

**Board of County Commissioners**

**Michelle Lawrence**  
District No. 1  
**Patricia B. Holloway**  
District No. 2  
**Richard M. Sheehan**  
District No. 3

May 14, 2002

Steve Blazek  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
1617 Cole Boulevard  
Golden, CO 80401-3393

Re: Proposed Operation and Improvements at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's South Table Mountain Site.  
Case Number 020150510RP1

Review of the materials provided yielded the following comments:

**Current Planning:**  
Development in this area should be compatible with the goals and objectives outlined in the *Jefferson County General Land Use Plan* and the *Jefferson County Zoning Resolution*. We would like to have the opportunity to review the Environmental Assessment in draft format. County planning staff review proposals against the appropriate community plan, applicable zoning requirements, and county policy. This review will be much more helpful when specific sites and structures are identified. Please contact Michael Smyth at 303.271.8719 with any questions.

**Engineering Geologist:**  
The scope listed the soils and geology that will be considered in the EA, therefore, the potential for swelling soils and slope failure complex should be addressed. Please call Pat O'Connell at 303.271.8707 with any questions on geology.

**Planning Engineering:**  
Planning Engineering has reviewed the proposal and has no comments at this time. We would like to provide further comment with the site expansion design when available. Please call Brad Sheehan at 303.271.8488 with any planning engineering questions.

**Zoning Administrator:**  
I have reviewed the referral for the scope of the Environmental Assessment for the NREL facility. I don't find any immediate issues with the proposed short term

and long term proposed actions, The area in question is zoned A-2 and falls within the jurisdiction of Jefferson County. Any development may be subject to a Site Approval process, and the applicable permits obtained for any projects undertaken. Please contact Michael Chadwick at 303.271.8704 with any questions.

Jefferson County Health Department:

The scope of the proposed Environmental Assessment for this property appears to be appropriate. We would expect that the air quality component would include a discussion on odors.

Mindi Ramig, REHS  
Environmental Health Services Division  
Department of Health and Environment  
mramig@co.jefferson.co.us  
303.271.5736  
303.271.5760

Long Range Planning:

Current Zoning and Land Use of Surrounding Properties: The property is currently zoned A2 and is in the Camp George West area.

Community Plan Recommendations:

It appears that the Denver West Office Park sites are within the incorporated boundaries of the City of Lakewood.

The South Table Mountain Site is subject to the recommendations in *The General Land Use Plan*. It is in the Camp George West Area. Although no specific recommendations are provided for this area, combined access, buffering from adjacent residential should be considered.

Recommendations and Comments:

- This referral should be sent to the City of Lakewood for comment on the Denver West Office Park.
- Specific comments can be provided once a site plan is submitted.
- Community/public input should be obtained. A site plan showing specific improvements should be provided for the public.

Please contact Kate Newman at 303.271.8735 with any questions on Long Range comments.

Open Space:

Open Space was concerned that the contractual and use issues expressed in the Conservation Easement agreements are protected.

Please contact Mark Hearon at 303.271.8772 with any questions on open space.

I am acting as the case manager for this review. Please call me at 303.271.8719 with any questions you have regards the process or county documents.

Sincerely,

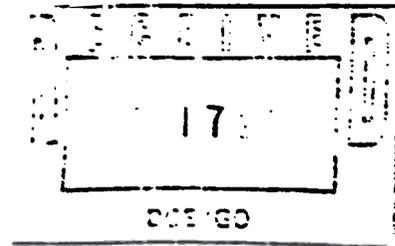
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Smyth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Michael Smyth, AICP  
Planner  
Planning and Zoning Department  
100 Jefferson County Parkway, Suite 3550  
Golden, CO 80419

cc: Preston Gibson  
Current Planning Administrator  
Planning and Zoning  
100 Jefferson Parkway, Suite 3550  
Golden, CO 80419-3550

Nanette Neelan  
Special Projects Coordinator  
County Administrator's Office  
100 Jefferson Parkway, Suite 3550  
Golden, CO 80419-3550

Save the Mesas  
c/o Don Parker, President  
305 Lookout View Dr.  
Golden, CO 80401  
303-279-4549  
stm@donparker.org



May 14, 2002

Steve Blazek  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
DOE Golden Field Office  
1617 Cole Blvd.  
Golden, CO 80401

Sent by email to - [steveblazek@nrel.gov](mailto:steveblazek@nrel.gov)

