



Department of Energy

Golden Field Office
1617 Cole Boulevard
Golden, Colorado 80401-3305

September 4, 2008

DISTRIBUTION LIST

- SUBJECT:** Notice of Public Scoping for the Preparation of an Environmental Assessment Supplement for Proposed Site Development Projects at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory South Table Mountain Site:
- Energy Systems Integration Facility,
 - Site Infrastructure Improvements,
 - Southern Site Entrance from South Golden Road,
 - Expansion of the Waste Handling Facility, and
 - Expansion of the Visitors Center

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) will be preparing a second Supplement to its Site-wide Environmental Assessment (EA) of the NREL South Table Mountain Complex (DOE/EA 1440, July 2003). This EA Supplement II will analyze the proposed Energy Systems Integration Facility, site infrastructure improvements, a southern site entrance from South Golden Road, and the expansion of the Waste Handling Facility and Visitors Center. DOE is seeking public input on this environmental assessment supplement. A description of the site and the proposed site development projects is included in an attachment to this letter. Specifically, DOE is seeking public comment on the proposed actions and alternatives, and the environmental issues to be addressed in the EA Supplement II.

Pursuant to the requirements of NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and DOE's implementing procedures for compliance with NEPA (10 CFR Part 1021), DOE is preparing a draft EA Supplement II to:

- Identify any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should this proposed action be implemented.
- Evaluate viable alternatives to the proposed action, including a no action alternative.
- Describe the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity.
- Characterize any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved should this proposed action be implemented.



The DOE Golden Field Office welcomes your input throughout the NEPA Process. DOE plans to complete the draft EA for public review by December 2008. Public scoping comments on the EA Supplement II will be accepted for a period of 30 days. Please submit your comments regarding this scoping document by **October 10, 2008**, to:

NREL NEPA Comments
National Renewable Energy Laboratory
1617 Cole Boulevard – MS 730,
Golden, CO 80401-3393,
(303) 275-4002 (fax),
Email: NREL.NEPA.comments@nrel.gov

Sincerely,



Steve Blazek
NEPA Compliance Officer

Enclosure

cc: Maureen Jordan
Senior Environmental Scientist
NREL

ATTACHMENT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING FOR THE PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR PROPOSED SITE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AT THE NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LABORATORY SOUTH TABLE MOUNTAIN SITE:

- ENERGY SYSTEMS INTEGRATION FACILITY,
- SITE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS,
- SOUTHERN SITE ENTRANCE FROM SOUTH GOLDEN ROAD,
- EXPANSION OF THE WASTE HANDLING FACILITY, AND
- EXPANSION OF THE VISITORS CENTER

SITE BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is one of twelve Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratories and is dedicated to the research, development, and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. The laboratory is comprised of three main sites: 1) South Table Mountain (STM); 2) Denver West Office Park (DWOP), and 3) the National Wind Technology Center (NWTC).

NREL conducts research activities at the STM site in support of the following DOE research programs:

- Solar Energy Technologies
- Geothermal Technologies
- Distributed Energy, Electrical Infrastructure and Reliability . Biomass
- Industrial Technologies
- Freedom Car and Vehicle Technology
- Hydrogen, Fuel Cells and Infrastructure Technologies
- Buildings Technologies
- Weatherization and Intergovernmental Grants
- Federal Energy Management
- Other DOE Sponsored Programs
- Work for Others Supporting the DOE Mission

Additional detail regarding NREL's mission and research programs is available on the website at: www.nrel.gov.

The 327-acre STM site is located on the southeast side of South Table Mountain, north of Interstate 70 and west of the Interstate 70 and Denver West Boulevard interchange in unincorporated Jefferson County, near Golden, Colorado (Legal description: Township 3 S, Range 70 W, Section 36, and Township 4 S, Range 70 W, Section 1) (See Figure 1). Only a portion of the site, 136 acres, is available for development. A total of 177 acres is protected by a conservation easement, and development on the remaining 14 acres is restricted by utility easements. The community of Pleasant View is adjacent to the southern border of the STM site. The STM site includes acreage on the South Table

Mountain mesa top, slope, and toe, and was formerly part of the Colorado National Guard facility at Camp George West. There are currently seven laboratory buildings, a few small test facilities, and several support buildings on the site.

PURPOSE AND NEED

A Site-Wide Environmental Assessment (EA) for the STM and the DWOP was prepared in 2003 that evaluated the existing and proposed facilities as well as the operation of the site. A supplement to the Site-Wide EA was completed in May 2008 (Supplement I, DOE-EA-144-S-I). The 2003 Site-Wide EA provides a detailed framework under which the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action will be evaluated. As was the case for Supplement I, activities evaluated in this EA Supplement II are those for which there is either current funding or there is a high likelihood of receiving funding in the near term. Further site development activities will be evaluated in future EA Supplements as funding for future projects is obtained and project designs and schedules are identified.

The subjects of this EA Supplement II include an Energy Systems Integration Facility (ESIF), site infrastructure improvements, a southern site entrance from South Golden Road, and expansion of both the Waste Handling Facility and Visitors Center at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory South Table Mountain Site.

This EA Supplement II will provide an opportunity to review the potential effects of constructing and operating these proposed actions. The purpose and need for the Proposed Actions is to: 1) provide additional research and development capabilities, 2) upgrade and expand portions of the existing infrastructure, including the handling of site generated wastes 3) prepare the site for future development, and alleviate projected traffic impacts associated with future growth, and 4) expand the site's ability to provide visitor access to NREL activities.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The following presents a summary of the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative descriptions.

Proposed Action

Energy Systems Integration Facility (ESIF). NREL is proposing to design, construct and operate a 'first of its kind' integrated test and validation facility for distributed renewable energy generation technologies being developed by EERE programs in partnership with industry. The federal government currently lacks a facility for designing and testing engineering optimized systems, testing integrated energy technologies, and simulating and or emulating new infrastructure scenarios. The lack of such a facility represents a key barrier to being able to meet national renewable energy goals. The proposed ESIF would allow DOE to optimize these technologies as part of a total energy system. Collecting both technical and economic data for business analysis would encourage integration of renewable energy technologies into energy production and

delivery systems at minimum cost and high system reliability. The ESIF would also allow U.S. industry members to insert their individual technologies into a controlled integrated energy system platform to test and optimize the technologies for earlier market penetration.

The ESIF is envisioned as a new 130,000 – 170,000 gross-square-foot facility with an additional 20,000 – 30,000 square feet for outdoor research test pads and associated infrastructure requirements (access road, service drives, etc.). The facility would provide research support space for up to 200 researchers. The facility would be designed to merit at least a “Gold” rating from the U.S. Green Building Council, in support of EERE’s goal to demonstrate energy efficient buildings with a lower impact on the environment.

The ESIF project would be a multi-year project with the design phase expected to start in 2009 and construction completion scheduled for December 2011. The actual location of the building would be selected during the design phase. The facility would most likely be placed on the North East quadrant of the existing STM campus, east of the existing Science and Technology Facility.

Infrastructure. Site infrastructure improvements would be designed to accommodate the ESIF and some of the additional future development envisioned at the STM site. Proposed infrastructure improvements include a North Loop Road, which would be approximately 1200 feet in length, approximately 4,000 feet of trenching for underground utility extensions, and up to 170,000 square feet of additional surface parking at the south end of the site. Denver West Boulevard, which currently runs through the campus, would remain. Additional onsite pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths, as well as a Commons Quad and an East Quad, would be developed. Additional improvements to the central arroyo and storm water detention are being considered as well.

Southern site entrance from South Golden Rd. In the traffic surveys completed by NREL in 2007 and 2008, the need for a third STM site entrance from the south was identified. This Supplement EA II will analyze the impacts of the options for an entrance connecting the site to South Golden Road.

Visitors Center Expansion. DOE is proposing to expand the existing NREL Visitors Center. The Visitors Center is currently about 6,500 square feet, and the expansion is anticipated to at least double the size of the facility. The added space could include a large conference room, additional office and indoor or outdoor exhibit space, and additional parking.

Waste Handling Facility Expansion. The current Waste Handling Facility is 1,065 square feet. This proposed expansion would provide a total of approximately 4,000 square feet for storage, packaging, and other hazardous waste activities to accommodate NREL’s increasing waste volumes that accompany overall Laboratory growth. Waste handling activities at NREL currently involve storage, preparation and packaging for transportation of waste to off-site disposal sites. No on-site waste treatment or disposal is proposed.

No Action

The No Action Alternative would add facilities and improve the infrastructure as proposed and assessed in EA Supplement I, but leave the remainder of the site in its current configuration. Specifically, the ESIF, infrastructure improvements would not be built, a new site entrance would not be created, and the Waste Handling Facility and Visitors Center would not be expanded.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED

The Draft EA Supplement II will address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives. Beneficial and adverse, on-site and off-site, construction, demolition, and operation and maintenance impacts will be discussed, as appropriate. The preliminary list of environmental topics to be addressed in the EA include:

- Land Use, Planning, Socioeconomics and Public Policy
- Traffic and Circulation
- Air Quality and Noise
- Visual Quality/Aesthetics
- Water Resources
- Soils and Geology
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Waste Management
- Public Facilities, Services and Utilities
- Energy
- Sustainability
- Risk Assessment
- Intentional Destructive Acts

