
Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Kerr McGee Oil & Gas Onshore LP's Kountze 3-D Seismic Survey - Plan of Operations Supplement

PIN: 17563

Date: December 22, 2006

Describe project, including location (reference the attached Environmental Screening Form, if appropriate), and list any mitigations:

Project Description: Kerr McGee Oil & Gas Onshore LP (Kerr McGee) has a National Park Service (NPS) approved plan of operations to conduct a three-dimensional geophysical (3-D seismic) survey in portions of the Big Sandy Creek Corridor, Lance Rosier, Turkey Creek, and Village Creek Corridor Units of Big Thicket National Preserve (Preserve). The 3-D seismic data collection is being accomplished using acoustic reflection methodology where sources of vibration are created and then recorded at various points along a grid to develop an image of the subsurface in three dimensions. The data will be utilized in the search for hydrocarbon resources in the area covered by the survey. For this operation, Kerr McGee is primarily utilizing explosive charges placed within shotholes approximately 100 feet in depth (source points) as the energy source to generate the vibrations. However, on lands owned by the United States within the project area, Kerr McGee proposed "cable-only" methodology where no source points would be placed. According to the approved plan of operations for the project, Kerr McGee's operations on federal lands are limited to surveying locations for receiver points, and the placement and subsequent removal of those receivers to record the vibrations generated at outside source points. Kerr McGee has requested that the National Park Service consider a supplement to the approved plan of operations for the Kountze 3-D seismic survey. Kerr McGee proposes to conduct vibroseis operations along Little Rock Road in the Lance Rosier Unit of the Preserve in Hardin County, Texas. Eleven vibroseis points were completed along the eastern end of the road by Kerr McGee during the week of December 17, 2006. This activity occurred before the NPS became aware of the operation. The NPS informed Kerr McGee that the operations were occurring within the Preserve, and that such activity was not permitted under the existing plan of operations for the project. Kerr McGee is proposing vibroseis operations at an additional thirty-two points along the road. According to Kerr McGee, this represents approximately five hours of operations. These operations would be limited to the surface of Little Rock Road, and would consist of four vibroseis trucks in a line traveling up the road and conducting operations at each of the pre-determined points. The operations at each point would consist of positioning the trucks, lowering a 4 x 8 foot pressure plate from each truck until contact is made with the road surface, applying 44,000 lbs of pressure to the surface and then vibrating the plates in unison at a signal from a recording truck outside the Preserve. The energy from the vibrations would be received in the same manner as that produced outside the Preserve. Little Rock Road would be closed to traffic during the vibroseis operation. After the vibroseis operation is completed, the road surface would be re-graded by Kerr McGee. Kerr McGee would offset vibroseis operations from sites of resource concern as indicated by the NPS. Third-party monitors would observe the operations to ensure compliance with the supplemented plan of operations.

Project Locations:

Location

County: Hardin

District:

Geo. Marker:

State: TX

Section:

Other:

(See Attached Environmental Screening Form)

Mitigation(s):

- 200 foot buffer of Kerr McGee Oil & Gas Onshore vibroseis operations from the Albert and Elizabeth Mitchell Homestead site boundaries.

Describe the category used to exclude action from further NEPA analysis and indicate the number of the category (see Section 3-4 of DO-12):

E.6. Non-destructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities (this is also a Departmental CE).

Describe any public or agency involvement effort conducted (reference the attached ESF):
(See Attached Environmental Screening Form)

On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No exceptional circumstances (e.g. all boxes in the ESF are marked "no") or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.


Park Superintendent

12/22/06
Date

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