



U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management Categorical Exclusion Determination Form



Program or Field Office: Office of Legacy Management (LM)

Project Title and I.D. No.: Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Operations at the Moab, Utah, Disposal Site (LM 21-16).

Location: Moab, Utah

Proposed Action or Project Description:

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) office of Legacy Management propose to use unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to acquire high-resolution spectral data needed to estimate spatial and temporal variability in evapotranspiration (ET) in southwestern riparian ecosystems that are dominated by tamarisk (*Tamarix spp.*). This acquisition would provide the high resolution needed to monitor defoliation and other subtle changes in tamarisk populations. At some UMTRCA sites, groundwater elevation, flow, and contaminant transport appear to vary seasonally and annually in response to changes in riparian ecosystems dominated by tamarisk. Therefore, effects of tamarisk and beetle interactions on ET are particularly relevant at these sites.

The areas to be surveyed are flat floodplains along the Colorado River just west of Moab, Utah. They include tamarisk stands and plantings of native trees where tamarisk stands have been removed. This area is accessible via U.S. 191 approximately 1 mile northwest of Moab, and then south on a gravel road through the U.S. DOE office complex. The potential reference areas are accessible via Kane Creek Road southwest of Moab.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

- B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring
- B3.2 Aviation activities that comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 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 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 under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Date Determined: