



4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This section describes the public, agency, and Native American consultation process associated with development of this SEA.

4.1 Public and Agency Involvement

The VA invites public participation in decision making on new proposals through the NEPA process. Public participation with respect to decision making on the Proposed Action is guided by 38 CFR Part 26, VA's policy for implementing NEPA. Additional guidance is provided in the VA's NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010). Consideration of the views and information of all interested persons promotes open communication and enables better decision making. Agencies, organizations, and members of the public that have a potential interest in the Proposed Action are urged to participate. A record of agency coordination and public involvement associated with this SEA will be provided in Appendix B in the Final SEA. Public comment records associated with the Final PEA are provided in Appendix E of that document.

4.1.1 Public Scoping Process

During the SEA process, the VA held a public scoping meeting on October 21, 2015, at the Retired Enlisted Association to discuss and receive input concerning the Proposed Action.

There were approximately 19 attendees, as well as two individuals from the VA. Representatives from AES Group, the company that is developing the cemetery master plan, were also in attendance. Participants from the community spoke and were recorded. Participants included interested citizens and veterans, local government office representatives, and members of a local veterans' cemetery committee. Most questions centered on the master planning process and specific design questions. Several comments and questions focused on the roadway approaching the National Cemetery, and whether improvements would be made as part of the cemetery site construction. An attendee from Senator Bennet's office inquired about the VA's role in the roadway approaching the cemetery, as well as expected water infrastructure on the cemetery site. One citizen inquired about prairie dogs currently living on the site. A member of the Pikes Peak National Veterans Cemetery Committee asked about the floodplain area on the site, on-site erosion abatement measures, and potential effects on views of Pikes Peak.

4.1.2 Agency Coordination

Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning (IICEP) is a federally mandated process for informing and coordinating with other governmental agencies regarding federal Proposed Actions. CEQ Regulations require intergovernmental notifications prior to making any detailed statement of environmental effects. Through the IICEP process, the VA notifies relevant federal, state, and local agencies and allows them sufficient time to make known their environmental concerns that are specific to a Proposed Action. Comments and concerns submitted by these agencies during the IICEP process are subsequently incorporated into the analysis of potential environmental effects conducted as part of the SEA. This coordination fulfills requirements under EO 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs* (superseded by EO 12416, and subsequently supplemented by EO 13132), which requires federal agencies to cooperate with, and consider, state and local views in implementing a federal proposal. It also constitutes the IICEP process for this document.



A full list of agencies and individuals coordinated with during the preparation of this SEA can be found in Section 10 and Appendix B. Some of the agencies the VA coordinated with during the PEA and SEA public involvement process include the following:

- USACE, Omaha District
- USDA
- USDA NRCS
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Colorado State Historic Preservation Office
- Colorado State Forest Service – South Area Forester
- CDOT – Region 2
- Colorado Department of Agriculture – Division of Conservation Services
- Colorado Department of Natural Resources
- Colorado Water Conservation Board

4.1.3 Public Review

The VA, as the federal proponent of this Proposed Action, is publishing and distributing the Draft SEA for a 30-day public comment period as announced by an NOA that will be published in the *Pueblo Chieftain* and the *Gazette* newspapers. Review copies will also be available for public review at the Ruth Holly and Sand Creek branches of the Pikes Peak Library District. In addition, the Draft SEA will be available for download via the Internet through a link on the VA's website (<http://http://www.cem.va.gov/EA.asp>).

4.1.4 Native American Consultation

For federal proposed actions, federal agencies are required to consult with federally recognized Native American tribes in accordance with NEPA, the NHPA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and EO 13175. As part of the Final PEA (VA 2012), the VA identified three Native American tribes as having possible ancestral ties to the Proposed Action's ROI (i.e., El Paso County, Colorado), and invited each tribe to consult on this Proposed Action. The VA identified these tribes based on the Native American Consultation Database and the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office. Section 10 of this SEA contains a list of the federally recognized Native American tribes invited to consult during both the PEA and SEA process. During preparation of the SEA, the Arapahoe Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming; Cheyenne and Arapahoe Tribes, Oklahoma; and Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, Montana, were contacted by letter. Responses received from consulted tribes can be found in Appendix C.



