Floodplain Statement of Findings for Stormwater Controls in Effluent, Mortandad, North Ancho, and Potrillo Canyons, Los Alamos National Laboratory

AGENCY

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management Los Alamos Field Office (EM-LA)

ACTION

Floodplain Statement of Findings

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

DOE EM-LA is proposing to install stormwater controls within the 100-yr floodplains of Effluent, Mortandad, North Ancho, and Potrillo Canyons within Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) near Los Alamos, New Mexico (Figure 1). These controls may include rock check dams, rock plunge pools, coir logs, erosion control blankets, straw wattles, compost logs and/or log check dams. They are designed to slow stormwater runoff and capture sediment from areas previously identified to have potential contamination from historical industrial activities at LANL. The proposed actions would be implemented to meet compliance requirements of the LANL Storm Water Individual Permit (IP) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit No. NM0030759.

The primary objective of the proposed action is to install stormwater controls to reduce or eliminate discharges of site-related pollutants of concern (POCs) in stormwater discharges from Site Monitoring Areas (SMAs) A-SMA-2.8, A-SMA-3, M-SMA-1, M-SMA-7.9, and PT-SMA-3 in compliance with the IP.

LOCATION WITHIN A FLOODPLAIN EXPLANATION

A-SMA-2.8, A-SMA-3, M-SMA-1, M SMA 7.9, and PT-SMA-3 are located within and/or adjacent to the 100-yr floodplain. To effectively mitigate the migration of site-related POCs to downstream waters, controls will need to be installed within the floodplain.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternatives to the proposed action that were considered are (1) *a no-action alternative, (2) installing controls only outside of the 100-yr floodplain, and (3) alternative compliance per IP Part I.D.2.*

The *no-action alternative* was not selected as it would not meet the objective of reducing or eliminating discharges of site-related POCs in stormwater discharges from A-SMA-2.8, A-SMA-3, M-SMA-1, M-SMA-7.9, and PT-SMA-3 and would result in noncompliance with the IP.

The *installing controls only outside of the 100-yr floodplain* alternative was not selected because it would have only a modest impact on channel flow, the stormwater runoff with the greatest erosive force and potential to transport POCs.

The *alternative compliance per IP Part I.D.2* alternative was not selected because it would not reduce potential contaminant transport at these locations and should be pursued only when there is no viable corrective action or installation is impracticable.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL HARM TO OR WITHIN THE FLOODPLAIN

Best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented to minimize and mitigate any impacts to the floodplain. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Heavy equipment will not be used within stream channels or on soils too wet to prevent damage to the soil structure.
- Vegetation removal will be minimized and restricted to areas necessary for installation of controls.

- All stormwater controls will be designed and installed in conformance with N3B-GDE-ER-5015, “Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual.”
- Disturbed areas will be revegetated using an appropriate native seed mix.
- Following installation of the controls, DOE EM-LA will complete confirmation monitoring of stormwater discharges from the project locations in compliance with the IP.

FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION STANDARDS

The installation of stormwater controls at A-SMA-2.8, A-SMA-3, M-SMA-1, M SMA 7.9, and PT-SMA-3 will not result in a significant change, if any, to the natural and beneficial values served by the floodplain. Minor short-term impacts to the floodplain are expected from ground disturbance from construction activities. Positive long-term impacts are anticipated through increased soil moisture retention and vegetative habitat following seeding. The proposed action, with implementation of BMPs, conforms to applicable floodplain protection standards.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

This Floodplain Statement of Findings was prepared in accordance with DOE-implementing regulation 10 Code of Federal Regulations 1022, “Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements,” and provides a summary of the assessment analysis and determination.

On March 12, 2026, EM-LA prepared and released for public review and comment the Notice of Proposed Floodplain Action for the Installation of Storm Water Controls in Effluent, Mortandad, North Ancho, and Potrillo Canyon. The notification of the proposed action and request for comment was sent to appropriate government agencies, tribes, groups, and persons known to be interested in or potentially affected by the proposed floodplain action. The notification was also made available to the public on the Energy.gov website and in local newspapers. The public comment period ended on March 27, 2026. No public comments were received.

EM-LA will provide 15 days of public review after publication of this Floodplain Statement of Findings before implementing the proposed action.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information on this proposed floodplain action, EM-LA can be reached at
Email:
EMLA-NEPA@em.doe.gov with the subject line Installation of Storm Water Controls
or
U.S. Mail:
EM-LA NEPA Document Manager
U.S. DOE Environmental Management Los Alamos Field Office
1200 Trinity Drive, Suite 400
Los Alamos, NM 87544

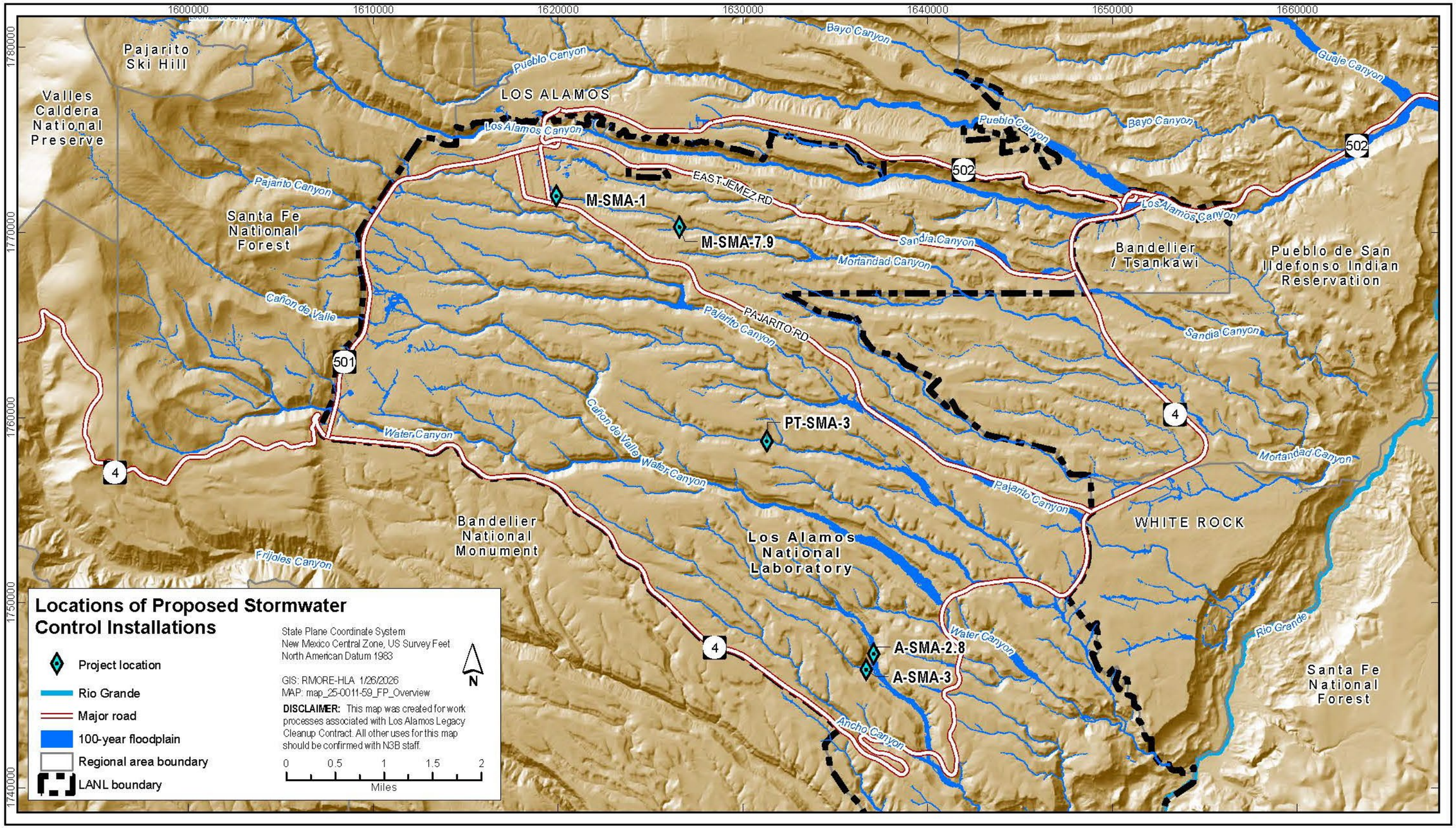

Figure 1 Locations of proposed stromwater control installations