

## **APPENDIX C**

### **INITIAL AGENCY COORDINATION LETTER AND RESPONSES**

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National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**Goddard Space Flight Center**  
**Wallops Flight Facility**  
**Wallops Island, VA 23337**



Reply to Attn of: 250.W

October 9, 2009

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
1849 C Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir or Madam:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts associated with an increase in conventional suborbital scientific balloon missions. For over 25 years, NASA has operated conventional, suborbital balloon launches from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) located in Fort Sumner, New Mexico and Palestine, Texas. NASA proposes to increase the number of conventional balloon missions from CSBF Fort Sumner from 15 launches to 25 launches annually. Conventional suborbital scientific balloons launched from the CSBF Palestine would continue at approximately 6 balloon missions per year.

Conventional suborbital balloons are used to conduct scientific studies. The balloon system includes a helium-filled balloon, a parachute, and payload. Scientific balloons can reach altitudes of 42 kilometers (26 miles), carry payloads up to 3,600 kilograms (8,000 pounds), and stay aloft for up to 36 hours. The balloon and payload are monitored throughout the duration of the mission by CSBF staff. Once the scientific data is collected, a radio command is sent from the ground station to separate the payload from the balloon. The payload, with an attached parachute, descends back to the ground. The balloon is terminated and descends separately. A team consisting of 3 to 4 CSBF personnel and 1 to 2 scientists is dispatched to collect the balloon, parachute, and payload. The enclosed figure provides a 10-year history of balloon and payload collection points for launches from both Fort Sumner and Palestine.

NASA is requesting input from other federal and state agencies on the proposal. We respectfully request that you provide comments or concerns by November 9, 2009; however, we will consider comments received at any time during the environmental process to the extent possible.

Please contact me at (757) 824-2319 or Ms. Shari Silbert at (757) 824-2327 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

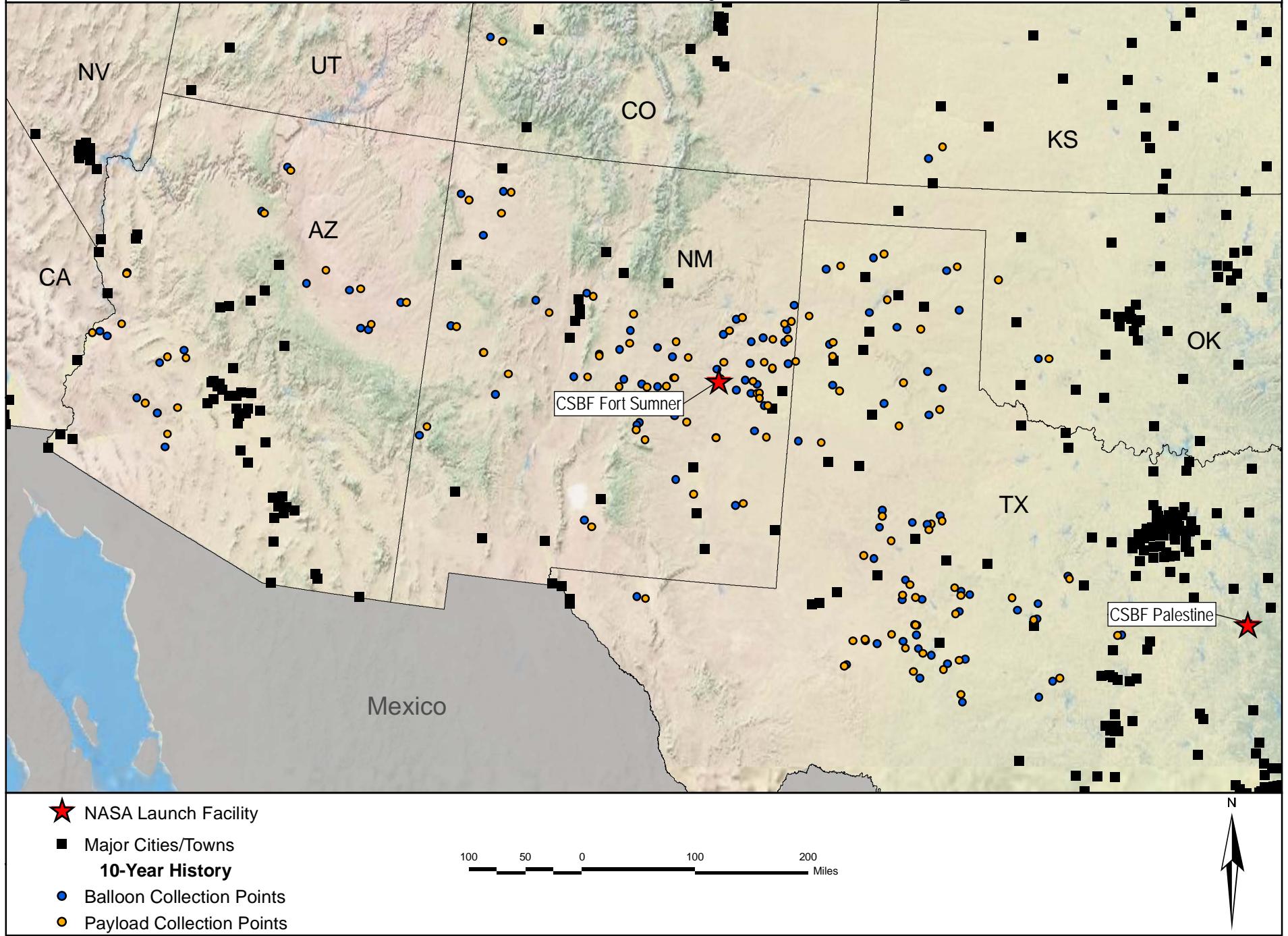
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua A. Bundick".

