Finding of No Significant Impact for Ground Water Compliance at the New Rifle, Colorado, UMTRA Project Site

AGENCY: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ACTION: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) plans to implement a ground water cleanup compliance strategy for the New Rifle Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) former processing site. The proposed compliance strategy at the New Rifle site is passive remediation by natural flushing with institutional controls and monitoring. The purpose of the strategy is to comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ground water standards defined in Title 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 192, Subpart B, and in so doing, protect human health and the environment.

Ground water at the New Rifle site is contaminated with residual radioactive materials from historical activities associated with the processing of uranium ore. The planned action (formerly, the proposed action) and a no-action alternative are described in detail in the *Final Environmental Assessment of Ground Water Compliance at the New Rifle, Colorado, UMTRA Project Site*. The planned action consists of the following remediation strategies for the site.

Ground water contaminants of concern (COC) at the New Rifle site are ammonia, arsenic, fluoride, manganese, molybdenum, nitrate, selenium, uranium, and vanadium. Arsenic, molybdenum, nitrate, selenium, and uranium exceed their maximum concentration limits (MCL) of 0.05 mg/L, 0.10, 44 mg/L, 0.01 mg/L, and 0.044 mg/L, respectively. Ammonia, fluoride, manganese, and vanadium have no MCLs; however, ammonia and vanadium exceed risk-based concentrations of 200 mg/L and 0.33 mg/L respectively; and fluoride and manganese exceed background concentrations of 4 mg/L and 4 mg/L, respectively. Ground water flow and transport modeling predicts that concentrations of COCs in the uppermost aquifer will decrease to levels below their MCL or risk-based values, or to background levels within 100 years. Institutional controls along with ground water and surface water monitoring will be implemented for these constituents as part of the compliance strategy. This compliance strategy will be protective of human health and the environment.

Institutional controls (IC) consist of a deed restriction covering the former millsite along with a Garfield County resolution requiring people to have an approved drinking water supply within the IC area, and a City of Rifle ordinance requiring people to use municipal water for drinking. The proposed monitoring program will begin upon regulatory concurrence with the *Ground Water Compliance Action Plan for the New Rifle, Colorado, UMTRA Project Site*. Monitoring will consist of verifying that institutional controls remain in place and collecting ground water and surface water samples. Analyses from these samples will be used to verify that COCs are decreasing and do not

exceed a regulatory limits or risk-based concentrations. If these criteria are not met, DOE would reevaluate the proposed action and determine the need for further National Environmental Policy Act documentation.

Long-term monitoring will be conducted by the DOE Grand Junction Office, Long Term Surveillance and Maintenance Program. Monitoring reports will be sent to regulators and the local library.

The Environmental Assessment analyzes the relevant environmental effects of DOE's planned action and a no-action alternative on ground water, surface water, land and water use, human health, ecological risk, floodplains, wetlands, threatened or endangered species, and socioeconomics. It also describes environmental justice considerations and analyzes the cumulative effects of the two alternatives. The planned action will not:

- Compromise public health or safety;
- Affect unique cultural, biological, or ecologically critical areas;
- Result in controversial impacts to the human environment;
- Result in impacts that would be uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks;
- By its implementation, establish a precedent for future actions having possible significant effects;
- Be associated with other actions that may have individually insignificant but cumulatively significant effects;
- Affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
- Cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources;
- Affect threatened or endangered species or their habitat;
- Result in a violation of federal, state, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FONSI: Copies of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact are available for review at local libraries and on the DOE website:

www.gjo.doe.gov\ugw\sites\co\Rifle\rifle.htm

Copies of the documents may be obtained from:

Donald Metzler, Program Manager
U.S. Department of Energy Grand Junction Office
2597 B ¾ Road
Grand Junction, CO 81502-2567
Telephone (970) 248-7612 or (800) 399-5618

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) PROCESS: For further information about the NEPA process, contact:

Joseph Robbins, NEPA Compliance Officer
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NNSA Service Center
Box 5400
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87195
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DETERMINATION: On the basis of the Environmental Assessment, which analyzed relevant environmental issues and addressed the concerns of stakeholders, DOE finds that no significant impact will result from implementing the planned action at the New Rifle site. This FONSI is documented pursuant to NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality's "Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA" codified at 40 CFR 1500, and DOE's "NEPA Implementing Procedures" codified at 10 CFR 1021. The planned action does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the environment within the mandate of NEPA. Therefore, implementation of the planned action does not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Signed in Grand Junction, Colorado, this 22nd day of July, 2003.

for
D. Bergman-Tabbert, Manager
Grand Junction Office