

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
REVISED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH
FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

Gas Main and Distribution System Upgrade for Pantex Plant, Amarillo, Texas

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: The *Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Gas Main and Distribution System Upgrade (DOE/EA- 1533)* provided sufficient evidence and analysis for the Department of Energy (DOE)/National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to conclude that potential adverse effects from the upgrade of the distribution system within plant boundaries and the construction of a 10-inch gas main off the plant site for a length of 8.6 miles would be minimal, under normal conditions. A Finding Of No Significant Impact for the Proposed Action was signed on September 1, 2005.

The Notice to Proceed was issued in November 2007. Construction on the proposed project outside the boundaries of Pantex Plant is complete. Construction within the boundaries of Pantex Plant has not begun. Engineering and administrative controls or mitigating activities that served to lessen any potential for adverse environmental effects were incorporated into offsite activities and will be followed for onsite construction. Examples of mitigating activity are: preconstruction surveys of prairie dog towns for nesting burrowing owls; the use of Best Management Practices to prevent surface soil erosion and sediment migration where soil disturbance is unavoidable; the use of standard dust suppression measures during construction to minimize the generation of fugitive dust; and the reseeded with native grasses of disturbed habitats other than croplands. The EA considered the cumulative effects of the Proposed Action and determined that the impacts from the construction and operation of the new gas pipeline would be temporary and would not contribute significantly to cumulative impacts from all area activities within the past, present and reasonably foreseeable future.

FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS: Based on preliminary design, it was determined that no floodplains or wetlands would be affected by the proposed project. Therefore, a separate Floodplain Assessment was not conducted. Detailed design, however, has determined that a floodplain would be impacted by the proposed activities within the boundaries of Pantex Plant. Because of this new information, a separate Floodplain Assessment has been conducted.

The floodplain effects of this project are those identified from the project description that would or could modify the existing conditions of the Playa 2 floodplain. The following project activities have been identified as potentially affecting the existing floodplain conditions at Playa 2:

- Trenching and installing of gas main and isolation valves.
- Returning impacted areas to original, natural grade and revegetating short-grass prairie areas with native grasses; species and percentages would be matched with the soil type to accomplish habitat restoration.
- Maintaining the new gas main system.

The trenching and regrading activities of onsite construction have the potential to impact approximately 3.1 acres of floodplain, less than 1.4 percent of the Playa 2 floodplain area. Storm water runoff may have the potential to erode denuded areas and transport sediments during trenching, installation, and revegetation, while maintenance of the pipeline could require

retrenching in the future to unearth the pipeline for repair, followed by regrading back to original natural grade. These impacts would be negative, direct, and short-term. The installation of the isolation valve has the potential to displace a small amount of floodplain volume (an increase in floodplain elevation of less than 0.001 inches) and would have a negative, direct, and long-term effect on existing conditions.

The negative effects of erosion and sedimentation would be minimized in the short term by controls described in the EA and used in the offsite construction, such as silt/ sediment fencing, geotextiles, riprap, gabions, etc. In the long term, revegetation as described in the EA would minimize erosion and sedimentation, as well as the scars from trenching. The negative effects of displacing floodplain volume would not be mitigated, but the total displacement would result in less than a 0.001-inch increase in floodplain elevation.

No mitigating activities beyond those presented in the EA and followed during offsite pipeline installation will be necessary during construction in the floodplain. The floodplain activities would comply with State and local floodplain requirements and would not significantly affect storage capacity in the floodplain, nor result in significant changes in flooding frequency, intensity, or duration, nor significantly impact other floodplain values. No wetlands would be impacted.

PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT REVIEW: In a letter dated June 23, 2005, the DOE/NNSA invited review and comment on the pre-decisional EA from the landowners who would be directly affected by the proposed project. Shortly thereafter, a Notice of Availability of the pre-decisional EA was published in local newspapers and the document was made available to the general public by placing it in the DOE Public Reading Rooms located in the cities of Amarillo and Panhandle, Texas. It was also accessible on the Pantex Plant website at www.pantex.com. The review and comment period ended on July 29, 2005.

A Notice of Proposed Floodplain Action was published in the Amarillo and Panhandle, Texas newspapers on November 6, 2008. It provided contact information and elicited input and comments by November 21, 2008. The Revised Finding Of No Significant Impact/Floodplain Statement of Findings, along with the Floodplain Assessment, will be provided to those agencies consulted during preparation of the EA. The documents will also be available to the general public through placement in the DOE Public Reading Rooms in Amarillo and Panhandle, Texas and on the Pantex Plant website at www.pantex.com.

AGENCY CONSULTATIONS: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) was engaged in informal consultation under the provisions of section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended. The Service concurred with NNSA's determination that federally listed threatened and endangered species are not likely to be encountered during project construction and that the proposed action would not significantly affect wetlands and other important fish and wildlife habitat.

The Panhandle Regional Planning Commission received a copy of the pre-decisional EA in its capacity as the Single Point of Contact for the State of Texas but waived review.

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department did not comment on the pre-decisional EA.

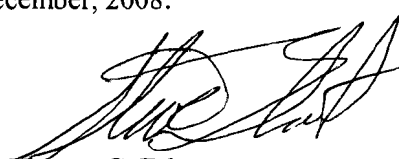
The route of pipeline construction avoids approaching within one-fourth of a mile of any playa lake, which eliminates the most likely sites for encountering Cultural Resources in the general area of the project, as determined by past archeological surveys. In the Cultural Resource Management Plan for Pantex Plant, dated April 2004, the Texas State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the playa lake settlement theory on which the determination of no effect on cultural resources is based.

PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT COMMENTS: No negative comments were received from the public, state and federal agencies, or interested parties. No changes were made to the content of the final EA as a result of public review.

No input or comments were received in response to the Notice of Proposed Floodplain Action.

FINDING: Based on the Environmental Assessment, which analyzes the consequences of the relevant issues of environmental concern for the Proposed Action, and the Floodplain Assessment, which determines short and long term effects of construction on the floodplain of Playa 2, DOE/NNSA finds that there would be no significant impact from proceeding with its proposal to update the Pantex Plant gas main and distribution system. This Finding of No Significant Impact is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 [42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.], the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Purpose, Policy and Mandate [40 CFR 1500-1508,], the Department of Energy National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures [10 CFR 1021], and the Department of Energy Procedures for Compliance with Floodplain/Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements [10 CFR 1022]. No changes in the original EA are necessary, since all significant impacts and mitigation were identified. No environmental impact statement is required for this proposal.

Signed in Amarillo, Texas this 15th day of December, 2008.



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: For further information on the proposed project, this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or the Environmental Assessment for the proposed project, please contact:

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Copies of this FONSI with attached EA will be available for public viewing at the following Department of Energy reading rooms:

U.S. Department of Energy Reading Room, Lynn Library/Learning Center,
Amarillo College, Washington Street Campus, 2201 S. Washington St.,
Amarillo, Texas (806) 371-5400.

U.S. Department of Energy Reading Room, Square House Museum, Corner of
5th Street and Highway 207, Panhandle, Texas (806) 537-3524.