

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**Grand Junction Office; Floodplain/Wetlands Statement of Findings for Site Characterization Activities at the Uranium Mill Tailings Site Located Near Shiprock, NM**

AGENCY: Grand Junction Office, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Floodplain/wetlands statement of findings.

SUMMARY: This Floodplain/Wetlands Statement of Findings is prepared pursuant to Executive Orders 11990 and 11988 and 10 CFR Part 1022, Compliance with Floodplain/Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to conduct site characterization activities at the Uranium Mill Tailings Site near Shiprock, New Mexico. The purposes of the activities are to determine the extent of ground water contamination and to investigate flow patterns in the ground water system; this information will assist DOE in selecting a ground water remediation strategy for the site in accordance with 40 CFR 192, Health and Environmental Protection Standards for Uranium and Thorium Mill Tailings. Portions of the proposed field activities would occur on the 100-year floodplain of the San Juan River and in a nearby wetland. Approximately 18,000 square feet (0.4 acre) of the 100-year floodplain and approximately 120 square feet (0.003 acre) of the wetland area would be temporarily disturbed by these field activities. A floodplain/wetlands assessment was prepared that described the effects, alternatives, and measures designed to avoid or minimize potential harm to or within the affected floodplain/wetlands. The assessment found that the proposed action would have minimal temporary or long-term impacts on the floodplain and associated wetland.

DATES: Written comments are due to the address below no later than October 13, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to Audrey Berry, U.S. Department of Energy-Grand Junction Office, 2597 B3/4 Road, Grand Junction, Colorado; or transmitted electronically by E-mail via Internet to Audrey.Berry@gjpomail.doegjpo.com; or by facsimile at (970) 248-6040.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS PROPOSED ACTION, CONTACT: Don Metzler, Project Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, Grand Junction Office, 2597 B3/4 Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 81503, Telephone 1-970-248-7612 or 1-800-399-5618, E-mail

Don.Metzler@gjpomail.
doegjpo.com.doegjpo.com.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON GENERAL DOE FLOODPLAIN/WETLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS, CONTACT: Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

The Notice of Floodplain/Wetlands Involvement for the Shiprock site characterization activities was published in the **Federal Register** on June 23, 1998 (63 FR 34153). The Floodplain/Wetlands Assessment was completed in August 1998.

Project Description

The Shiprock site is located on the Navajo Nation in northwestern New Mexico, approximately 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) south of Shiprock, New Mexico, and about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of Farmington, New Mexico. The proposed action would involve (1) installing monitoring wells to characterize ground water quality and other hydrologic properties, and (2) constructing a surface water distribution system consisting of a 30-foot-long, 4-foot-high, concrete intake structure on Bob Lee Wash; a connecting 6-inch diameter, 2,000-foot-long pipeline along the upper limit of the 100-year floodplain; and a 1- to 2-foot deep, gravel-filled infiltration trench underneath the last half of the pipeline. Most of the pipeline would be outside the wetlands, in higher-elevation areas. The intake structure would divert a portion of the flow in Bob Lee Wash into the pipeline and infiltration trench and increase ground water flow in the floodplain alluvial aquifer. The purpose of the surface water distribution system would be to flush ground water contaminants towards the San Juan River and decrease contaminant concentrations within the aquifer. Features of the surface water distribution system would be in place for two to three years. Because contaminated ground water is present in the floodplain alluvial aquifer, the monitoring wells and surface water distribution system must be located on the floodplain.

Alternatives

No alternative sites or actions exist for the proposed characterization activities; the only other alternative would be no action. Under a no action alternative, no impact to the floodplain or wetland

would occur. The ground water contamination, however, would remain in place, and no additional characterization would be performed.

Floodplain and Wetland Effects

Installation of the monitoring wells, pipeline, and infiltration trench would directly affect approximately 18,000 square feet (0.4 acre) of floodplain. Present vegetation consists primarily of inland saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) and salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*). The areas disturbed by installation activities would be more susceptible to wind and water erosion until vegetation became reestablished. None of the proposed characterization activities would be expected to affect lives, property, or any natural and beneficial floodplain values. In addition, the construction of an intake structure across Bob Lee Wash would directly affect approximately 120 square feet (0.003 acre) of wetland. This construction within a wetland would require regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers has been consulted and a Nationwide Permit will be required before construction begins.

Diversion of water from Bob Lee Wash through the intake structure and into the pipeline could potentially affect the downstream emergent wetland over time by reducing the amount of water supplied by the wash. Temporary displacement of birds, small mammals, and other wildlife in adjacent areas may occur during installation of the intake structure and the associated pipeline and trench. Wildlife use of the wetland would be expected to return shortly after construction work is complete. No threatened or endangered species would be affected.

Floodplain and Wetland Mitigation Measures

Potential adverse effects within floodplain and wetland areas would be mitigated by (1) installing monitoring wells only in higher-elevation areas (2) reseeding floodplain areas where vegetation has been disturbed as a result of characterization activities (3) avoiding wetland areas whenever possible by constructing most of the pipeline and all of the infiltration trench outside wetlands (4) diverting a minimal amount of flow from Bob Lee Wash (5) using access routes that are well outside wetlands, and (6) monitoring emergent wetland boundaries annually for the duration of the proposed activities to ensure wetlands are not permanently reduced. With the implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed action would be protective of the 100-

year floodplain and associated wetland at the Shiprock site and would conform to the Navajo Nation's floodplain protection standards.

