CX Posting No.: DOE-ID-INL-24-017

SECTION A. Project Title: Use of Rotary Wing Aircraft at INL for Training Evolutions

SECTION B. Project Description and Purpose:

The Emergency Response and Readiness program out of the National and Homeland Security (N&HS) directorate of the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) frequently provides advanced radiation detection training to various mission partners. The training consists of lectures, skilled based training lanes, and full mission profile exercises utilizing sealed radioactive sources and radiological contamination.

Mission partners will utilize radiation detection equipment including handheld radiation detectors, handheld contamination detectors, and vehicle mounted and aerial mounted detection systems to successfully search, locate, identify, and mitigate radiological hazards.

The areas in these exercises include the following areas within the Critical Infrastructure Test Range Complex (CITRC) and the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) airfield at INL.

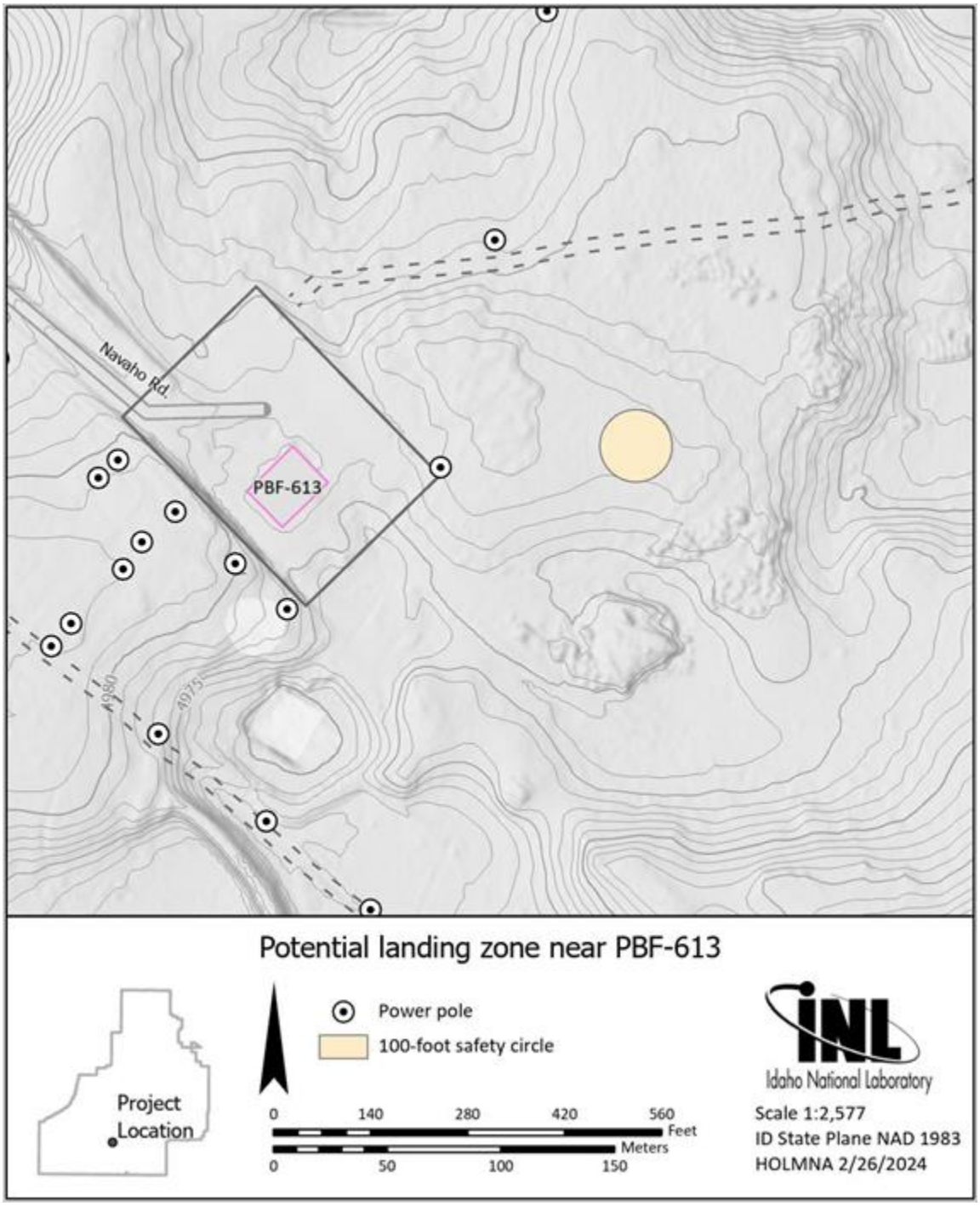
There will be two exercises conducted:

