

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION



RECIPIENT: NREL

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE : STM and NWTC BioControl for Noxious Weeds; NREL Tracking No. 15-028

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-AC36-08GO28308	NREL-15-028	GO28308

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

DOE/EA 1914 (NREL NWTC)	Final Site-Wide Environmental Assessment of the Department of Energy's National Wind Technology Center at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory
DOE/EA-1968 (NREL STM)	SITEWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, U.S. DOE NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LABORATORY, SOUTH TABLE MOUNTAIN CAMPUS, GOLDEN, COLORADO

Rationale for determination:

The Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is proposing to conduct integrated weed management activities by releasing biocontrol organisms which would target noxious weeds found on the South Table Mountain (STM) and National Wind Technology Center (NWTC) sites.

The biocontrolled organisms would consist of two species of weevil and a rust fungus. The Colorado State Department of Agriculture (CODA) has previously conducted the same type of biocontrols on their property and would be assisting NREL in their procurement and application.

The biocontrol organisms are two species of weevils, the seed head feeding weevil (*Larinus minutus*) and the knapweed root weevil (*Cyphocleonus achates*). Both species attack diffuse and spotted knapweed. NREL and CODA would release the weevils at the pine ridge area of the National Wind Technology Center. This is an area that is very labor intensive to apply herbicide because of the rough terrain and the risk of harming the natural vegetation. Release of the weevils is tentatively scheduled for early to mid-August.

The other biocontrol organism planned for noxious weed abatement is a type of fungal rust that attacks Canada thistle. Two sites have been selected to release the rust, one at the NWTC and one at the main STM campus. The STM site would be northwest of the Thermal Testing Facility in a small draw extending into the conservation easement parcel. The NWTC site would be along the Coal Creek tributary east of Building 251. Because the rust is an organism with a complex life cycle, sites with rust fungus are best left untouched, meaning no herbicide or mowing would occur in these areas. Application of the rust is tentatively planned for the fall of 2015 when conditions are optimal.

Both the weevils and the rust are host specific organisms, meaning that they feed or infect only the weed they are targeted for, nothing else. No native plant species or biological species would be impacted by the release of these organisms.

Pest management, including NREL's Noxious Weed Program is considered a routine maintenance and is an activity analyzed as part of the 2014 Final Site-Wide Environmental Assessment of the NREL NWTC (DOE/EA-1914) and the 2014 Final Site-Wide Environmental Assessment for the NREL STM (DOE/EA-1968). DOE has determined that this activity is bounded by the environmental impact analysis contained in these EAs and their respective FONSI, and no further NEPA review is required.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If you intend to make changes to the scope or objective of your project you are required to contact the Project Officer identified in Block 11 of the Notice of Financial Assistance Award before proceeding. You must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved.

Note to Specialist :

Laura Margason August 3, 2015

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Electronically Signed By: Lori Gray *Lori Gray* Date: 8/4/2015
NEPA Compliance Officer

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

☐ Field Office Manager review required

NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

- ☐ Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- ☐ Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Field Office Manager