Appendix B

Public Review and Comment

- Notice of Availability, 3 Feb 2014
- Letters

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Agency: Department of Defense, Defense Threat Reduction Agency

Action: Notice of Availability

Summary: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to address the potential environmental impacts associated with the conduction of a single seismic experiment within a 3.5 acre area adjacent to the spillway of the former Teton Dam, in Fremont County, Idaho. The purpose of this Public Notice is to solicit comments from interested persons, groups, or agencies. A copy of the draft EA is available on the DTRA website (http://dtra.mil/Info/FOIA/ElectronicReadingRoom/FrequentlyRequestedDocuments/CurrentEvents.aspx) under the project title: Seismic Experiment at the Teton Dam Site. Comments will be accepted for 30 days from the date of this notice to ensure consideration.

Addresses: Questions or comments concerning the proposed action should be addressed to:

Mr. Jeffrey Thomas, Chief
Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD) Test and Evaluation (T&E) Division
1680 Texas St. SE, Bldg 20363
Kirtland AFB NM 87117-5669
Email: TDTS@DTRA.MIL

For Further Information Contact: Mr. Jeff Fraher, 505-846-6991, jeffrey.fraher@dtra.mil.

Supplementary Information: The draft EA evaluates the impacts of conducting a single seismic experiment at the former Teton Dam site in Fremont County, Idaho. The purpose of this experiment is to provide seismic information in a volcanic tuff in order to improve predictive modeling capabilities. Minimal ground shock data exists at the intermediate range from coupled explosions. In conjunction with the Department of Energy (DOE), data has been collected from low porosity granite, and weak porous tuff. The specific geology present in the Teton River Canyon will link existing ground shock data to that of harder denser formations.

The experiment will employ seismic monitoring equipment placed in 39 boreholes along three radials extending outward from a larger diameter borehole that would contain approximately 225 pounds (lbs) explosive charge. Monitoring equipment and the explosive charge would be placed in the boreholes at a uniform elevation, approximately 80 to 165 ft (24 to 50 m) below the surface. Depth of each borehole will be adjusted for local topographic variation in order to achieve the uniform elevation of gauges and explosive charge. Cables will be run from the monitoring equipment exiting the boreholes to an instrumentation trailer. A cable will also run from the explosive charge exiting the borehole collar to an appropriate firing system. Fourteen additional seismic monitors would be placed on the surface along the three radials ranging from

195 ft (60 m) up to 1640 ft (500 m) away from the explosive charge. Cameras will be mounted in various locations on both sides of the canyon to allow visual monitoring during the seismic experiment. An appropriately designated exclusion area, including areas on both sides of the Teton River and the river itself will be evacuated during explosive handling and prior to execution of the experiment. The experiment is expected to be conducted in the early summer of 2014.

Anticipated Impacts and Evaluation: The site preparation and conduction of the single seismic experiment will not result in any significant adverse impacts to the environment. There will be a slight and temporary disturbance in habitat for flora and fauna as a result of the site preparation activities; however, the amount lost will be insignificant when compared with the surrounding ecosystem. Once the experiment has been completed, the site will be reseeded with a native seed mix appropriate to the area which will minimize effects from the experiment. No humans or large animals will be injured by the airblast, ground shock, or fragmentation from the detonation through the use of temporary fences and the establishment of a safety zone. No existing structures will be damaged by the detonation. The proposed action will have no effect on the three listed threatened species, and their designated critical habitats, and will have no effect on the four candidate species.

The proposed project will not have direct or indirect effects to waters of the U.S.; therefore, permits under the Clean Water Act Section 401 or 404 would not be required.

The operation of drilling equipment during construction activities will result in increased vehicle emissions, and vehicular access to / from the project site on local dirt roads will result in a slight increase in fugitive dust. These effects will be localized and temporary. Emissions will not exceed EPA's *de minimis* threshold levels or affect implementation of Idaho's Clean Air Act implementation plan; therefore, effects to air quality will be insignificant.

Only one cultural resource was identified within the area of potential effect, the Teton Dam. The dam is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nor will the structures be 50 years of age at the time of the seismic experiment. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation considers Teton Dam to be a significant and eligible property for the NRHP, but there has been no formal determination at this time. The undertaking would not alter or otherwise affect directly or indirectly any significant characteristics or values that would qualify Teton Dam for listing on the NRHP. It was determined that no historic properties will be affected by the project. Consultation with the Idaho SHPO, the Northwestern Band of the Shoshoni Nation of Utah, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation, and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation of Idaho was initiated in letters dated 17 October 2013.

As the experiment is a one-time event, no long term socioeconomic benefits are expected. To protect human safety, standard construction best management practices (BMPs) will be required

during the construction and site clean-up phases. When explosives are on site, access will be further restricted to include the canyon bottom and the adjacent rim.

