

FMC-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 : NREL; NWTC Power Generation Upgrade; NREL Tracking No. 14-015B

| Funding Opportunity Announcement Number | Procurement Instrument Number | NEPA Control Number | CID Number |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| NA | DE-AC36-08GO28308 | NREL-14-015B | 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 |
|------------------------------------|--|

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is proposing to expand the electrical generation capacity at the National Wind Technology Center (NWTC). The NWTC is a federally-owned facility that consists of 305 acres and is primarily utilized for wind energy research, development, and testing. It is located southeast of the intersection of Colorado Highway (CO) 93 and CO-128, in Jefferson County, Colorado.

NREL's proposed NWTC Power Generation Upgrade project would include the construction of an onsite electrical substation, an onsite electrical feeder line leading from NWTC's south-western boundary to the substation, and an offsite transmission line, approximately one mile in length, which would run south from the NWTC property across private property to an XCEL Energy owned utility switch yard station located along CO highway 93.

The substation construction would involve clearing and grading approximately .65 acres of previously disturbed grassland located in the south-west corner of the NWTC. The perimeter of the substation would be fenced, enclosing an area approximately 150' x 220'. The area within the substation enclosure would be treated with a pre-emergent herbicide (approved by NREL ESH&Q) and uniformly covered with crushed rock to a depth of 6" prior to installing substation equipment. Following construction, disturbed areas outside the substation fencing would be backfilled and revegetated using the NWTC native seed mix.

The electrical feeder line would include burying a conduit that would house two 13.2 kW primary distribution lines and fiber optic cabling that would run adjacent to the NWTC western property line to the substation. Construction would require trenching an area approximately 760' long, 10' wide, and 5' deep. Cable markers would be installed to clearly identify the underground cable route. A stormwater permit for this and that of the substation would be secured before construction began.

The proposed offsite transmission line would run directly south from the southwest corner of the NWTC through easement property and be approximately one mile in length. The easement may be on private or US Fish and Wildlife Service property, each of which are located in the same area, parallel to each other, and separated by a fence. A final decision on which property would be used for the transmission line has not been made and is dependent on future funding and negotiations with property owners. For either location, the transmission right-of-way would be around 100' wide and approximately one mile in length. It is estimated that up to ten 80' tall power poles would be installed using a caisson drill rig and skid steer. Each would be buried 10' in the ground, using holes that are 8' wide and 15' deep and secured via backfill materials. Excavated soil would either be spread around each pole, so as to not harm the vegetation, or hauled offsite for appropriate disposal. Spiral bird light diverters would be installed about 15" apart on the top wire of the transmission lines. NREL would utilize established Lab Level Procedures for construction and

resource conservation measures on either project site selected.

The potential impacts of construction and operation of the NWTC site sub-station and electrical feeder line were analyzed in DOE's Final Site-Wide Environmental Assessment (DOE-EA 1914) for the National Wind Technology Center. Five options were analyzed in the EA, the location and design of the proposed project fits within the scope of the Plainview Option #2 (DOE-EA 1914, p. 42). A Finding of No Significant Impact was issued on May 14, 2014 for all activities therein.

DOE completed this NEPA review to verify that the NWTC Sitewide Environmental Assessment addressed the potential impacts of the proposed project, as defined to date. DOE will conduct an additional NEPA review and any required consultations when details about the proposed transmission line are available.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination for this award, and funding for certain tasks under this award is contingent upon the final NEPA determination.

Insert the following language in the award:

You are restricted from taking any action using federal funds, which would have an adverse affect on the environment or limit the choice of reasonable alternatives prior to DOE/NNSA providing either a NEPA clearance or a final NEPA decision regarding the project.

Prohibited actions include:

NWTC Power Generation Upgrade transmission line activities – including equipment purchase and construction - is prohibited pending additional NEPA review and completion of consultations and applicable permit acquisitions.

This restriction does not preclude you from:

If you move forward with activities that are not authorized for federal funding by the DOE Contracting Officer in advance of the final NEPA decision, you are doing so at risk of not receiving federal funding and such costs may not be recognized as allowable cost share.

Note to Specialist :

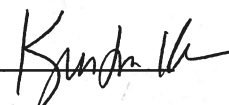
NEPA review completed by Laura Margason on September 14, 2017

NOTE TO NREL NEPA AND PM: NWTC Power Generation Upgrade transmission line activities – including equipment purchase and construction - is prohibited pending additional NEPA review and completion of consultations and applicable permit acquisitions.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

 Electronically Signed By: Kristin Kerwin
NEPA Compliance Officer



Date: 9/14/2017

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:

Field Office Manager

Date: