

PMC-EF2a

(2.06.02)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
EERE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER  
NEPA DETERMINATION**



RECIPIENT: NREL

STATE: CO

**PROJECT TITLE :** NWTC Sitewide EA Update; NREL Tracking No. 11-021

|  |                                      |                            |                   |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b> | <b>Procurement Instrument Number</b> | <b>NEPA Control Number</b> | <b>CID Number</b> |
|  |                                      | NREL-11-021                | GO10337           |

**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:

**C12** Siting, construction, and operation of energy system prototypes including, but not limited to, wind resource, hydropower, geothermal, fossil fuel, biomass, and solar energy pilot projects.

**Rational for determination:**

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) National Wind Technology Center (NWTC) is located southeast of the intersection of Colorado Highway (CO) 93 and CO-128 in Jefferson County, Colorado. The NWTC is a federally-owned facility that consists of 305 acres and is primarily used for wind energy research, development, and testing. The goals of the NWTC are to improve the Nation's overall economic strength and competitiveness, energy security, and environmental health through the development of clean, competitive, and reliable power technologies.

A Site-Wide Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued in May 2002 (DOE/EA 1378) for the NWTC. The EA analyzed short-term and long-term site improvements and activities. The long-term scenarios included "bounding analysis" assumptions to represent likely site "buildout" conditions. The DOE NEPA implementing regulations [10 CFR 1021.330(d)] require DOE to evaluate existing site-wide NEPA documents at least every five years to determine whether it adequately addresses current agency plans, functions, programs and resource utilization with respect to environmental impacts.

Since the 2002 EA and FONSI were issued all proposed actions at the NWTC have been analyzed and determined to be within the boundaries of the existing EA as described in the short- and long-term planning sections. Funding of programs in the past few years has resulted in the implementation of both the short-term and long-term actions addressed in the 2002 EA.

A new Site-Wide EA is proposed to evaluate the potential individual and cumulative environmental impacts of reasonably foreseeable activities at the NWTC. Currently, natural resource surveys are in progress including wildlife, vegetation, avian and bat surveys to establish current baseline conditions of the NWTC. The proposed EA would address any changes in the regional environment that may have occurred since the previous EA and would evaluate new site development proposals and operations. A site-wide review provides an overall NEPA baseline that is useful for tiering or as a reference when preparing project-specific NEPA reviews. The environmental impact information that a site-wide review provides can be incorporated by reference in later NEPA reviews, so that later reviews can be simpler in scope and focus on project-specific issues.

Reasonably foreseeable activities for the NWTC are discussed in a number of DOE/NREL planning documents including the Fiscal Years 2009-2020 Ten-Year Site Plan and the Fiscal Years 2010-2021 Ten Year Site Plan. During the EA scoping process, NREL and DOE staff will collaborate with appropriate NWTC staff, the public and stakeholders to clearly define the proposed action(s) and alternatives to be addressed in the new Site-Wide EA.

Existing information is not available to determine if any impacts from future proposed actions would be significant or if they could be mitigated. Upon completion of the EA, it would be determined if it was necessary to prepare an

Environmental Impact Statement or if a Finding of No Significant Impact could be issued.

Development of the EA, including all NEPA components, such as soliciting public input on the EA Scoping and the Draft EA (including one public meeting) would be completed by a subcontractor (to be determined) and the Alliance for Sustainable Energy staff. A DOE NEPA Document Manager will be assigned to oversee the EA process. No environmental/sensitive resource considerations would be associated with the development of this EA document. Ongoing natural resource surveys have already received NEPA determinations and are in progress.

**NEPA PROVISION**

Insert the following language in the award:

You are required to:

Prepare a Site-Wide EA, following the format and protocol prescribed by the DOE.

Note to Specialist :

None Given.

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

Lori Plummer  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date:

4/27/2011

**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:

[Signature]  
Field Office Manager

Date:

4/27/11