- **Exercise (April 29 - May 3, 2024)** The current plan is to utilize a UH-60 Black Hawk from the 101st WMD Civil Support Team based out of Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho. We will utilize the helicopter on Monday and Tuesday April 29 - 30 for overflights of CITRC and surrounding areas. The helicopter will be outfitted with radiation detection equipment from the mission partner and will perform patterned flights of a predetermined area where there will be exposed radiological sources. The flights will be performed starting at 1000 feet agl with a descent and overflight at the following altitudes until a successful detection is received: 800 feet, 600 feet, 400 feet, and 200 feet. Staging at the UAS airfield will aid in onloading/offloading the detector system and ensuring functionality prior to measurements.

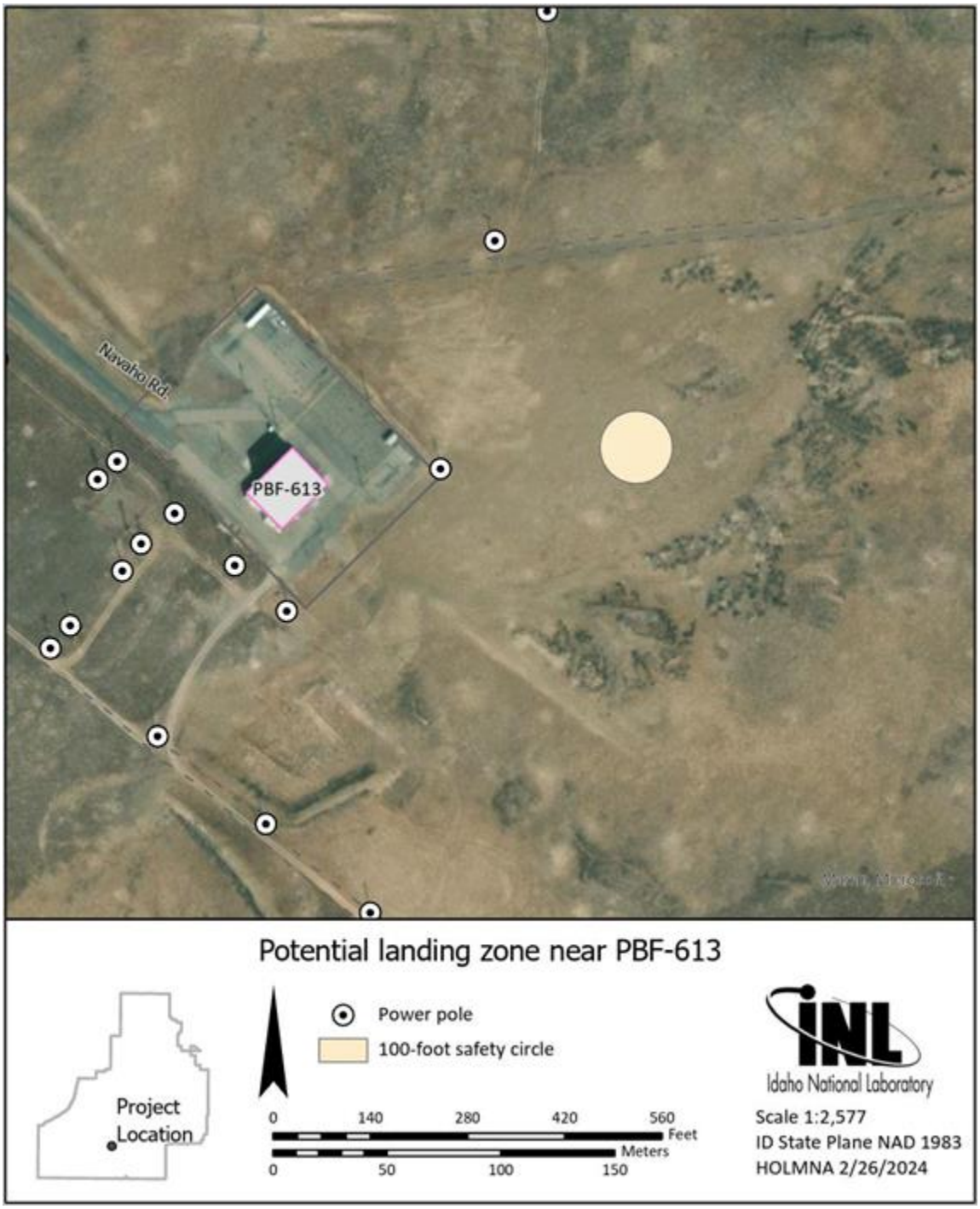
- **Exercise (September 30 - October 4, 2024)** The current plan is to utilize a UH-60 Black Hawk from the mission partner based out of Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho. The helicopter will be utilized on Thursday and Friday October 3 - 4 for transportation of troops from an offsite location to their target facilities of interest at CITRC. Staging will occur at the UAS airfield for loading/offloading of personnel/equipment and then land in the vicinity of Power Burst Facility (PBF)-613.