Issued in Albuquerque, N.M. on September 16, 1998.

Constance L. Soden,

*Director, Environmental Protection Division,
U.S. Department of Energy, Albuquerque
Operations Office.*

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BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Golden Field Office; Notice of Solicitation for Financial Assistance Applications; Southeast Regional Biomass Energy Program Management Project

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation for financial assistance applications number DE-PS36-98GO10359.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), pursuant to the DOE Financial Assistance Rules, 10 CFR 600.8, is announcing its intention to solicit applications for the Southeastern Regional Biomass Energy Program (SERBEP) Management Project. The selected applicant will receive financial assistance to manage SERBEP under a cooperative agreement with DOE.

DATES: The solicitation will be issued on or about October 13, 1998.

AVAILABILITY: To obtain a copy of the Solicitation once it is issued, submit a written request to the U.S. Department of Energy, Golden Field Office, 1617 Cole Boulevard, Golden, CO 80401, Attention: Mr. Matt Barron, Contract Specialist. For convenience, requests for the Solicitation may be sent via facsimile to Matt Barron at (303) 275-4788 or by E-mail to matt_barron@nrel.gov. Prospective applicants are encouraged to obtain the solicitation electronically through the Golden Field Office Home Page at <http://www.eren.doe.gov/golden/solicit.htm>. Only written requests for the solicitation will be considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The major goals of the DOE SERBEP are: to promote biomass energy by creating awareness, a positive image, and confidence in biomass energy technologies within the region; to develop a climate supportive of biomass energy among the general public and relevant government agencies; to assist both the public and private sectors in the responsible development, commercialization, and utilization of biomass energy technologies so that the

region achieves full realization of associated energy, economic, and environmental benefits; and to select and perform activities that provide for responsible development of biomass energy within the region. The Southeastern Region includes the following states/areas: Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Applications must address each of the following activities in order to be considered for award. The activities are (1) management and planning, (2) information and outreach, and (3) project oversight and evaluation.

1. Management and Planning includes a plan for the overall management of the project at the state level, including coordination with the DOE Atlanta Regional Support Office (ARSO) and SERBEP ad hoc steering committees. The responsibility also includes development of resource plans and the provision of technical input to DOE for development of annual operating plans for the SERBEP.

The SERBEP Annual Operating Plan (AOP) is a document which will be prepared each year by the ARSO, with appropriate committee input, which provides guidance and direction to the program for the following Fiscal Year.

The FY'98 AOP is available for interested parties. It is anticipated that the FY'99 AOP will not vary significantly from the current AOP and that it will be completed by September 1998—prior to the award resulting from this solicitation. It will be the responsibility of the recipient to guide the Program in meeting AOP objectives, recommend and implement changes to the AOP as necessary, and assist the ARSO in the preparation and completion of future AOP's.

2. Information and Outreach includes responding to inquiries about the program from interested parties, developing biotech briefs, collecting and contributing articles to support dialogue, and preparing regional biomass energy program reports. The recipient also will coordinate and publish a regional newsletter at least quarterly and will establish and maintain a SERBEP Internet site which provides relevant biomass program information and project summaries.

3. Project Oversight and Evaluation includes the award and administration of subgrants to organizations in the region. The recipient will solicit applications for projects in support of program objectives through a

competitive solicitation. The ARSO will establish a review panel consisting of DOE and/or DOE laboratory staff, state officials, university staff, and other experts as needed. Documentation of the evaluation process and final recommendations will be collected and presented to the ARSO Project Officer for approval prior to execution of subawards.

Administration of the individual subgrants, including financial commitments, performance tracking, and the provision of periodic reports to DOE, will be the responsibility of the recipient with appropriate oversight from the ARSO.

In response to this solicitation, DOE expects to make a single award. Solicitation number DE-PS36-98GO10359 will include complete information on the program including technical aspects, funding, application preparation instructions, application evaluation criteria, and other factors that will be considered when selecting projects for funding. No pre-application conference is planned. Issuance of the solicitation is planned on or about October 13, 1998, with responses due on November 10, 1998.

Notice of Solicitation for Financial Assistance Applications

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL BIOMASS ENERGY PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Issued in Golden, Colorado, on September 17, 1998.

John W. Meeker,

Chief, Procurement, GO.

[FR Doc. 98-25689 Filed 9-24-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP97-168-000 and CP97-168-001; Docket No. CP97-169-000 and CP97-169-001]

Alliance Pipeline L.P.; Notice of Environmental Compliance Meeting for the Alliance Pipeline Project

September 21, 1998.

Take notice that on October 6, 1998, the staff of the Office of Pipeline Regulation will meet with representatives of Alliance Pipeline L.P., to discuss its compliance with the environmental conditions contained in the Commission's Order issued in the above dockets on September 17, 1998 (Order). However, because the Order is subject to petitions for rehearing at this time, the staff will not discuss the