Public Review Process: The decision on whether to conduct the project will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered; among these are: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by the conduction of a seismic experiment may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the DTRA Director within the comment period of this notice, and must clearly set forth the following: the interest that may be affected, the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity, and the particular reason for holding a public hearing regarding this activity.

DTRA invites submission of any issues and/or concerns on the environmental impact of the proposal. Comments will also be considered in determining whether it would be in the best public interest to proceed with the proposed project. DTRA will consider all comments received before the expiration date of this notice. The nature or scope of the proposal may be changed upon consideration of the comments received. DTRA will initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and afford the appropriate public participation opportunities attendant to an EIS, if significant effects on the quality of the human environment are identified and cannot be mitigated.

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News Release

Defense Threat Reduction Agency
U.S. Strategic Command Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction
On the Web: www.dtra.mil
Media Contact: 1 (703) 767-5870

For Immediate Release

No. DTRA 2014-001
February 4, 2014

SEISMIC TEST DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FINDS LITTLE TO NO IMPACT NEAR FORMER TETON DAM SITE

A draft environmental assessment (EA) concerning a planned seismic experiment has been found to have little to no significant impact on the environment in and around the proposed test site near the former Teton Dam east of Sugar City, Idaho. The draft EA and Notice of Availability is being released for public comment on the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's website at http://dtra.mil/Info/FOIA/ElectronicReadingRoom/FrequentlyRequestedDocuments/CurrentEvents.aspx. The Department of Defense worked extensively with other federal, state, local and tribal officials to ensure every possible aspect was considered, and that there were no negative impacts to the environment.

This routine geological experiment – a small underground explosion – is part of a larger U.S. government project to gather information on how shock waves move through different types of rock. The data collected during this experiment will help the DoD's Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) more accurately model the speed and direction of seismic waves in different types of rock and soil.

This small-scale test will use conventional explosives, multiple seismic sensors and several nearby cameras surrounding the explosion to capture the data during the experiment. Shock waves travelling through the soil will provide DTRA with priceless data on how this particular type of rock affects seismic signals. This experiment:

- will not affect the former dam site
- will not affect wildlife in and around the area
- will not affect the river or groundwater
- will not pollute or contaminate the environment
- will not affect any historical or cultural sites
- will not impact the population, local towns, or structures

This routine scientific experiment will follow the strictest environmental standards before, during and after the test, and will only temporarily disturb animals due to preparation of the test site and the ground shock when the underground explosion is set off. Holes drilled for the placement of sensors and the explosive charge will be filled in after the experiment, and the land will be reseeded to return it to its natural condition.

The full Environmental Assessment, Seismic Experiment at the Teton Dam Site, is on the DTRA website at http://dtra.mil/Info/FOIA/ElectronicReadingRoom/FrequentlyRequestedDocuments/CurrentEvents.aspx. The report includes detailed information about the experiment, the surrounding environment, correspondence with state and local agencies, and several detailed pictures and maps showing exactly where the test will take place and the location and arrangement of sensors, cameras and the closest towns and structures.

For any and all media queries, including questions about the Draft EA, please contact DTRA Public Affairs:

DTRA Public Affairs
8725 John J. Kingman Rd., Stop 6201
Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-6201
(703) 767-5870 or (800) 701-5096
Email: dtra.publicaffairs@dtra.mil

For anyone outside the media, if the full report does not answer any questions you may have or you wish to provide comments on the document, please send them to:

Mr. Jeffrey Thomas
1680 Texas St. SE, Bldg 20363
Kirtland AFB, NM 87117-5669
Email: TDTS@DTRA.MIL

FAQs

How will this affect the former dam site or the river? This seismic experiment will not affect the river or the former dam site. The explosion may rattle loose rocks nearby, but the experiment will not alter the terrain in any way.

Is this a big explosion? Relatively speaking, no; the explosive used is equal to about 190 pounds of TNT. If detonated on the surface, the average person might see and hear the explosion from miles away, but underground (approx. 80-100 feet below the surface) the explosion will be well-contained; shock waves in the immediate vicinity will likely be the only sign that the test has taken place.

Why can't they do this experiment somewhere else? While this particular type of volcanic rock exists in several western states, the volcanic tuff near the former Teton Dam has the best qualities (depth, consistency, porosity, exposure) for an experiment measuring seismic activity.

Will this explosion create a crater or disturb the former dam site? No; this is a relatively small charge, and the surrounding rock will contain the explosion. The shock waves will travel through the ground the same way earthquakes move through the earth. Loose rocks near the explosion may move, but this will not look anything like a "Hollywood" explosion.

