U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management
National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Checklist

Project/Activity: New Verde Mine Investigations, Lease Tract C-G-26, Uranium Leasing Program

A. Brief Project/Activity Description

Energy Fuels Resources Corporation (EFRC), lessee to the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management, proposes to evaluate former mine workings associated with the New Verde Mine on Lease Tract C-G-26 in preparation for potential future mine development. This lease tract is on Calamity Mesa, along the southern flank of the Uncompahgre Plateau in southwestern Mesa County. The mine site would be accessed by workers on a former mine access road and on public roads.

A bulkhead, approximately 6 feet (ft) high and 9 ft wide, was constructed of concrete blocks in 1996 to seal the northern-most mine portal. Approximately four workers would access the portal by overland foot travel (about 200 yards along the former access road) and use hand tools (e.g., hammers, mallets) to break out some portion of the bulkhead. They would open up enough of the bulkhead for workers to enter the mine workings. Before entering the mine, air monitoring would be conducted to ensure worker safety, and if necessary, respirators would be used. A health and safety person would be a member of the crew. EFRC has staff personnel who are qualified to determine if bad ground conditions or other hazardous conditions exist inside the mine and who are trained in mine rescue.

Mine workers would evaluate mine conditions along identified drifts of interest, and they would also identify locations for potential vent holes. All investigations would be terminated if unsafe conditions are encountered.

It is anticipated that all work would be completed within 2 days. After completion of the mine inspection, the portion of the bulkhead that was removed would be replaced with similar materials, or, if the entire bulkhead was removed, a secure metal gate with a lock would be installed. ERFC would like to conduct this investigation in August in conjunction with proposed reclamation actions on the same lease tract that were evaluated in a recent Environmental Checklist (LM-27-10).

B. Environmental Concerns

Evaluate the following elements and indicate by checking "yes" or "no" if any phase of the project/activity would result in a change or impact that is subject to regulatory permits, controls, or plans or that would require additional evaluation. If the "yes" column is checked, provide a brief explanation below, and attach sheets with additional detail as necessary or appropriate.

Element	Yes	No	Element	Yes	No
Air emissions/air quality	☒	☐	Exposure/impacts to public or workers	☒	☐
Noise	☐	☒	Need for public awareness/involvement	☐	☒
Solid waste generation	☐	☒	Transportation/traffic control required	☐	☒
Mixed waste management	☐	☒	Access to/use of DOE property	☐	☒
Chemical storage on site	☐	☒	Visual resources impacted	☐	☒
Pesticide/herbicide use	☐	☒	Cultural/archaeological resources present	☐	☒
Toxic substances management	☐	☒	Wetland/floodplain impacted	☐	☒
Regulated quantities of petroleum used or stored on site	☐	☒	Protected species present: federal, state, or tribe listed	☐	☒
Radioactive materials/soils	☒	☐	Migratory birds breeding or nesting	☐	☒
Surface (ground) disturbance	☐	☒	Wild/scenic rivers impacted	☐	☒
Surface water use/contamination	☐	☒	Prime/unique farmlands present	☐	☒
Surface water quality	☐	☒	Groundwater use/contamination	☐	☒

Element	Yes	No	Element	Yes	No
Groundwater quality affected	☐	☒	Other considerations	☐	☒

C. Explanation and Qualification of All "Yes" Responses

Air emissions/air quality: Monitoring for oxygen levels and radon and radon progeny would be conducted using appropriate instrumentation. The mine has been closed for 14 years, and it is unknown if unsafe conditions are present. Respirators would be available and used if necessary.

Radioactive materials/soils: The New Verde Mine was a working uranium mine that contains radioactive uranium ore.

Exposures/impacts to public or workers: Air quality inside the mine and around the mine entrance would be monitored for radon gas and oxygen levels. Workers would be required to wear respirators if working level standards were exceeded. It is not expected that any workers would be exposed to unsafe levels of radon gas.

D. Eligibility/Conditions

The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D of Title 10 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 1021 (10 CFR 1021). DOE has determined that these classes of actions do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment (see 10 CFR 1021.410). There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental impacts of the proposed action, and the proposed action is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts. Finally, the action is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

E. Recommendation

The proposed action of removing a portion or entire bulkhead and replacing it upon completion of investigations is an allowable activity under Criterion B1.28 of Appendix B to Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021, "Minor activities that are required to place a facility in an environmentally safe condition where there is no proposed use for the facility." The actual mine evaluation would be an allowable activity under Criterion B3.1, "Onsite and offsite characterization and environmental monitoring . . ."

☒ Meets Criteria ☐ Does Not Meet Criteria ☐ Unsure

F. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination

The scope of actions proposed under Section A of this Environmental Checklist, and the information relevant to the potential for environmental impacts in Section B have been reviewed, and the following has been determined:

☒ The proposed actions meet the criteria for categorical exclusion.

☐ The proposed actions do not meet the criteria for categorical exclusion; therefore, I recommend that the LM NEPA Planning Board be convened based on my recommendation (see attached rationale) to complete:

- ☐ an Interim Action.
- ☐ an Environmental Assessment.
- ☐ an Environmental Impact Statement.
- ☐ a Supplemental Analysis.

Concurrences

Project/Activity: New Verde Mine Investigations, Lease Tract C-G-26, Uranium Leasing Program

LM Site Name New Verde Mine Investigations LT C-G-26	**LM Site Program** Uranium Leasing Program	
Contractor NEPA Coordinator Sandy Beranich	**Signature** Sandra Beranich 2010.08.04 12:21:45 -06'00'	**Date**
Contractor Program Lead Ed Cotter	**Signature** 2010.08.04 13:18:06 -06'00'	**Date**
LM Program Manager Laura Kilpatrick	Laura E. Kilpatrick Laura E. Kilpatrick DOE LM - Rocky Flats 2010.08.05 16:02:12 -06'00'	**Date**
LM NEPA Compliance Officer Rich Bush	**Signature**	**Date** 8/10/10

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