Joshua A. Bundick  
Lead, Environmental Planning

Enclosure

# Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) Operational Areas



National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**Goddard Space Flight Center**  
**Wallops Flight Facility**  
**Wallops Island, VA 23337**



Reply to Attn of: 250.W

March 22, 2010

Dr. Jeffrey Blythe  
THPO  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
P.O. Box 507  
Dulce, NM 87528-0507

Dear Dr. Blythe:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts associated with an increase in conventional suborbital scientific balloon missions. For over 25 years, NASA has operated conventional, suborbital balloon launches from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) located in Fort Sumner, New Mexico and Palestine, Texas. NASA proposes to increase the number of conventional balloon missions from CSBF Fort Sumner from 15 launches to 25 launches annually. Conventional suborbital scientific balloons launched from the CSBF Palestine would continue at approximately 6 balloon missions per year.

Conventional suborbital balloons are used to conduct scientific studies. The balloon system includes a helium-filled balloon, a parachute, and payload. Scientific balloons can reach altitudes of 42 kilometers (26 miles), carry payloads up to 3,600 kilograms (8,000 pounds), and stay aloft for up to 36 hours. The balloon and payload are monitored throughout the duration of the mission by CSBF staff. Once the scientific data is collected, a radio command is sent from the ground station to separate the payload from the balloon. The payload, with an attached parachute, descends back to the ground. The balloon is terminated and descends separately. A team consisting of 3 to 4 CSBF personnel and 1 to 2 scientists is dispatched to collect the balloon, parachute, and payload. The enclosed figure provides a 10-year history of balloon and payload collection points for launches from both Fort Sumner and Palestine.

As balloons and payloads have infrequently descended onto tribal lands (Enclosure 1), NASA is requesting input from local tribal officers on the proposal. We respectfully request that you provide comments or concerns by April 22, 2010; however, we will consider comments received at any time during the environmental process to the extent

possible. Additionally, to facilitate an expeditious recovery of a balloon or payload from tribal lands, we request that you provide a point of contact for future coordination.

Please contact me at (757) 824-2319 or Ms. Shari Silbert at (757) 824-2327 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

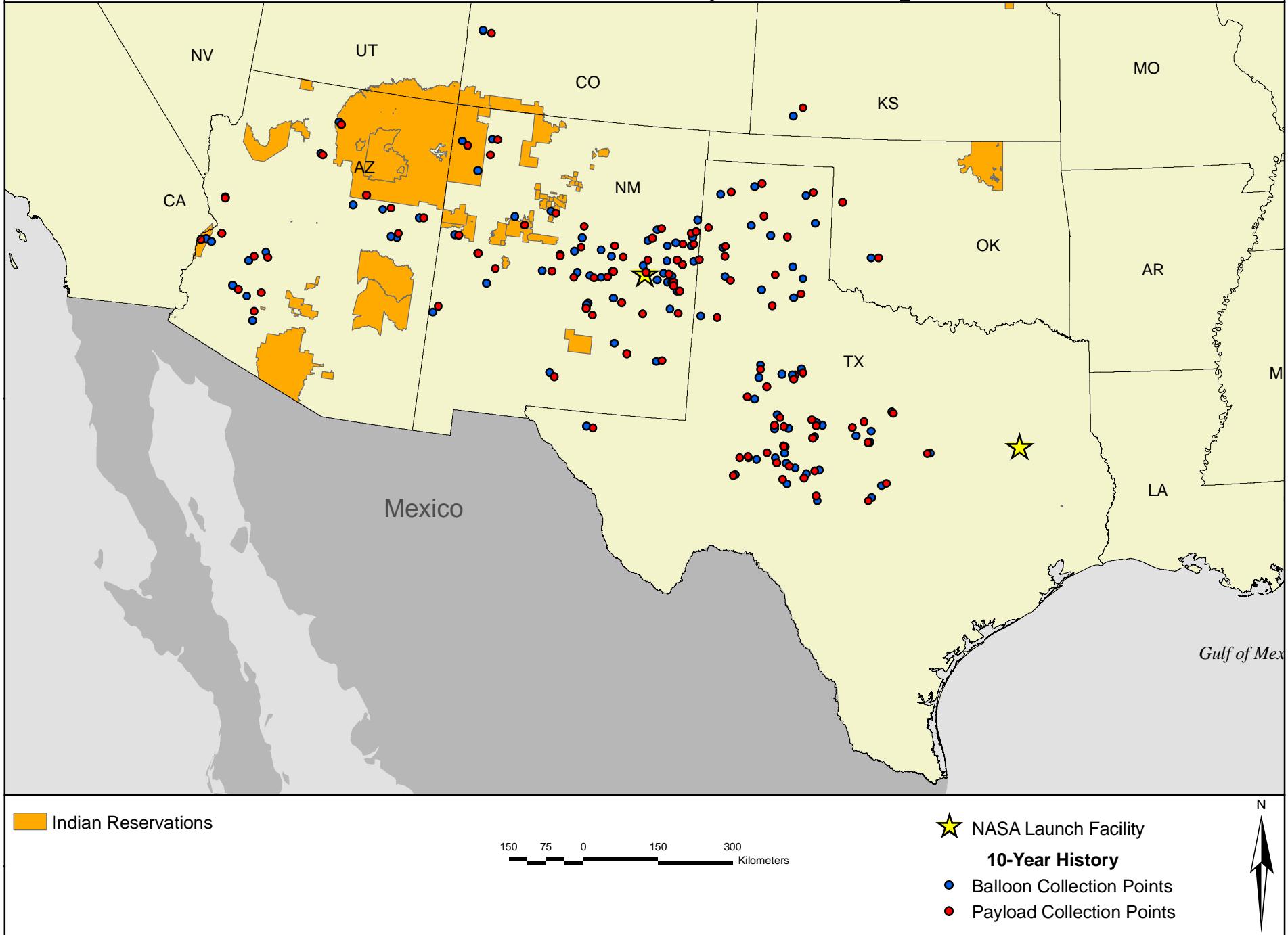
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua A. Bundick".

