

Attachment 11J(1)

Explanatory Note for U.S. Geological Survey May 3, 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 required under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Section 1609(c) through March 31, 2010.

The USGS reported 57 percent of the NEPA actions completed during the previous reporting period ending December 31, 2009. For this reporting period, the USGS made significant headway by completing 96 percent of the NEPA determinations. We project completing all the remaining NEPA determinations before 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 (row 2) consists of the projects and activities listed below. The Finding of No Significant Impact for this EA was signed on March 19, 2010. The Decision Record is in draft, and is planned for signature by mid-April.
- The Leetown Science Center EA (row 19) addresses the projects and activities listed below. The final draft EA was submitted by the contractor and is being reviewed internally. The anticipated completion date is April 30, 2010.
- The Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center EA (row 56) addresses the projects and activities listed below. The draft EA was completed and issued for internal comments. The final EA and FONSI are anticipated to be completed by April 30, 2010.
- Western Region - SITKA MAGNETIC OBSERVATORY - Correct Critical Safety Issues with Vault EA (row 63): Due to the frozen conditions in Alaska, preliminary studies have just begun. The EA is expected to be completed by May 31, 2010.

Status of Pending CEs

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

- Abandonment of Discontinued Ground Water Wells, Removal of Discontinued Cableway Stations, and Removal of Discontinued Streamgages, rows 71-73a: Nine hundred seventy-two Project/Activities require NEPA reviews. The USGS has issued 954 CEs and 18 CEs are pending. The USGS is waiting for further information on threatened and endangered species in order to complete the pending CEs. We anticipate all these actions will be categorically excluded and issued by the end of April.

- Seismic and volcanic monitoring – earthquakes, Line # 75-77a: 66 Earthquake projects will remain “Pending” until the acquisition process is completed. Twenty-seven NEPA determinations are awaiting final approval. These NEPA determinations are expected to be completed by mid-April. Under Cooperative Agreement procurements, the Cooperator determines the location of projects. Location information is needed to complete the NEPA determination. Thirty-nine of these locations are undergoing further investigation due to the location selected and the suggested actions to be taken (e.g. drilling, excavation). If the assessments require an EA, alternative locations may be chosen. All NEPA determinations are expected to be completed by the end of May.

Withdrawns

Six actions under the Deferred Maintenance/Facilities program were previously reported as 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.

- Row 13 – Eastern Region – Florida Integrated Science Center – Repair Heating, Ventilating & Air Conditioning System
- Row 22 – Eastern Region – Leetown Science Center - Install New Water Source for Public Water Supply
- Row 23 – Eastern Region - Leetown Science Center - Reduce Pollutant Load on Hopewell Run
- Row 26 – Eastern Region - Leetown Science Center - Renovate Tank Pad Isolation Room to Bio-Level Safety 3 (BSL-3) Standards
- Row 31 – Eastern Region - LEETOWN SCIENCE CENTER - Replace Sewage Treatment Facility and Dispose of Existing Structure
- Row 32 – Eastern Region - Leetown Science Center - Upgrade & Repair K-Pond Ultra Violet Disinfection Systems

One hundred twenty-six actions from the Deferred Maintenance - Streamgages, cableways, wells Program were withdrawn during this reporting cycle. The USGS determined that these projects and activities would not be addressed using ARRA funds. The report was amended to reflect these changes. The following changes were made to the spreadsheet to reflect the withdrawn actions:

- Rows 71, Abandonment of Discontinued Ground Water Wells. The total number of NEPA actions was reduced from 162 reported in previous report to 136. A new line item was added for the 26 ARRA projects that were withdrawn (row 71a).
- Rows 72, Removal of Discontinued Cableway Stations: The total number of NEPA actions were reduced from 100 reported in previous report to 90. A new line item was added for the 10 withdrawn actions (row 72a).

- Row 73 and 73a, Removal of Discontinued Streamgages: The total number of NEPA actions was reduced from 838 reported in the previous report to 746. A new line item was added for the 92 projects that were withdrawn (row 73b).

Additions

One hundred thirty-eight actions from the Seismic and volcanic monitoring – earthquakes Programs were added. The report was amended to reflect these changes.

- 136 projects were added to ANSS Replacement of Existing Urban Strong Motion Instrumentation (Rows 75 and 75a)
- One project was added to ANSS Replacement Upgrade of Existing Deformation Monitoring Equipment (Rows 76 and 76a) and
- One project was added to ANSS Replacement/Upgrade of Existing Seismograph Stations and Processing Centers (Rows 77 and 77a)

Example of NEPA Benefits

Western Region - Steilacoom Warehouse & Storage Facility - Underground Tank Removal Categorical Exclusion (USGS Spreadsheet, page 2, row 65)

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.

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