State of California – California Environ. .al Protection Agency

Department of Toxic Substances Control

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION TRACKING FORM

Project Title: Interim Removal Action pursuant to Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) at Installation Restoration Program (IRP) Site 32 Cluster (Site 32-Missile Silo 576-D and Site 35-Missile Silo 576-G), Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB)

Project Location (*Include County*):

Northern VAFB, between El Rancho Road and El Rancho Oeste Road

PCA Code: 14740 Site Code: 300162-47

Lead Staff Person: Quang Than Phone # (714) 484-5352

Unit or Section: Site Mit. & Brownfields Reuse Prog., Office of Military Fac., Southern Cal. Operations

Address: 5796 Corporate Avenue

City: Cypress State: CA Zip Code: 90630

Step #1 Project Manager prepares the NOE; attaches the transmittal memorandum for internal review, initials and dates; the Branch Chief (or his/her designee) signs off and submits the completed package to the Chief of the Office of Environmental Analysis, Regulations and Audits (OEARA).

for Tayseen Mahmud
Project Manager Signature
Quang Than
Provide Name of Person Signing

Branch Chief or Designee Signature
John Scandura
Provide Name of Person Signing

Step #2 NOE is date stamped, logged and assigned to OEARA staff. OEARA will review and evaluate within fifteen (15) working days from the date received. A written response will be provided if changes are needed. OEARA Chief or designee signs the tracking form with a copy of the NOE and attachments.

Eric M. Maher 3/17/05
Chief, OEARA or Designee Signature

Provide Name of Person Signing

Step #3 OEARA will forward the NOE to the Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse.

Date Mailed to OPR

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Department of Toxic Substances Control
Site Mitigation and Brownfields Reuse Program
Office of Military Facilities
Southern Calilfornia Operations
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

Project Title: Interim Removal Action (IRA) pursuant to Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) at Installation Restoration Program (IRP) Site 32 Cluster (Site 32-Missile Silo 576-D and Site 35-Missile Silo 576-G), Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB)

Project Location – Specific: Northern VAFB, between El Rancho Road and El Rancho Oeste Road

Project Location – City: Unincorporated, near Lompoc **Project Location – County:** Santa Barbara

Description of Project:

Background: Site 32 Cluster (32C) comprises Site 32-Missile Silo 576-D and Site 35-Missile Silo 576-G. These two sites are former Atlas missile launch facilities and are grouped together because of shared environmental characteristics and operational history. The primary contamination problem at Site 32C is Trichloroethylene (TCE) in groundwater. In this interim removal action, a barrier of willow trees will be installed to intercept the TCE-contaminated groundwater plume. The contaminated groundwater will be absorbed into the tree root system and broken down into harmless substances. This use of trees to clean up contamination is called phytoremediation.

Phytoremediation was selected for this IRA due to the following factors: the shallow occurrence of groundwater which means that willow roots would form within the water table, levels of TCE in groundwater being not toxic to plants, and the low cost of tree planting relative to those of other active technologies. Phytoremediation has been successfully used at dozens of sites to naturally reduce concentrations of a wide variety of contaminants including fuel hydrocarbons, chlorinated solvents, metals, explosives, radionuclides, etc. through direct plant uptake. The overall effectiveness of phytoremediation increases over time, as the plants comprising the barrier mature and grow.

Project Activities: Up to 360 trees will be planted in 4 foot deep holes, in three rows, and spaced at 15-foot intervals within an area of about 1,350 feet by 50 feet. Standard engineering and construction practices will be used to minimize potential environmental impacts during tree planting activities. Excavated soils will be used to backfill the hole and form an irrigation berm around each tree.

The effectiveness of the phytoremediation barrier will be determined from analyses of groundwater samples from monitoring wells. The samples will be collected and analyzed quarterly for one year after installation. Up to ten new wells will be constructed and used, together with three existing wells, for monitoring purposes.

No final cleanup goals have been set for this IRA. The final remedy to remediate the contaminated groundwater at this site will be selected in the feasibility study phase. The proposed IRA is designed, however, to be compatible with and potentially comprise the final remedy at Site 32 Cluster.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Toxic Substances Control

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Department of the Air Force
Vandenberg Air Force Base
Contact: Ms. Beatrice Kephart

Exempt Status: *(check one)*
- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(A));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

☐ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____
☒ General Rule (Sec. 15061(b)(3))

Exemption Title: With certainty, no possibility of a significant effect on the environment.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt:

The proposed remedial action has only limited activities. It will not create any significant environment impact because:

1. The site is located within the boundaries of Vandenberg AFB, an isolated, active military installation. The area in which Site 32C is located is in a remote area in the northern half of the base. There is no access available to the area by the general public, and access by non-essential personnel will be restricted during tree planting activities. The nearest potential residential receptors at the Military Family Housing are more than 3.5 miles away. The nearest city, the city of Lompoc, is about ten miles away.

2. The tree planting activities will have minimal impact to the surrounding habitats. The planting area is sparsely vegetated and efforts will be taken to disturb as little as possible the flora and fauna in the area. No sensitive or endangered species exist in the Site 32C area.

3. Site 32C is not located in an area known for cultural and paleontological resources. The contractor will obtain a site-specific work permit or dig permit from the Base, which requires clearance from the Base Cultural Resources for Native American burial sites, archaeological, historical, etc, before tree planting begins.

4. No soil will be removed from the site as a result of tree planting activities. Excavated soil will be used to backfill the hole and as an irrigation berm around the tree. A very small amount of soil will be removed during the construction of up to ten new monitoring wells. This soil will be characterized and disposed of accordingly at an appropriate offsite disposal site.

Quang Than
Lead Agency Contact Person

(714) 484-5352
Phone #

DTSC Branch Chief Signature

4/28/05
Date

John Scandura
DTSC Branch Chief Name

Chief, Southern California Operations Branch, Office of Military Facilities
DTSC Branch Chief Title

TO BE COMPLETED BY OPR ONLY

Date Received For Filing and Posting at OPR: _____