Joshua A. Bundick  
Lead, Environmental Planning

Enclosure

# Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) Operational Areas



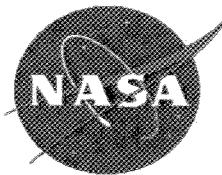
National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**Goddard Space Flight Center**  
**Wallops Flight Facility**  
**Wallops Island, VA 23337**

RECEIVED

OCT 13 2009

Texas Historical Commission



Reply to Attn of: 250.W

October 9, 2009

Texas Historical Commission  
PO Box 12276  
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Dear Sir or Madam:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts associated with an increase in conventional suborbital scientific balloon missions. For over 25 years, NASA has operated conventional, suborbital balloon launches from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) located in Fort Sumner, New Mexico and Palestine, Texas. NASA proposes to increase the number of conventional balloon missions from CSBF Fort Sumner from 15 launches to 25 launches annually. Conventional suborbital scientific balloons launched from the CSBF Palestine would continue at approximately 6 balloon missions per year.

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NASA is requesting input from other federal and state agencies on the proposal. We respectfully request that you provide comments or concerns by November 9, 2009; however, we will consider comments received at any time during the environmental process to the extent possible.

NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED PROJECT MAY PROCEED	
by _____	
for Mark Wolfe	
State Historic Preservation Officer	
Date	10/13/09
Track#	

Please contact me at (757) 824-2319 or Ms. Shari Silbert at (757) 824-2327 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

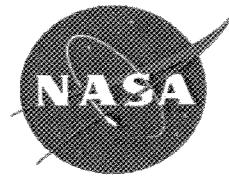
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua A. Bundick".

Joshua A. Bundick  
Lead, Environmental Planning

Enclosure

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Goddard Space Flight Center**  
**Wallops Flight Facility**  
**Wallops Island, VA 23337**

JVB  
087903



Reply to Attn of: 250.W

October 9, 2009

Katherine Slick, SHPO  
New Mexico Historic Preservation Division  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
Bataan Memorial Building, 407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Ms. Slick:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts associated with an increase in conventional suborbital scientific balloon missions. For over 25 years, NASA has operated conventional, suborbital balloon launches from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) located in Fort Sumner, New Mexico and Palestine, Texas. NASA proposes to increase the number of conventional balloon missions from CSBF Fort Sumner from 15 launches to 25 launches annually. Conventional suborbital scientific balloons launched from the CSBF Palestine would continue at approximately 6 balloon missions per year.

Conventional suborbital balloons are used to conduct scientific studies. The balloon system includes a helium-filled balloon, a parachute, and payload. Scientific balloons can reach altitudes of 42 kilometers (26 miles), carry payloads up to 3,600 kilograms (8,000 pounds), and stay aloft for up to 36 hours. The balloon and payload are monitored throughout the duration of the mission by CSBF staff. Once the scientific data is collected, a radio command is sent from the ground station to separate the payload from the balloon. The payload, with an attached parachute, descends back to the ground. The balloon is terminated and descends separately. A team consisting of 3 to 4 CSBF personnel and 1 to 2 scientists is dispatched to collect the balloon, parachute, and payload. The enclosed figure provides a 10-year history of balloon and payload collection points for launches from both Fort Sumner and Palestine.

NASA is requesting input from other federal and state agencies on the proposal. We respectfully request that you provide comments or concerns by November 9, 2009; however, we will consider comments received at any time during the environmental process to the extent possible.

