

Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS)

In July 2009, the U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration, Nevada Site Office (NNSA/NSO) announced its intent to prepare a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for operation of the Nevada Test Site, now known as the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS), and other Nevada facilities under its purview. These other locations include the Remote Sensing Laboratory at Nellis Air Force Base, the NNSA/NSO campus in North Las Vegas, and portions of the Tonopah Test Range. The SWEIS will cover NNSA/NSO activities conducted for a period of 10 years.

This approach is consistent with the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)* which requires federal agencies to evaluate how activities at their respective sites affect the environment. It is a formal process in which the agency must demonstrate a strong commitment to incorporating environmental values into the decision-making process and proposing reasonable alternatives when environmental impacts are identified.

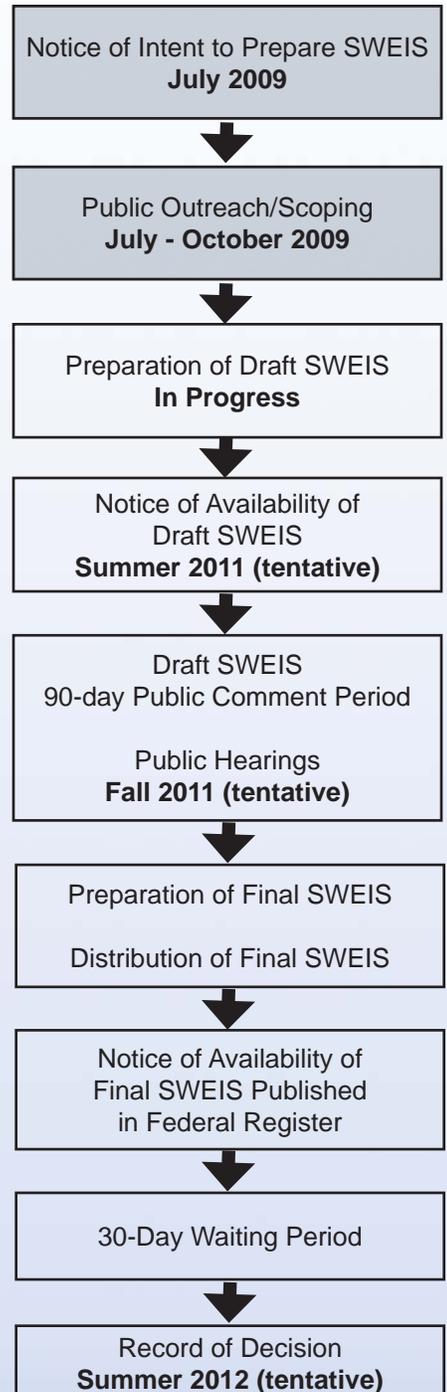
The existing NNSS Environmental Impact Statement, which has been in place since 1996, serves as an environmental baseline analysis of how site activities affect land use, geology and soils, air quality, groundwater, biological and cultural resources, socioeconomics, and public health and safety. In addition, the new SWEIS will identify and analyze issues such as: changes in the environmental baseline; status of contamination in groundwater; low-level/mixed low-level radioactive waste transportation and disposal; and potential new or expanded programs and activities at the NNSS and other Nevada facilities.

SWEIS Development

The SWEIS will identify and evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the following three alternatives:

- No Action - Maintain level of current operations (activities) that resulted from the implementation of missions, programs, capabilities, and projects analyzed in the 1996 NNSS Environmental Impact Statement and subsequently selected in the associated Records of Decision.

The SWEIS Process



- Reduced Operations - Reduce activity levels, as well as decommission facilities and areas.
- Expanded Operations - Increase in the level of operations under the No Action alternative plus the level of operations associated with additional capabilities.

Record of Decision

Upon completion of the SWEIS, one of the proposed alternatives, or a combination thereof, will be implemented using a Record of Decision. A Record of Decision is a public record of the U.S. Department of Energy's decision on a proposed action. The Record of Decision includes whether practical means were used to avoid or minimize environmental harm and, if not, why.

The Process and You

The public is encouraged to participate in the NEPA process and development of the SWEIS. The NNSA/NSO will hold meetings in communities near the NNSS to facilitate dialogue with the public. During this public comment period, individuals, organizations, and government agencies and entities are invited to comment on the draft SWEIS.

For more information on the SWEIS process or schedule, or to be added to the document distribution list, contact:

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