5 MANAGEMENT MEASURES

This section summarizes the management measures (as applicable) identified in Section 3 that are proposed to minimize and control adverse effects of the Preferred Alternative at acceptable, minor levels. “Management measures” are defined as routine BMPs and/or regulatory environmental compliance and protection measures that are regularly implemented as part of proposed activities, as appropriate, across Colorado. Per established protocols, procedures, and requirements, the VA (and the VA’s design and construction contractors) would implement BMPs and would satisfy all applicable regulatory requirements in association with the design, construction, and operation of the Preferred Alternative.

In general, implementation of management measures, as identified in Table 5-1, would maintain effects at acceptable levels for all resource areas analyzed. These are different from “minimization measures,” which are defined as project-specific requirements that are not routinely implemented as part of development projects, but that are necessary to reduce identified environmental effects to less-than-significant levels.

Table 5-1 provides a summary of BMPs/Environmental Protection Measures included in the Proposed Action to ensure that adverse, minor effects are controlled and/or reduced. These measures are based on the analysis in the Final PEA (VA 2012) and the site-specific SEA analysis.

Table 5-1. Best Management Practices Incorporated into the Proposed Action

Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Environmental Protection Measure
Aesthetics	Incorporate existing topography and natural features into site design, wherever possible.
	Incorporate elements of local vernacular architecture into facility and site design.
	Maintain landscaped areas, buildings, roadways, and signage.
	Design the site to accentuate existing viewsheds, including vistas of Pikes Peak.
Air Quality	Use appropriate dust suppression methods during on-site construction activities. Available methods include application of water, dust palliative, or soil stabilizers; use of enclosures, covers, silt fences, or wheel washers; and suspension of earth-moving activities during high wind conditions.
	Maintain an appropriate speed to minimize dust generated by vehicles and equipment on unpaved surfaces.
	Cover haul trucks with tarps.
	Stabilize previously disturbed areas through revegetation or mulching if the area would be inactive for several weeks or longer.
	Visually monitor all construction activities regularly, in particular, during extended periods of dry weather, and implement dust control measures, when appropriate.



Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Environmental Protection Measure
Geology and Soils	Design paved areas to drain to the stormwater management system.
	Install and monitor erosion prevention measures (BMPs), such as silt fences and water breaks, detention basins, filter fences, sediment berms, interceptor ditches, straw bales, rip-rap, and/or other sediment control structures; and seed/revegetate areas that have been temporarily cleared of vegetation.
	Retain on-site vegetation to the maximum extent possible.
	Plant and maintain soil-stabilizing vegetation on disturbed areas.
	Use native vegetation to revegetate disturbed soils.
	Create and maintain a tree-lined border to minimize visual impacts of topographical changes.
	Adequately address permits from CDPS before any proposed construction activities commence and adhere to permit conditions during all on-site construction activities.
Hydrology and Water Quality	Avoid development within on-site wetlands/WOTUS.
	Adequately address permit(s) from the USACE and CDPHE, and attempt to address local agencies, to minimize adverse effects on wetlands/WOTUS prior to construction.
	Maintain a buffer of undisturbed land around the identified wetlands/WOTUS
	Develop a site design that prevents surface water runoff to the on-site and adjacent surface waters, and avoids interaction with on-site and adjacent surface waters.
	Develop a site design that accounts for pre/post 100-year volume stormwater drainage at a minimum.
	Implement pre/post-100-year volume stormwater retention at a minimum.
	Implement stormwater management facilities and other related stormwater management infrastructure for the site.
	Construct barriers in work areas and in material sources to prevent sediment, petroleum products, chemicals, and other liquids and solids from entering jurisdictional wetlands or WOTUS.
	Clear ephemeral drainages and intermittent and perennial streams of all work items, debris, or other obstructions placed by, or resulting from, construction operations.
	Locate machinery servicing and refueling areas away from streambeds and washes to reduce the possibility and minimize the impacts of accidental spills or discharges.
	Inspect and maintain construction vehicles in good working order and maintain a spill kit.
	Apply turf establishment to finished slopes and ditches after completion of construction on a portion of the site.
Explore options to increase reuse of potable water.	



Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Environmental Protection Measure
Floodplains and Wetland	Modify floodplains and contributing channels to enhance predictability of flooding scenarios, and reduce vulnerability of wetlands and VA assets to flood events.
	Implement channel stabilization/restoration projects along Corral Tributary to prevent further channel erosion and sedimentation of waterways and wetlands.
	Avoid development to the extent practicable of on-site wetlands, floodplains, and Section 404 jurisdictional waters. Maintain a buffer or undisturbed land around identified wetlands and floodplains.
	Adequately address permits from FEMA, the USACE, El Paso County, and other regulatory agencies to minimize adverse impacts on jurisdictional wetlands and/or floodplains.
	Implement pre/post-100-year stormwater volume retention, at a minimum.
	Implement stormwater management facilities and related infrastructure on site.
Wildlife and Habitat	Use native species when revegetating land disturbed by construction to avoid the potential introduction of non-native or invasive species.
	Avoid to the greatest extent practicable any ground disturbing activities within 200 feet of identified wetlands and surface waters.
	Continue to consult with the USFWS and CPW to minimize adverse effects to protected vegetation and wildlife resources prior to construction.
	Implement preventative efforts to prevent the establishment of noxious weeds.
	Prioritize control and elimination of weeds that are already established, and take prompt action to eradicate the species.
	Integrate specific site BMPs such as erosion control measures for spoils areas, which include actions such as soil reinforcement BMPs (i.e., grass stabilization, soil reinforced geotextiles) and straw wattles around the downslope of the pile, to help prevent noxious weed establishment.
	Focus site disturbance on previously managed or disturbed grasslands, thereby reducing the amount of vegetation and tree disturbance.
Cultural Resources	Perform additional subsurface archaeological investigation before construction begins if required.
	Properly address any unknown cultural resources discoveries during site development.
	Comply with the NHPA, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 36 CFR Part 79, and EO 13007 during the proposed future development process.
	Consult with the Colorado SHPO and tribes and develop and implement appropriate management measures to insure that adverse effects to unknown cultural resources would not occur.
	Implement procedures for inadvertent discovery if any archaeological resources are unearthed during construction or during excavation associated with burials, including coordination with SHPO and applicable tribal representatives.



Technical Resource Area	Best Management Practice/Environmental Protection Measure
Noise	Limit construction activity to daylight hours.
	Use properly maintained and muffled vehicles and equipment.
	Observe local noise ordinances at all times.
	Locate stationary operating equipment as far away from surrounding residents as possible. Shut down heavy equipment and other noise emitters when they are not in use.
Utilities	Design plans will be submitted to each available utility provider to determine specific connection requirements and implement the necessary connection requirements.
Transportation and Parking	Coordinate with local officials and CDOT to ensure that construction and operational traffic are considered in the planning of any future transportation improvements in this vicinity.
	Coordinate with CDOT to identify and implement roadway improvements, as necessary, such as turn lanes and signals.
	Prevent deposit of debris and soil on local roadways during the construction period.
	Plan construction activities to limit the effects to traffic flow on local roadways; time construction activities to avoid peak travel hours.



6 CONCLUSIONS

This SEA analyzed the potential environmental effects of the VA's Proposed Action to construct and operate a new National Cemetery in Colorado Springs, Colorado. As described in Section 1.1, this SEA has been "tiered" from a Final PEA prepared by VA on July 17, 2012 (VA 2012).