Subject:: Save the Mesas comments on DOE Golden Field Office request for public comments on site-wide environmental issues related to the proposed operation and improvements at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's South Table Mountain Site

Dear Mr. Blazek:

The Board of Save the Mesas met to discuss your request for public comments and we offer the following:

1. Save the Mesas, a citizens group committed to preserving North and South Table Mountains, fully supports the mission, activities, and goals of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. We are pleased that NREL chose to locate in Golden and we support the upgrading and enhancement of facilities at the South Table Mountain Site that further the mission, activities, and goals of NREL. We support the continued 2-3% annual growth of the facilities as considered likely in the request for public comments.
2. Save the Mesas is committed to keeping all development off the top and the presently undeveloped portions of the slopes of South Table Mountain and we oppose the addition of any new developments on the Mesa Top portion of the NREL South Table Mountain Site, and we oppose any new developments that would be located any higher on the slopes than the present facilities, with the exception that we would support restoration of the amphitheater.
3. We support the removal of any and all "semi-permanent" facilities on the Mesa Top when those facilities are no longer needed.

4. We support NREL's current efforts to minimize the impact of lighting at the Mesa Top facility by use of lights triggered by motion detectors, and the use of methods to direct the light to only those areas needing light.
5. We propose that to minimize impacts, any new facilities be located to the extent possible in land no higher in elevation than the current main building on the slope of the South Table Mountain Site. To minimize the environmental impacts of new facilities, we propose NREL use the newly acquired Camp George West land and other flatter lower lands to the maximum extent possible before placing any further developments on upper slopes or on the top.
6. We propose that the Environmental Assessment (EA) particularly consider the land use and planning impacts, including cumulative impacts. Current local land use plans, visions and authorities disfavor developments on the top or upper slopes of the Table Mountains. Developments on the higher slopes and on the top are contrary to local City and County land use visions and plans. Any further developments high on the slopes and on the mesa top may set land use precedents that could lead to further developments on the higher slopes and top by other land owners. This result would be a significant adverse impact. We recommend soliciting comments from the City Of Golden and from Jefferson County on this matter.
7. We propose that the EA particularly the visual quality and aesthetics of placement of any new facilities, in that where options are available, using lands lower in elevation can be used to minimize visual quality and aesthetics impacts.
8. We propose that the EA particularly consider the benefits of locating facilities on the lower lands to minimize impacts to traffic and circulation (by both workers and visitors), air quality and noise, and biological resources, and energy use.
9. With regard to lighting we propose that the EA particularly consider the impacts of lighting on visual quality and aesthetics, and cumulative impacts on land use, planning, light pollution, biological resources and energy consumption.
10. We propose that the EA particularly consider the impacts of all its activities by the examples it sets. NREL is looked to as an expert so it has environmental impacts, both favorable and unfavorable, far beyond its own activities. Examples set by NREL can have significant indirect environmental impacts. Some examples to set would be minimizing visual impacts and maximizing aesthetics, using lighting that minimizes energy use, minimizing impacts to traffic and automobile use, promoting land use compatible with local desires and standards, recycling, minimizing adverse impacts to biological, cultural, water, and other natural resources and enhancing the environment in ways that are apparent.
11. The outdoor theater could be characterized as historically, culturally and socially significant to Golden. It is possible NREL expansion on the South Table Mesa could encroach on the theater. One way to ameliorate this

impact would be to revitalize and preserve the theater, for example by working with local historical groups.

12. One great way to minimize impacts on land use, planning, visual quality, aesthetics, biological resources, and various cumulative impacts resulting from the Mesa Top facility and any further developments would be to buy all or portions of South Table Mountain and dedicate the use to conservation. This would also protect the 180-degree access to the sun afforded by the natural mesa top to those facilities and experiments. In the scheme of things that cost might be reasonable and the positive impact would be huge.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment at this stage in the process of the development of your plans and your new EA. Please put us on your mailing and emailing lists.

We remember and much appreciate the previous dedication of most of NREL's Mesa Top land to conservation.

