



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form



Categorical Exclusion ID#: NV-2023-001 REV 2

Proposed Action Title: Ecological and Environmental Field Activities

Program or Field Office: Nevada Field Office

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

Proposed Action Description

Surveys, data collection, and monitoring would be conducted at project locations at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS), Nellis Air Force Base (Remote Sensing Laboratory-Nellis), and the North Las Vegas Facility (NLVF) to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and directives. Information would be gathered and used to predict, evaluate, and mitigate potential and cumulative impacts of proposed projects on ecosystems, cultural resources, and the public. Surveys, data collection, and monitoring activities would include, but would not be limited to, the following:

- Surface and shallow subsurface soil sampling
- Biological and cultural resource walkover/pedestrian surveys
- Monitoring of air, water, soil, plants, and wildlife
- Geophysical surveys
- Localized vegetation and pest control
- Revegetation
- Translocation of plants and wildlife
- Animal capture, tagging, trapping, tracking, and sampling
- Aerial operations (helicopter, plane, uncrewed aerial vehicle)
- Study plot establishment
- Meteorological station operation
- Photography

Activities would include routine effluent (water and wastewater) monitoring and environmental surveillance for contaminants in air, water (surface and groundwater), vadose zone, soil, plants, and animals to determine if activities at the NNSS are affecting the environment or offsite public. Animal studies would also be conducted to provide knowledge of current activity on and off site, prey demography, and habitat use.

Radio tracking of large animals such as bighorn sheep, mountain lions, mule deer, and antelope would include ground-based captures (e.g., air cannon, snare, clover trap), aerial surveys, aerial captures (i.e., net gun), placement or removal of tracking devices on animals, and installation of motion-triggered



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cameras at various locations. Aerial operations (helicopter, plane, or uncrewed aerial vehicle) would be low-level (below 500 feet above ground level). Flight operations may originate from onsite designated airstrips or landing and launch locations on the NNSS, or in certain instances, flight operations may originate from off-NNSS locations (e.g., Nevada Test and Training Range) in coordination with the NNSS Flight Operations Group. Studies of varied species would include trapping, GPS [global positioning system] collaring, and/or the collection of samples for a variety of analyses (e.g., disease, genetics, radiological). Helicopter landings to process animals may occur in non-designated landing locations. Removal (e.g., relocation, euthanasia) of animals may be required (e.g., disease, nuisance, specimen collection). Removal techniques may include the use of firearms, asphyxiation, or other humane means.

Radio tracking of small animals such as desert tortoises or burrowing owls would include ground-based captures (e.g., removing animals from burrows by hand, nets, traps), radio-telemetry tracking, placement or removal of tracking devices on animals, and installation of motion-triggered cameras at various locations.

Sample collection identified in state and/or federal permitting for a variety of analysis (e.g., disease, genetics, radiological) may be required. Capture and handling of these animals would follow state and/or federal permitting guidelines.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied

10 CFR 1021: Appendix B, B1.3 Routine Maintenance; B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring; B3.2 Aviation Activities; and B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources.

For the DOE procedures regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see 10 CFR 1021.102 and Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, and also Section 5.4 (Applying one or more categorical exclusions to a proposal) and Appendices B and C of the DOE National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).

To find that a proposal is categorically excluded, DOE shall determine the following:

- (1) The proposal fits within one or more classes of actions listed in Appendix B and C of the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures;
- (2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. However, segmentation does not include proposals that are developed and potentially implemented over multiple phases where each phase results in a decision whether to proceed to the subsequent phase; and
- (3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that indicate a normally excluded agency action is likely to have a reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effect.

The classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Appendix B, include the following conditions as



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integral elements of the classes of actions. To fit within the classes of actions in 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, 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 of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

NEPA Compliance Officer Determination

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under NNSA NAP 451.1 and DOE P 451.1), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action and I have reviewed the proposal for integral elements. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances present and that the proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Therefore, the application of a categorical exclusion is appropriate.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Patricia Gallo

Date Determined: May 14, 2025