This SEA evaluated two alternatives: (1) Preferred Alternative—construct and operate a new National Cemetery on the 374.3-acre site; and (2) No Action Alternative—do not construct the proposed National Cemetery.

This SEA evaluated possible effects on aesthetics, air quality, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, wildlife and habitat, cultural resources, noise, floodplains and wetlands, utilities, and transportation and parking. The VA determined that five other technical resource areas were sufficiently analyzed in the PEA and did not require further analysis in this SEA, including land use, solid and hazardous waste, socioeconomic, community services, and environmental justice.

No significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to the local environment or quality of life would be anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Preferred Alternative. Public comments on this Draft SEA will be considered in the preparation of the Final SEA.



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9 LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADT	average daily traffic
AMSL	above mean sea level
APE	area of potential effect
AQCR	air quality control region
ASEL	A-weighted sound exposure level
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
BMP	Best Management Practices
C.R.S.	Colorado Revised Statutes
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CDPHE	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
CDPS	Colorado Discharge Permit System
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	Colorado Geological Survey
CLOMR	Conditional Letter of Map Revision
CNHP	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CSU	Colorado Springs Utilities
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
DNL	day-night average sound level
E&S	erosion and sedimentation
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECOS	Environmental Conservation Online System
EISA	Energy Independence and Security Act
EO	Executive Order
EPAct	Energy Policy Act
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
GHG	greenhouse gas
GPD	gallons per day
gsf	gross square feet
HVAC	heating, ventilation, air conditioning
IICEP	Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning
ISDS	Individual Sewage Disposal System
LEED®	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LOS	level of service



MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MG	million gallons
mg/L	milligrams per liter
MP	master plan
mph	miles per hour
MVEA	Mountain View Electric Association
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NCA	National Cemetery Administration
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOA	Notice of Availability
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PEA	Programmatic Environmental Assessment
PIC	Public Information Center
ROI	region of influence
SEA	Site-Specific Environmental Assessment
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGBC	United States Green Building Council
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
WOTUS	waters of the United States
WQCD	Water Quality Control Division
WWSD	Widefield Water and Sanitation District



10 AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

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The Pueblo Chieftain

825 W. Sixth Street
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11 LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS REQUIRED

Permit, Approval or Certification	Responsible Agency	Applicable Criteria	Required Actions	Permitting Schedule	Comments
State Environmental					
Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Permit (https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdph/e/401-certification)	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment	Required for projects where activities will disturb jurisdictional WOTUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete CWA Section 401 Permit Application • Submit Site Plan • Submit description of BMPs 	Approximately 2 days to prepare application. Agency review takes approximately 60 days.	
Water Quality Construction General Permits (https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdph/e/wq-construction-general-permits)	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment	Required for projects where activities would disturb one acre or more of land.	Complete Stormwater Discharge Associated with Construction Activities Application	Approximately 2 days to prepare application.	



Permit, Approval or Certification	Responsible Agency	Applicable Criteria	Required Actions	Permitting Schedule	Comments
Other Permits/ Approvals					
Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Permit (http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/RegulatoryProgramandPermits.aspx)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers(U SACE), Omaha District	Required for projects where activities will disturb jurisdictional "Waters of the United States"	Complete Individual Permit if adverse impacts are anticipated. Complete General Permit if minimal impacts are anticipated.	Approximately 2 days to prepare application. Agency review takes approximately 60 days.	
FEMA MT-2 Application and Forms (https://www.fema.gov/mt-2-application-forms-and-instructions)	Federal Emergency Management Agency	These forms should be used by community officials or individuals via community officials to ask that FEMA revise the effective National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) map (Flood Hazard Boundary Map, Flood Insurance Rate Map, Flood Boundary and Floodway Map, or Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map) and Flood Insurance Study report for a community	Complete application forms, project narrative, hydrologic and hydraulic computations, certified topographic map with floodplain delineations, annotated FEMA FIRMs to reflect changes resulting from the project, items necessary to fulfill FEMA NFIP regulatory requirements, and processing fee.		