Why do they need to set off an explosion? This experiment is specifically designed to capture data from an underground explosion. An explosion or other event on the surface would transfer or lose most of its energy to the atmosphere, but underground, all of the energy created by an explosion goes "into" the surrounding rock, creating the right type of seismic waves that can be accurately tracked and measured at set distances from the explosive charge.

Are these experiments related to future projects at the dam site? No; this is a one-time experiment chosen on the particular type of rock found here.

Could the underground explosion set off an earthquake? No; the USGS has indicated that there are no fault lines in the vicinity of the study area, and this is a relatively small explosion compared to other tests.

Will the public be allowed access to the dam site during the work period? During the site preparation, recreation will not be restricted at the spillway ruin, other than standard construction safety zones. On the day before and day of the experiment, recreational access to the spillway, canyon bottom, and southern portion of the dam site (left bank of the river) will be restricted. This closure of the Teton Canyon surrounding the dam site is only expected to be for two to three hours, on two or three days.

From: loriann briggs
To: TDTS
Subject: CWMD Tesing
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 5:36:03 PM

Mr. Jeffrey Thomas:

My name is Lori Briggs. I live and work in south eastern Idaho. My boys and their family farm not even 10 miles from the Teton dam site. I was forwarded a link about the testing to be done this summer.

I have concerns because this is a dry year. Any seismic activity affects the aquafer. Why not do the testing in the fall after all the irrigating for the farmers is done for the year.

There was nothing in the link about what this testing will do to the Teton river. What are the affects this blasting will have on the river below?

If this affects farming this year--it trickles down to the local economy. If the farmers don't do well---no one does well. It's a ripple affect.

Also, why Idaho?----I am positive there are more remote areas for the testing in America.

Exactly what are the results you are looking for?----it can't possibly be to see how underground terrorism works. We all know about the cities that are underground these United States---so of course you must know about what blasting does underground.

At what cost is this to us taxpayers?---Is this a good idea spending money for this when the economy is so bad right now?

These are real concerns. Though Idaho is small in population --- we do have a voice about what happens in our great state.

Please take the time to answer these questions and inform.

Thank you,

Lori Briggs

Comment Number

From: loriann briggs
To: TDTS
Subject: CWMD Tesing
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 5:36:03 PM

Mr. Jeffrey Thomas:

My name is Lori Briggs. I live and work in south eastern Idaho. My boys and their family farm not even 10 miles from the Teton dam site. I was forwarded a link about the testing to be done this summer.

1. I have concerns because this is a dry year. Any seismic activity affects the aquafer. Why not do the testing in the fall after all the irrigating for the farmers is done for the year.

2. There was nothing in the link about what this testing will do to the Teton river. What are the affects this blasting will have on the river below?

If this affects farming this year--it trickles down to the local economy. If the farmers don't do well---no one does well. It's a ripple affect.

3. Also, why Idaho?----I am positive there are more remote areas for the testing in America.

4. Exactly what are the results you are looking for?----it can't possibly be to see how underground terrorism works. We all know about the cities that are underground these United States---so of course you must know about what blasting does underground.

5. At what cost is this to us taxpayers?---Is this a good idea spending money for this when the economy is so bad right now?

These are real concerns. Though Idaho is small in population --- we do have a voice about what happens in our great state.

Please take the time to answer these questions and inform.

Thank you,

Lori Briggs

DTRA Response:

1. Effects to the aquifer. Existing data indicates that there is not a direct link to the aquifer which is more than 310 ft below surface. Drilled holes to conduct and monitor the experiment will be approximately 165 ft deep (or less) which is above the ground water table. The closest well head to the test area is approximately 1300 ft away. Vibrations at that well head are expected to be similar to those felt when a pick-up is driven by. Since irrigation water will not be interrupted by conducting the experiment, there is no reason to delay testing until the fall. (*Re: Sections 3.3 and 4.3.2*).
The experiment will not affect the water table, and all holes drilled to conduct the experiment will be back filled with rubble and grout following Idaho's guidelines for capping wells. (*Re: Section 4.2.2*).

2. Effects to Teton River: Due to the size and controlled nature of the test explosion, there will be no impacts to the river. Its possible small loose rocks could be dislodged from the cliff face. A safety perimeter on the river will be established just prior to the test event. (*Re: Sections 4.2.2 and 4.15.2*)

3. Location: The Teton Dam site was chosen because of the specific geology of the rock layer, not because of isolation. (*Re: Sections 1.0 and 2.3*)

4: Desired results: The purpose of the experiment is to provide seismic information in a specific geologic type (volcanic tuff) in order to improve predictive computer modeling capabilities. (*Re: Section 1.3*)

5. Cost: The overall test will be about $1M with much of it going to the local economy. The drilling will be done by certified Idaho drillers and personnel will stay in area hotels.