacts of the proposed action such that a normally excluded action would have a reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effect? The proposed action may be modified to avoid reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effects such that a categorical exclusion would apply. If yes, please describe.	☐	☒	
INTEGRAL ELEMENTS			
Would the proposed action threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements related to the environment, safety, health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders?	☐	☒	
Would the proposed action require siting, construction, or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities?	☐	☒	
Would the proposed action disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or natural gas products already in the environment such that there might be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases?	☐	☒	
Would the proposed action have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources? See examples in 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, Paragraph B(4).	☐	☒	
Would the proposed action involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, such that the action is not contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release, and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health?	☐	☒	
If "No" to all questions above, complete Section VI, and provide NRSF and any attachments to DOE NCO for review. If "Yes" to any of the questions above, contact DOE NCO for additional NEPA review.			
VI. Responsible Organization's Signatures:			
Initiator:			
Cody M. Schrader, HMIS/NEPA SME <i>Print First and Last Name</i>	CODY SCHRADER (Affiliate) Digitally signed by CODY SCHRADER (Affiliate) Date: 2026.06.17 09:48:11 -07'00' <i>Signature / Date</i>		
Cognizant Program/Project Representative:			
Tashina R. Jasso, DOE-HFO SSD <i>Print First and Last Name</i>	TASHINA JASSO Digitally signed by TASHINA JASSO Date: 2026.06.17 13:00:06 -07'00' <i>Signature / Date</i>		
VII. DOE NEPA Compliance Officer Approval/Determination:			
Based on my review of information conveyed to me concerning the proposed action, the proposed action fits within the specified CX(s): ☒ Yes ☐ No			
Douglas H. Chapin, DOE-HFO NCO <i>Print First and Last Name</i>	Douglas H. Chapin Digitally signed by DOUGLAS CHAPIN Date: 2026.06.17 14:40:53 -07'00' <i>Signature / Date</i>		
NCO Comments (Note: If comments are added, then this field must be filled out prior to entering the electronic signature in VII.			

ATTACHMENT

HFO/CX-00249, Revision 0

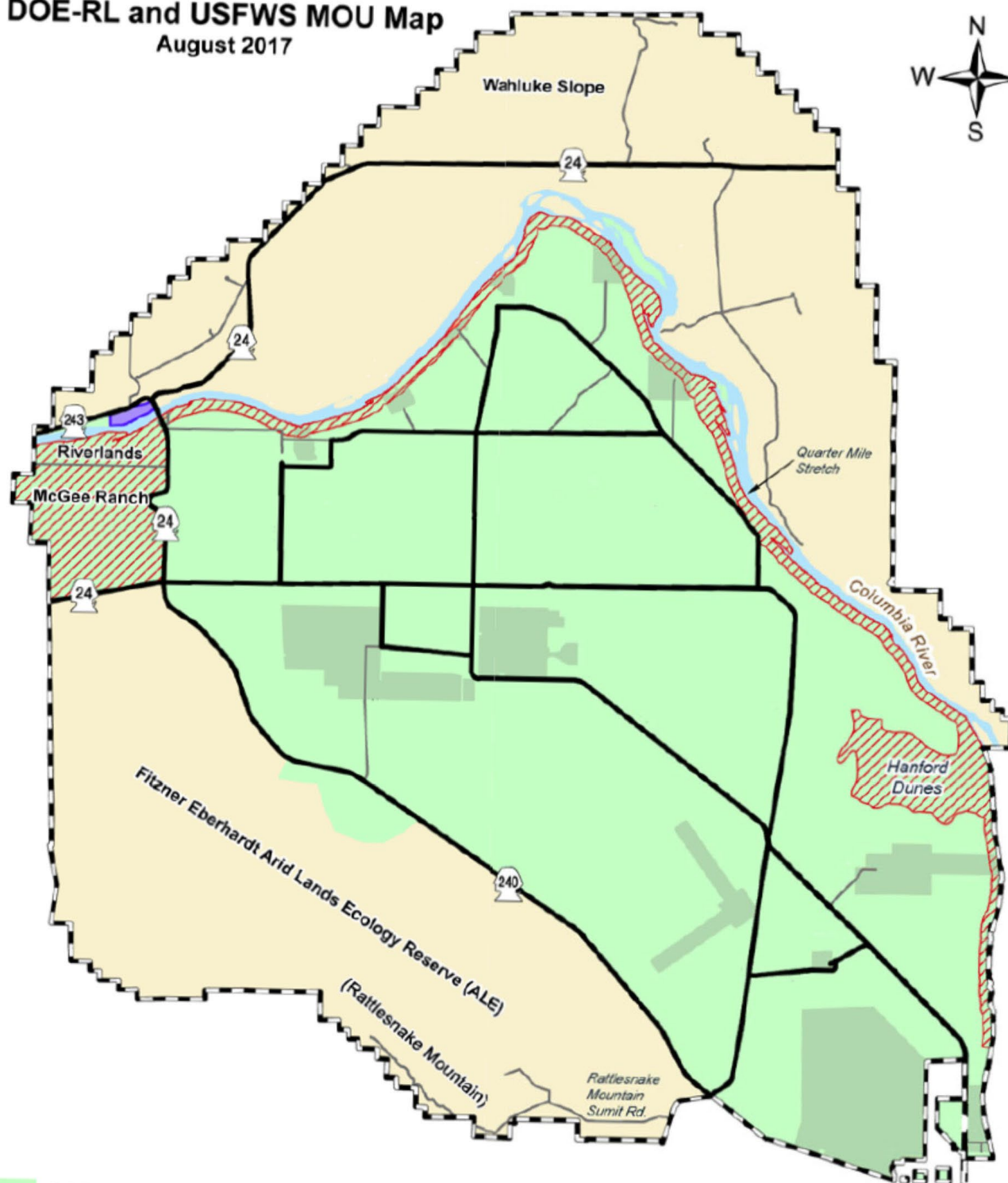
**Second Two Year Extension of U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office, Permit
Issued to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, for use of Fitzner-
Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve**

August 2017 DOE-RL and USFWS MOU Map

(2 Pages Including this Page)

DOE-RL and USFWS MOU Map

August 2017



- DOE Managed Areas (Central Hanford)
- DOE Managed Areas (Monument)
- USFWS Managed Areas of the Monument or Refuge
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife Managed Areas of the Monument

