

APPENDIX A

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES REVIEW

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Pacific Northwest National Laboratory

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U.S. Department of Energy

June 27, 2001

Mr. Daniel G. Saueressig
Fluor Daniel Hanford /Waste Management
P. O. Box 1000, MSIN T4-04
Richland, WA 99352

Dear Mr. Saueressig:

BIOLOGICAL REVIEW OF THE TRU RETRIEVAL PROJECT, 200W Area, ECR #2001-200-064.

Project Description:

- Waste currently buried in several trenches within the 218-W-4C and -4B burial grounds will be retrieved. Work will consist of scraping off the existing soil cap and removing the drums or other containers. Cap material will be stored in spoil piles over adjacent trenches, within other parts of the trenches, or used as cover for other waste containers.

Survey Objectives:

- To determine the occurrence in the project area of plant and animal species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), candidates for such protection, and species listed as threatened, endangered, candidate, sensitive, or monitor by the state of Washington, and species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act,
- To evaluate and quantify the potential impacts of disturbance on priority habitats and protected plant and animal species identified in the survey.

Survey Methods:

- Pedestrian and ocular reconnaissance of the proposed project site were performed by C. A. Duberstein and M. R. Sackschewsky on 23 April 2001. The percent cover of dominant vegetation was visually estimated,
- Priority habitats and species of concern are documented as such in the following: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (1994, 1996), Washington State Department of Natural Resources (1997), and for migratory birds, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1985). Lists of animal and plant species considered Endangered, Threatened, Proposed, or Candidate by the USFWS are maintained at 50 CFR 17.11 and 50 CFR 17.12.

Survey Results:

- The proposed project sites are mostly highly disturbed, with sparse cover of Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), and crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron*)

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cristatum). Native species such as Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa sandbergii*), gray rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*) and Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*) are present but are sparsely distributed.

- No migratory bird species were observed nesting in the vicinity of the proposed site, however several species could nest in the vicinity, including killdeer and nighthawks, both of which favor barren gravel areas as nest sites.

Considerations and Recommendations:

- No plant or animal species protected under the ESA, candidates for such protection, or species listed by the Washington state government as threatened or endangered were observed in the vicinity of the proposed site.
- It is recommended that scraping of areas that have not been recently disturbed be performed during the non-nesting season (i.e. between August 1 and April 1) to avoid destruction of migratory bird nests. If such disturbance between April and August is required, please contact the ECAP staff for further site-specific review.
- No adverse impacts to species, habitats, or other biological resources are expected to result from the proposed actions.
- This Ecological Compliance Review is valid until 15 April 2002.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Sackschewsky
Project Manager
Ecological Compliance Assessment Project

REFERENCES

- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1985. Revised List of Migratory Birds; Final Rule. 50 FR 13708 (April 5, 1985).
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 1994. Species of Special Concern in Washington.
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 1996. Priority Habitats and Species List.
- Washington Department of Natural Resources. 1997. Endangered, Threatened & Sensitive Vascular Plants of Washington.