Very sincerely,

Don Parker, President  
Save the Mesas

Jordan, Maureen

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**From:** Blazek, Steve  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 07, 2002 8:07 AM  
**To:** Jordan, Maureen  
**Subject:** FW: lights on STM

Steve Blazek  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
U.S. DOE Golden Field Office  
Golden, CO 80401

303-275-4723  
303-275-4788 (FAX)

—Original Message—

**From:** John Lahr [mailto:johnjan@lahr.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 02, 2002 10:30 PM  
**To:** steve\_blazek@nrel.gov  
**Cc:** Steve\_Sargent@nrel.gov  
**Subject:** lights on STM

Steve Blazek  
NREL

Hi Steve,  
You might want to check out <http://www.darksky.org/>  
and this one:  
[http://search1.npr.org/opt/collections/torched/me/data\\_me/seg\\_140490.htm](http://search1.npr.org/opt/collections/torched/me/data_me/seg_140490.htm)  
Cheers,  
John

What's with the bright lights on the top of South Table Mountain?

You are quoted as saying:

"We would entertain reasonable suggestions as to how we might further reduce the visibility of our lights to the community." [steve\_blazek@nrel.gov]

Why not have them connected to motion sensors? This would provide the same amount of security lighting but they would only be turned on when necessary. In fact this would enhance security because the police could see from a distance if the lights are on and drive up for a quick check. This would also reduce energy consumption and it seems NREL should lead by example in this area.

Cheers,  
John

John C. Lahr  
1925 Foothills Road  
Golden, CO 80402  
Phone: (303) 215-9913  
john@lahr.org  
<http://lahr.org/john-jan/>

**Jordan, Maureen**

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**From:** Blazek, Steve  
**Sent:** Monday, May 13, 2002 7:34 AM  
**To:** Jordan, Maureen  
**Subject:** FW: NREL expansion

FYI - Note the water storage tank comment-

Steve Blazek  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
U.S. DOE Golden Field Office  
Golden, CO 80401

303-275-4723  
303-275-4788 (FAX)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** J White [mailto:jwh1te@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 10, 2002 7:50 AM  
**To:** steve\_blazek@nrel.gov  
**Subject:** NREL expansion

Dear Mr. Blazek,

As a Golden resident, Colorado native and member of the GoldenCO@yahoogroups listserv, I have a few comments regarding NREL's proposed expansion on the top of South Table Mountain. Like others, I support the alternative energy research NREL is involved in. You have been extremely cooperative about the lighting situation there and that has not gone unnoticed. I understand why you would want to put water storage at the highest point available to you. However, I oppose any development that encroaches farther up the mesa than your primary buildings are today. (And they are quite high.) I oppose any and all development on the top of South Table Mesa proper.

You have a reasonably sized campus with plenty of extra space. You are scientists involved with alternative energy research. Please, put your teams together and come up with a more creative solution. I understand no compelling and convincing reasons for you to expand further up the mesa.  
Thank you,

Jen White  
17301 Rimrock Dr  
Golden, CO 80401  
jwh1te@yahoo.com

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Do You Yahoo!?  
Yahoo! Shopping - Mother's Day is May 12th!  
<http://shopping.yahoo.com>

**Jordan, Maureen**

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**From:** Mary & Don Parker [maryndon@attbi.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2002 2:20 PM  
**To:** goldenco; Judy Denison  
**Subject:** [Fwd: Growth]

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Growth

Dear Mr. Blazek,

As Al Bartlet - CU physics Prof point out below, 2-3% growth results in some pretty extensive increases if taken out a few decades. My comments on Save the Mesas' supporting NREL's 2-3% growth rate is only for 10-20 years at most. A 3% growth would result in a doubling of the size of NREL in about 25 years and 2% in about 35 years so that growth rate can't continue for too many decades before NREL would outgrow its current facilities and/or do a lot more development on its South Table Mountain site.

Please add growth and growth rate to the scope of the EA.

Don Parker

May 15, 2002

TO: Steve Blazek  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
DOE Golden Field Office  
FAX # (303) 275-4788

RE: REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON SITE-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES  
RELATED TO THE PROPOSED OPERATION AND IMPROVEMENT AT THE  
NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LABORATORY'S (NREL) SOUTH TABLE  
MOUNTAIN (STM) SITE.

Dear Mr. Blazek:

I support the proposed plan to continue operation of the STM and Denver West Office Park (DWOP) with new and improved capability. I have used the educational resources, including tours and workshops, at NREL several times. I plan to incorporate the knowledge I've gained into a new house I will be building in the next few years and in the business I own. My business will be purchasing a new building this year and we will use the NREL resources during the planning and tenant finish of the new commercial property.