The helicopters will require a landing area 30 feet x 30 feet with a safety circle of 100 feet at PBF-613 (Pictures 1 and 2). To safely land and take-off (avoiding extensive network of overhead powerlines at CITRC), 200 feet is required not including the 100-foot safety circle. There will be foot traffic but no vehicle traffic around the landing area at PBF-613. There will be one landing/takeoff required for each facility. The flight path (Picture 3) is designated by the blue line and the landing locations are designated by the yellow pins with respective facility names.

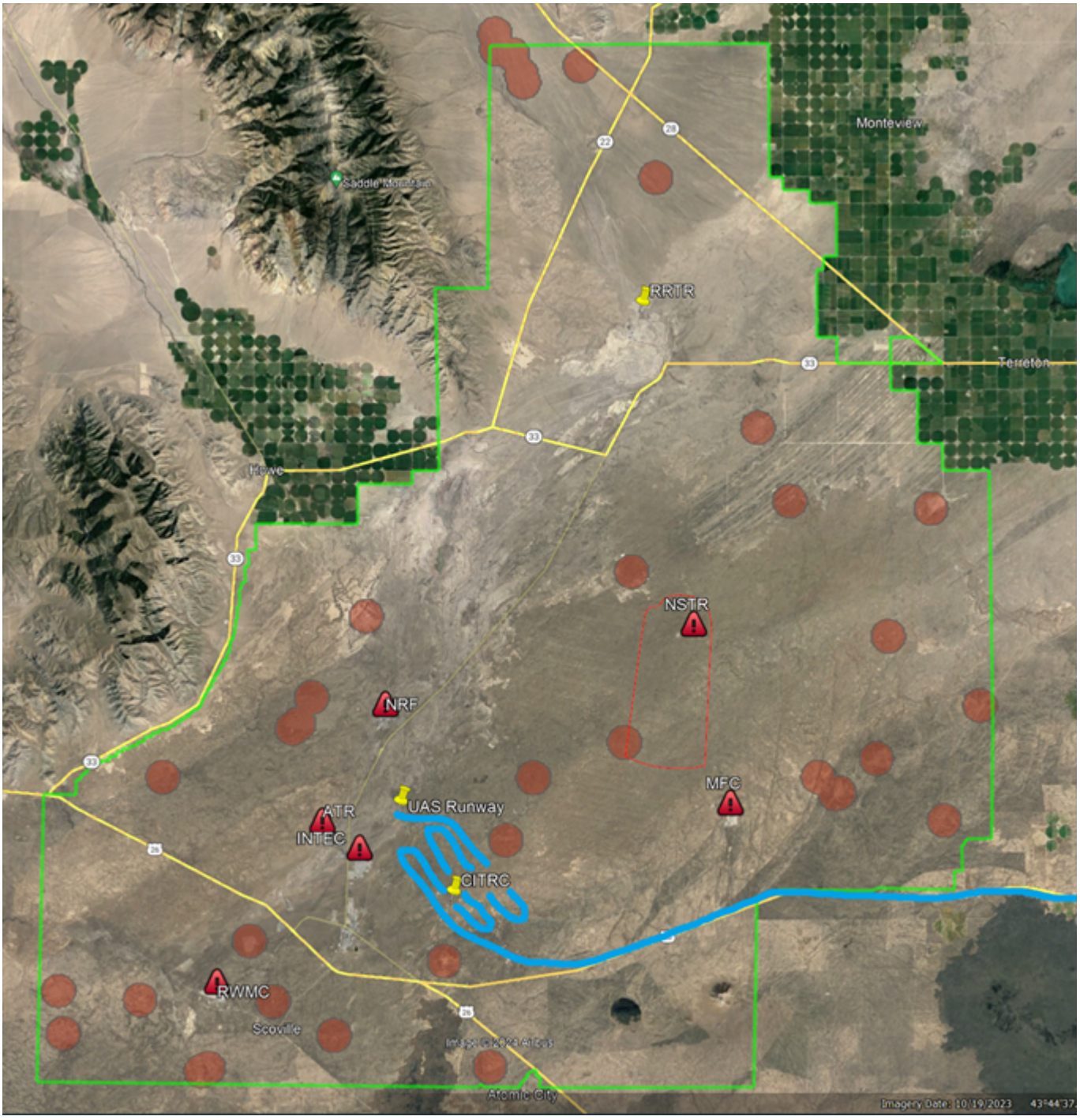
Picture 1: Landing Area (topography):



