



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



**Program or Field Office:** Office of Legacy Management

**Project Title and I.D. No.:** Routine site activities at the Rulison, CO, Site LM # 50-11

**Location:** Garfield County, CO

**Proposed Action or Project Description:**

The Rulison site is located 40 miles northeast of Grand Junction, CO, in Garfield County. One underground nuclear test was conducted at the Rulison Site in 1969 to study the ability of nuclear explosions to stimulate natural gas production from low permeability formations. No further tests were conducted at the Rulison Site. Testing of gas after detonation indicated that although radionuclide concentrations had dropped, the remaining presence of radionuclides within the produced gas made it unmarketable. To ensure that public safety is maintained, DOE annually samples 5 area sources of surface water (streams and ponds) and 8 groundwater wells to monitor contaminant concentrations. On a quarterly basis, gas and produced water samples are collected from operating gas wells within a one-mile radius of ground zero. The gas samples are tested for tritium; the produced water is tested for tritium, high-resolution gamma, gross alpha, and gross beta. Surface and ground waters are tested for tritium and by high-resolution gamma analysis. Existing roads are used to access all sample locations.

In addition to sample collection, DOE annually inspects a monument at ground zero.

No impacts were found to be associated with these activities.

**Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:**

B3.1 Site characterization and monitoring

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.

*Tracy A. Ribeiro*  
NEPA Compliance Officer:

12/22/2011  
Date Determined: