



National Nuclear Security Administration Categorical Exclusion Determination Form



NEPA ID#: HEDLP 15-001-001

Proposed Action Title: Removal of Water Sumps (NV-2012-035)

Program or Field Office: Nevada Field Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Nevada National Security Site (NNSS), Nye County NV

Proposed Action Description:

There are currently five water sumps on the NNSS that were historically needed to support operations, but are no longer needed. Combined water loss from these sumps is about 28 million gallons per year through percolation and evaporation. Closing these sumps would save this amount of water and the cost of pumping the water into the sumps, but would have an adverse impact on the wildlife that has become dependent on these for year around water sources. Many of the animals utilizing these water sumps are sensitive or protected, so mitigative actions will be taken to replace the water sources. Meetings and site visits have taken place with the NSTec operators of the water systems, NSTec biologists, and DRI cultural/historic staff to agree on the appropriate mitigative actions. Following is a description of each sump closure and the agreed upon mitigative actions:

Area 25 - Well J-11 Site: This sump is currently supplied by a line from WeH J-12, and the valve filling the sump would be closed. The sump would be allowed to dry, but would be left as is, and could be used again if the need arose. Cane Spring and Topopah Spring are two natural springs that are located about 10 miles to the east and north respectively. A 600 gallon 4ft x 12ft x 20 inch deep trough would be attached to an existing drain pipe at each spring to provide a better year around water source. These troughs would accommodate the animals currently using the sump, including bats that dip down to the water to drink while still in flight. Some dirt would be brought in to level the tanks, which would eliminate any surface disturbance.

Area 5 - Well Sb: The valve to the sump would be closed, and the sump would be allowed to dry. The sump would be left as is, and could be used again if the need arose. To mitigate the loss of this water source, a 600 gallon trough would be installed at the nearby Well 5a Booster Pump Station to capture pump cooling water that currently runs onto the ground from the pump house into a gully.

Area 6 - Construction Yard: A valve controlling water flow into the sump would be closed, and the existing fill stand would be connected directly to potable water line, but with a backflow prevention device being installed. The closed sump would be cleaned, dredged and lined with plastic to prevent future water loss if the need arose to use the sump again. Another of the 600 gallon water troughs would also be connected to the water line as a substitute water source for the wildlife.

Area 6 - Well Cl : A valve controlling water flow into the sump would be closed, and the existing fill stand would be connected directly to potable water line, but with a backflow prevention device being installed. The closed sump would be cleaned, dredged and lined with plastic to prevent future water loss if the need arose to use the sump again. Another of the 600 gallon water troughs would also be connected to the water line as a substitute water source for the wildlife.

Area 18 - Camp 17: Because of the lack of any surrounding natural water source for the wild horse and burro using this sump, the proposed modification would be to only reduce the amount of water stored in the sump. A full width dike comprised of native soil fill would be placed near the midpoint of the existing sump to reduce the surface area and storage volume by 50% or more. The fill line could need extending, and one bank of the smaller sump could need sloping, depending how the existing sump is reduced.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B-1.3 - Routine Maintenance

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 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.

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.

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning 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 and that other-regulatory requirements set forth above are met. Therefore, the application of a categorical exclusion is appropriate.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Linda Cohn

Date Determined: 6/18/2012