SCHEDULE

DOE anticipates public distribution of the Draft EA Supplement II for comments by December 2008. Comments on the scoping letter and proposed action are requested by October 10, 2008. No formal public scoping meeting is currently planned for this project. The Draft EA Supplement II, when available, will be posted in the Department of Energy's Golden Field Office electronic reading room:

<http://www.eere.energy.gov/golden/reading room.aspx>

Please direct your comments to:

[NREL NEPA Comments](#)

National Renewable Energy Laboratory
1617 Cole Boulevard – MS 730
Golden, CO 80401-3393
(303) 275- 4002 (fax)
Email: NREL.NEPA.Comments@nrel.gov

FIGURES:

Figure 1 Regional Location Map, South Table Mountain Site

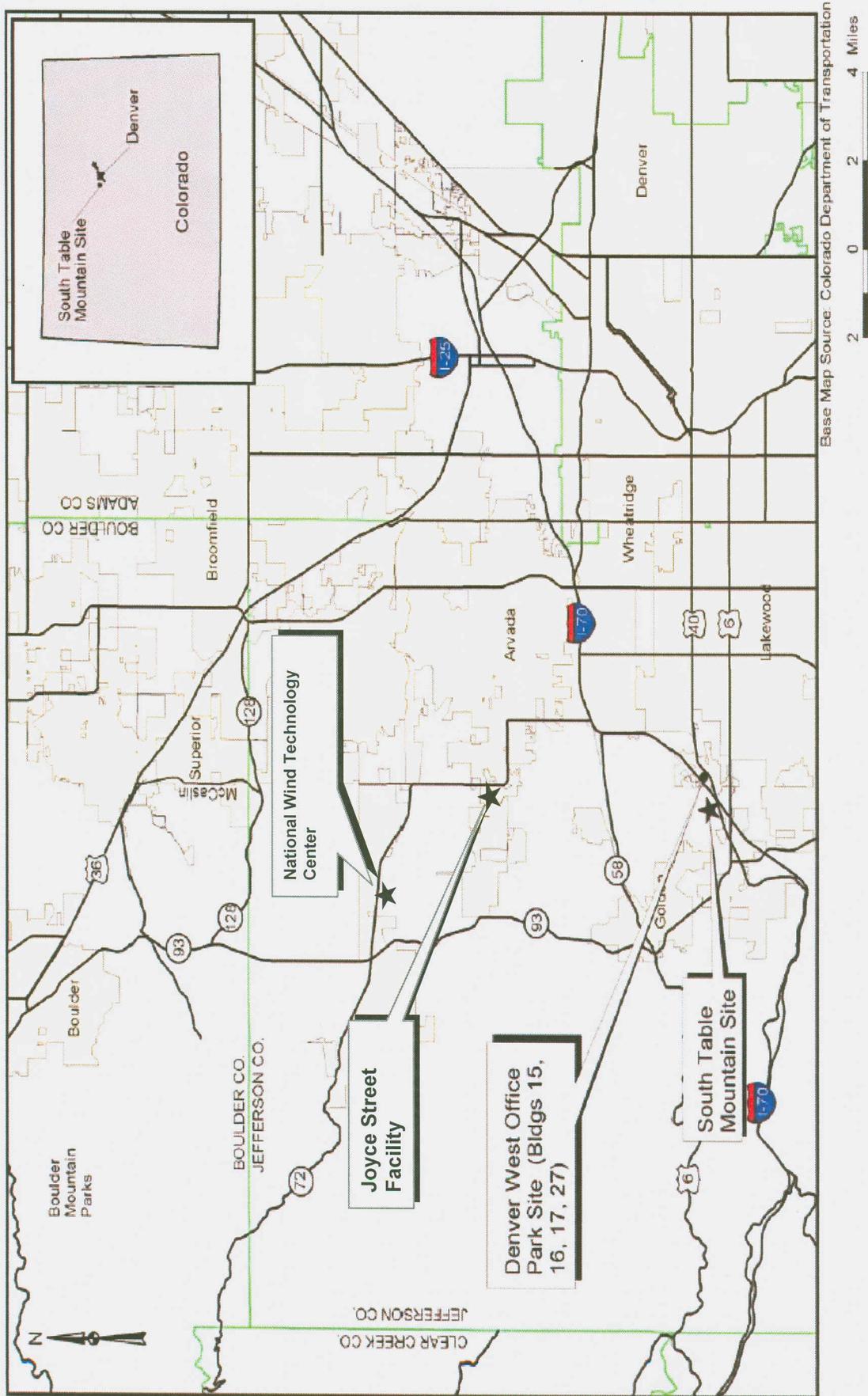


Figure 1 Regional Location Map