

Attachment 11J(1)

Explanatory Note for U.S. Geological Survey Report February 1, 2010

In accordance with the guidance provided by the Council of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provides the required status report as of December 31, 2009.

The USGS reported fewer than ten percent of the NEPA actions completed during the previous reporting period ending September 30, 2009. For this reporting period, the USGS made significant headway by completing 58 percent of the NEPA documentation. We project completing all the remaining NEPA determinations by the end of the next reporting period.

Status of Pending EAs

The status of the pending EAs are as follows. These actions are carried over from the last report.

- The Columbia Environmental Research Center EA consists of the projects and activities listed below. The first draft of the EA was received. A public meeting will be held on January 13, 2010. Substantive comments will be addressed in the EA. The EA will be completed before the next reporting cycle.
 1. Line # 2 – Central Region - COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER - Renovate Pond Banks, Kettles and Piping
 2. Line #3 – Central Region - COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER - Upgrade Parking Lot Drainage
 3. Line #68 – Central Region - COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER - Office/Laboratory Consolidation New Building Construction & Disposal of 9 Existing Assets
- The Leetown Science Center EA addresses the projects and activities listed below. We are waiting for a response from FWS and the SHPO. Contractor is expected to submit Final EA by 2/15/10. The draft EA is expected to be completed by mid-January for internal review. The final EA and FONSI are expected to be issued for signature by mid-February.
 1. Line #19 – Eastern Region - LEETOWN SCIENCE CENTER - Construct Earthen Dams
- The Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center EA addresses the projects and activities listed below. The draft EA was completed and issued for internal comments. The USGS requested for public comments. No comments were received. Based on the internal comments received, the EA is being revised. The final EA and FONSI are expected to be issued for signature by the end of January. The final EA and FONSI are anticipated to be announced by mid-February.
 1. Line #56 – Eastern Region - UPPER MIDWEST ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CENTER - Design and Install Fire Suppression System in the Main Office, Laboratory, Garage, & Maintenance Building
 2. Line #57 – Eastern Region - UPPER MIDWEST ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CENTER - Remediate Waste Water Treatment for Disinfection

3. Line #59 – Eastern Region - UPPER MIDWEST ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CENTER - Replace Water Tower
 4. Line #70 – Eastern Region - UPPER MIDWEST ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CENTER - Building Addition Segment "D"
- Line #63 – Western Region - SITKA MAGNETIC OBSERVATORY - Correct Critical Safety Issues with Vault: EA is expected to be completed early February.
 - Line #44 – Eastern Region - S O CONTE ANADROMOUS FISH LABORATORY - Construct Solar Roof Building to Replace Temporary Space with a Permanent Structure: The EA was conducted and was drafted for internal review. A public comment period was held, with no comments received. The draft EA is being revised based on internal comments. The final EA and FONSI are to be issued for signature by mid-January. The final EA and FONSI are anticipated to be announced by the end of January.

Status of Pending CEs

The status of the pending CEs is as follows. These actions are carried over from the last report.

- Central Region – Line # 11, NORTHERN PRAIRIE WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER - Install Automatic Fire Sprinkler System: The archaeological/architectural survey was completed. The North Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer (ND SHPO) has sent a letter concurring with the determination of “No Historic Properties Affected”. However, one portion of the sprinkler system to be installed under an asphalt parking lot is an area of concern. The ND SHPO has agreed with our assessment, and this portion of the construction will be monitored by a permitted archaeologist. This CE is being reviewed and will be issued by end of February.
- Western Region – Line #60, GUAM SEISMOLOGICAL OBSERVATORY - Replace Hazardous Electrical System: The USGS is currently waiting on letter from the Guam Department of Agriculture Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources. Once the letter is received, then we will proceed with the informal consultation with Fish and Wildlife Services. We approximate this CE to be completed at the beginning of February.
- Abandonment of Discontinued Ground Water Wells, Removal of Discontinued Cableway Stations, and Removal of Discontinued Streamgages, Line #71-73a: Eleven hundred Project/Activities require NEPA reviews. We have issued 564 CEs and 536 CEs are pending. We anticipate all these actions will be categorically excluded and issued in mid-January.
- Seismic and volcanic monitoring – earthquakes and the Seismic and volcanic monitoring – volcanoes, Line # 75-83: 314 Volcano and Earthquake projects will remain “Pending” until the acquisition process is completed. Under Cooperative Agreement procurements, the Cooperator determines the location of the projects. Location information is needed to complete the NEPA determination. All cooperative Agreements are expected to be awarded and the NEPA determinations completed before the next reporting cycle.

Grouped NEPA Actions

In several instances, the number of NEPA actions (columns G-J) and the number of ARRA funded projects and activities (column E) for a program are not the same because in some cases, one NEPA action covers multiple projects and activities under that program.

Change in Status

Five actions, listed below, are withdrawn. The USGS determined that these projects and activities would not be addressed using ARRA funds. These projects and activities will be funded by the Bureau Deferred Maintenance and Capital Improvement funds. The report was amended to reflect these changes.

- Line #22 – Eastern Region – Leetown Science Center - Install New Water Source for Public Water Supply
- Line # 23 – Eastern Region - Leetown Science Center - Reduce Pollutant Load on Hopewell Run
- Line # 26 – Eastern Region - Leetown Science Center - Renovate Tank Pad Isolation Room to Bio-Level Safety 3 (BSL-3) Standards
- Line #31 – Eastern Region - LEETOWN SCIENCE CENTER - Replace Sewage Treatment Facility and Dispose of Existing Structure
- Line # 32 – Eastern Region - Leetown Science Center - Upgrade & Repair K-Pond Ultra Violet Disinfection Systems

One action, Line # 63, the *Western Region - SITKA MAGNETIC OBSERVATORY - Correct Critical Safety Issues with Vault*, warranted an Environmental Assessment in lieu of a Categorical Exclusion.

One action, Line # 41, the *Eastern Region - NORTHERN APPALACHIAN RESEARCH LABORATORY - Rehab and/or Replace Raceways for Fisheries Research* was originally reported to need an Environmental Assessment; however, this activity did not warrant an EA. Therefore, a Categorical Exclusion was issued.

Modification to the 1609(c) Corrected Report Form

In order to accurately report on the status of NEPA determinations, separate entries were added to show the variance amongst the Projects/Activities within the same Title/Program. For instance, Line #72a was added to illustrate the number of CEs that are “done” compared to the number of remaining CEs, Line #72, for the *Abandonment of Discontinued Ground Water Wells* project. The new lines are # 71a, # 72a, and # 73a.

Errors in Reporting

The number of projects for previously reported Line #71 was reduced from 168 to 162. Previously reported Line #73 was increased from 643 to 838. The reporting error was due to an accounting error.

NEPA Benefits

Western Region - Steilacoom Warehouse & Storage Facility - Underground Tank Removal Categorical Exclusion (row 64)

In the course of performing all the necessary research associated with this project, the USGS established a strong working relationship with the State of Washington Department of Ecology, the Department of Archeology and Historical Preservation, the Steilacoom Tribe, the Nisqually Tribe, and the Puyallup Tribe. These new relationships helped us to quickly move forward on the removal of the underground storage tank categorical exclusion, without any complications or additional concerns from the public.