I have found the staff to be very helpful and informative. The resource materials that are available have been useful. I strongly support increased research into renewable energy and would support any improvements made in NREL's ability to do research and educate the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely yours,



Teresa Bath  
P. O. Box 255  
Golden, Colorado 80402  
(303) 271-0488

Kennedy, Brian P.

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**From:** Karl Buchholz [KarBuc@lakewood.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 05, 2002 10:23 AM  
**To:** Brian Kennedy (E-mail)  
**Cc:** Maureen Jordan (E-mail); David Baskett; Karl Buchholz; Jerry Goldman; Karen Lind (E-mail); John Mullins (E-mail)  
**Subject:** NREL EA



Karl Buchholz  
(E-mail).vcf

Brian,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with Dave Baskett and me last week. I've had a chance to review the information you provided for NREL's long-term growth scenario at South Table Mountain.

After reviewing the data you provided, I believe your traffic projections are a little too conservative (high). The Institute of Transportation Engineers publishes trip generation data for various land uses. The ITE Trip Generation Manual (6th Ed) provides trip data for Research and Development Centers based on number of employees. The ITE data estimates the number of daily trips for such a facility to be 2.77 trips per employee. For the worst case growth scenario of 1461 new employees at STM in 2022, the number of new daily trips would be 4,047. ITE also provides data for the AM and PM peak hours for outbound and inbound trips. During the AM peak hour, ITE data suggests the number of new trips would be 540 inbound and 88 outbound. For the PM peak hour, the number of new trips would be 60 inbound and the 539 outbound. Using this data, the number of new trips during the AM and PM peak hours are about one-half of what you've estimated.

Using the ITE data, I added the new NREL STM trips to the 2020 traffic volumes presented in the Mills Traffic Study for the intersections along Denver West Marriot Blvd. from Denver West Parkway to Cole Blvd. I did not do a detailed traffic analysis of the intersection capacities, but upon inspection of the new volumes, I believe the I-70 interchange ramp intersections and the Cole intersection should be able to absorb the additional traffic without significant impacts. The Denver West Parkway/Denver West Marriot Blvd. intersection will see a large increase in the volume of traffic turning left (NB to WB) during the AM peak period and, correspondingly, a large increase in right turns (EB to SB) during the PM peak period. Based on a preliminary analysis during the AM peak period it appears this intersection has the capacity to handle the added NREL traffic during the 2022 scenario. During the PM peak period, however, the intersection will likely be over-capacity due to the high volume of EB right-turns from DWP to DWMB. Under the PM 2022 scenario, a double right-turn lane will probably be needed to mitigate the increase in right turning traffic (estimated at approximately 440 additional right-turns during the PM peak hour). As a result, the City of Lakewood would like to see this impact addressed as part of the EA process.

I hope this information is helpful for evaluating the environmental impacts of this EA. Please keep us informed as the EA process moves forward and let me know if you have any questions regarding the above.

Sincerely,  
Karl Buchholz, PE  
Principal Traffic Engineer  
City of Lakewood

<<Karl Buchholz (E-mail vcf)>>

LANTZ ASSOCIATES  
13335 W. 72<sup>nd</sup> Cir.  
Arvada, CO 80005  
(303) 887-3714  
(303) 423-4949 fax

July 12, 2002

Brian Kennedy  
SAIC  
405 Urban Street, Suite 400  
Lakewood, CO 80228

RE: Scoping for NREL Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input for the scoping process for the EA you are preparing for NREL. We have reviewed the information concerning the EA process and I am sending the following comments on behalf of Denver West.

- We agree with the trip generation estimates that Karl Buchholz at the City of Lakewood provided to you (4,047 daily, 628 AM Peak, 599 PM Peak).
- Even though Karl stated that he thought the roadway system can accommodate the additional traffic, we would like to see a Traffic Impact Study prepared. That study will provide detailed analysis of the various turning movements at the intersections along Denver West Marriott Boulevard. The study will also identify any turn lanes that might be too short or will be over capacity due to the additional traffic.
- The Traffic Impact Study should look at the intersections along Denver West Marriott Boulevard from Denver West Parkway to Colfax Boulevard.
- The Traffic Impact Study could either be done on a conceptual basis with the EA, and then refined as specific developments are proposed, or it could be delayed until the specific developments are known. There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. A Traffic Impact Study completed with the EA will identify potential problem areas now, which would then be addressed in more detail in the future as specific developments are proposed. A Traffic Impact Study prepared in the future is more accurate as more details are known about the development, however, potential problems are not identified until that time.