Picture 2: Landing Area (aerial):



Picture 3: Flight Path:



The refueling operations will occur at the Idaho Falls Airport. The rotary wing aircraft will depart from Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho, and land at the Idaho Falls airport for staging/refueling.

The following roads will be closed at CITRC during the exercises: Apache and Cheyenne Roads.

No waste will be generated in association with this project.

SECTION C. Environmental Aspects or Potential Sources of Impact:

Air Emissions

NA

Discharging to Surface-, Storm-, or Ground Water

NA

Disturbing Cultural or Biological Resources

There is the potential for this work to impact vegetation and for project personnel to interact with various wildlife species. A Biological Resource Review will be arranged within two weeks prior to the initiation of any activities that might disturb soil or vegetation and again following completion of project activities. A nesting bird survey is included with the Biological Resource Review for actions occurring between April 1 - October 1 per compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Bat surveys are also included with the Biological Resource Review in accordance with the INL Bat Protection Plan.

Generating and Managing Waste

NA

Releasing Contaminants

When chemicals are used during the project there is the potential for spills that could impact the environment (air, water, soil).

Using, Reusing, and Conserving Natural Resources

NA

Environmental Justice

Idaho Falls Regional Airport already serves multiple aircraft on a daily basis and is not located within a census tract identified as "disadvantaged" by the CEQ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. The INL site is located in a disadvantaged census tract, but has no permanent residents. Given there is no anticipated waste and the majority of the exercises take place within the boundary of the INL site, there are no anticipated impacts to environmental justice stemming from the activities described in the scope section of this document.

SECTION D. Determine Recommended Level of Environmental Review, Identify Reference(s), and State Justification: Identify the applicable categorical exclusion from 10 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 1021, Appendix B, give the appropriate justification, and the approval date.

For Categorical Exclusions (CXs), the proposed action must not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environmental, safety, and health, or similar requirements of Department of Energy (DOE) or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources (see 10 CFR 1021). In addition, no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal exist that would affect the significance of the action. In addition, the action is not “connected” to other action actions (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1) and is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1608.27(b)(7)).

References: B1.2 "Training exercises and simulations", B3.2 "Aviation activities", B3.11 "Outdoor tests and experiments on materials and equipment components"

Justification: B1.2 Training exercises and simulations (including, but not limited to, firing-range training, small-scale and short-duration force-on-force exercises, emergency response training, fire fighter and rescue training, and decontamination and spill cleanup training) conducted under appropriately controlled conditions and in accordance with applicable requirements.

B3.2 Aviation activities for survey, monitoring, or security purposes that comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

B3.11 Outdoor tests and experiments for the development, quality assurance, or reliability of materials and equipment (including, but not limited to, weapon system components) under controlled conditions. Covered actions include, but are not limited to, burn tests (such as tests of electric cable fire resistance or the combustion characteristics of fuels), impact tests (such as pneumatic ejector tests using earthen embankments or concrete slabs designated and routinely used for that purpose), or drop, puncture, water-immersion, or thermal tests. Covered actions would not involve source, special nuclear, or byproduct materials, except encapsulated sources manufactured to applicable standards that contain source, special nuclear, or byproduct materials may be used for nondestructive actions such as detector/sensor development and testing and first responder field training.

Is the project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) ☐ Yes ☒ No

Approved by Robert Douglas Herzog, DOE-ID NEPA Compliance Officer on: 4/3/2024