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# *Environmental Assessment Scoping Meeting*

## **Photovoltaic Solar Project at the Durango, Colorado, Disposal Site**

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Office of Site Operations

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# Meeting Agenda

- Purpose of Meeting
- Legacy Management's (LM's) Mission and Goals
- LM Sites
- Durango, Colorado, Disposal Site Background
- Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Input from the Public



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# Purpose of Meeting

- A public scoping meeting is an optional step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for preparing an EA
- The meeting will inform the public of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) alternatives being considered at the Durango Disposal Site and the EA process that will be followed
- The meeting invites the public to provide input and comments relating to the alternatives being considered and whether other reasonable alternatives should be included
- This meeting is specifically on the EA

# LM's Mission and Goals

## Mission

- To manage DOE's post-closure responsibilities and ensure the future protection of human health and the environment. LM has the control of, custody of, and responsibility for maintaining legacy sites, structures, and facilities.

## Goals

- Protect human health and the environment through effective and efficient long-term surveillance and maintenance.
- Manage legacy land and assets, balancing remedy management requirements while maximizing beneficial reuse with an emphasis on renewable energy development.



# LM Sites

- LM manages over 80 sites across the United States and Puerto Rico
- LM manages 12 sites in Colorado, including the Durango Disposal Site
- DOE owns the mill tailings and land at the Durango Disposal Site



# Durango, Colorado, Disposal Site Background

- The Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act authorized DOE to clean up uranium mill tailings at 22 inactive mill sites
- Tailings were moved from Smelter Mountain to a new disposal site up Bodo Canyon
- Remedial action was completed in 1991
- The 40-acre disposal cell sits on the 120-acre property
- The property is bounded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife to the north, west, and east, and the Bureau of Reclamation/Animas LaPlata Project to the south



# Durango, Colorado, Disposal Site Background (continued)

- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensed the site in 1996; DOE is responsible for the site's long-term surveillance and maintenance
- The cell contains 2.5 million cubic yards of uranium mill tailings and mill debris
- The top of the cover slopes slightly at 1 percent; the top 6 inches are composed of gravel and soil to support some vegetation
- The cover contains multiple layers to minimize infiltration into the cell and prevent the release of radon from the cell



# Durango, Colorado, Disposal Site Background (continued)

- The NRC license requires that Durango have a long-term surveillance plan (LTSP)
- The LTSP states the long-term surveillance and maintenance requirements
- NRC and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) have approved the LTSP (September 16, 1996)
- The LTSP requires that the site undergo annual inspections and reporting; the reporting is available online at [www.LM.doe.gov](http://www.LM.doe.gov)



# Durango, Colorado, Disposal Cell



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# **EA for Photovoltaic Solar Project at the Durango Disposal Site**



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# Environmental Assessment

Alternatives to consider:

- Take no action
- A lease for placement of a photovoltaic system on flat ground on top of the cell
- A lease for placement of a photovoltaic system on top of the cell and flatter areas west and south of the cell on land previously disturbed



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*Example of Solar Facility:*  
**Rifle, Colorado, Former Mill Site**



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# Lease for Solar Photovoltaic Alternatives

- Flat land on the cell cover is available for a photovoltaic system that generates up to 4 megawatts
- The area around the cell can be the site of up to a 0.5-megawatt system
- Panels would be placed on top of the cell without penetrating the soil
- Electrical transmission lines cross a corner of the property, and a substation is 1,000 feet to the south
- DOE would make land available for leasing to a utility company or private industry
- Developing the photovoltaic system requires working with La Plata Electric Association and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc.

# Environmental Assessment

- The EA will consider environmental impacts on the physical, cultural, and biological resources that the alternatives could affect
- Visual analysis will be included
- Cooperating agencies have been contacted
- Cultural resource surveys will be conducted
- The Southern Utes and Ute Mountain Utes have been contacted



# Environmental Assessment (continued)

DOE extended offers to the following entities to be cooperating agencies in the EA process:

- CDPHE
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado Governor's Energy Office
- NRC
- La Plata County
- Southern Utes
- Ute Mountain Utes

# EA Timeline

Scoping meeting	May 3
Draft EA issued to cooperating agencies for review	July
Issue Draft EA to the public	September
Final DOE decision	December





# Path for Solar Project

- DOE will produce the NEPA EA
- DOE will offer a long-term lease for a private entity to build a photovoltaic system
- DOE will maintain the current cell design, as the lease will not allow changes
- DOE will work with NRC and CDPHE to revise the LTSP



# Input from the Public

- Input on scoping will be accepted until May 18
- There are a variety of ways to comment:
  - E-mail comments to [Bob.Darr@LM.doe.gov](mailto:Bob.Darr@LM.doe.gov)
  - Fill out an input card
  - Make a comment tonight
- Questions on presentation