Please contact me at (757) 824-2319 or Ms. Shari Silbert at (757) 824-2327 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Joshua A. Bundick  
Lead, Environmental Planning

Enclosure

Please provide a more thorough description of the actions and potential to affect cultural resources along with the results of NASA's tribal consultation efforts pursuant to complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.  
Please provide



Jan U. Biallo 10/16/09  
Native SHPO



OFFICE of ARCHAEOLOGY and HISTORIC PRESERVATION

19 October 2009

CHS #55816

Joshua A. Bundick  
Lead, Environmental Planning  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Goddard Space Flight Center  
Wallops Flight Facility  
Wallops Island, VA 23337

RE: Balloon and Payload Recovery, Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility, Fort Sumner,  
De Baca County, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Bundick:

Thank you for your recent correspondence dated 9 October 2009, concerning the potential impacts associated with the recovery of balloons and payloads launched from the CSBF in New Mexico. Our office has reviewed the submitted materials. Our office feels that the potential impact on cultural resources is likely to be minimal, assuming that the recovery teams travel to the vicinity of the landing site by vehicle and then make the final approach to the landing site on foot. If a vehicle is used to approach the landing site itself, it is possible that archaeological resources could be impacted by the off-road activity.

If you have any questions, please contact Joseph Saldibar, Architectural Services Manager, at (303) 866-3741.

Sincerely,

Edward C. Nichols  
State Historic Preservation Officer, and  
President, Colorado Historical Society



# United States Department of the Interior

TM& RV  
10/27/09



In Reply Refer To  
1795(00600)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Amarillo Field Office - Helium Operations  
801 South Fillmore, Suite 500  
Amarillo, TX 79101-3545  
[www.blm.gov/nm](http://www.blm.gov/nm)

October 21, 2009

Mr. Joshua A. Bundick  
Lead, Environmental Planning  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Goddard Space Flight Center  
Wallops Flight Facility  
Attention: 250.W  
Wallops Island, VA 23337

Dear Mr. Bundick:

This is in response to your letter dated October 9, 2009, requesting comments for an environmental assessment on suborbital scientific balloon missions that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is preparing.

The Bureau of Land Management, Amarillo Field Office, can foresee no real impacts to any of the resources it manages relative to an increase in conventional, suborbital balloon launches from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facilities at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and Palestine, Texas. Should any of your balloons, payloads, or parachutes land on the Crossbar Cooperative Management Area, the 12,000 acre tract of public land that we manage northwest of Amarillo, Texas, your personnel will need to contact this office in order to gain access to the lands.

Please contact Paul Tanner, Natural Resource Specialist, at (806) 356-1008 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive ink that reads "Leslie A. Theiss".

Leslie A. Theiss  
Field Manager, Amarillo

# KANSAS

KSR&C No. 0410-142

Kansas Historical Society  
Cultural Resources Division

MARK PARKINSON, GOVERNOR

October 21, 2009

Joshua A. Bundick  
Lead, Environmental Planning  
Goddard Space Flight Center  
Wallop Flight Facility  
Code 250.W  
Wallop Island VA 23337

RE: Suborbital Scientific Balloon Missions  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Statewide

Dear Mr. Bundick:

The Kansas State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed its cultural resources files for the area of the above referenced project in accordance with 36 CFR 800. The project as proposed should have no effect on properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places or otherwise identified in our files. This office has no objection to implementation of the project.

Any changes to the project area that include additional ground disturbing activities will need to be reviewed by this office prior to beginning construction. If construction work uncovers buried archaeological materials, work should cease in the area of the discovery and this office should be notified immediately.

This information is provided at your request to assist you in identifying historic properties, as specified in 36 CFR 800 for Section 106 consultation procedures. If you have questions or need additional information regarding these comments, please contact Tim Weston 785-272-8681 (ex. 214). Please refer to the Kansas Review & Compliance number (KSR&C#) above on all future correspondence relating to this project.

Sincerely,

Jennie Chinn  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Patrick Zollner  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer



NEW MEXICO  
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT



*Office of the Secretary*

BILL RICHARDSON  
Governor

Harold Runnels Building  
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)  
PO Box 5469, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469  
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836  
[www.nmenv.state.nm.us](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us)

RON CURRY  
Secretary  
Jon Goldstein  
Deputy Secretary

October 27, 2009

National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Goddard Space Flight Center  
Wallops Flight Facility  
Wallops Island, VA 23337

**ATTN: 250.W**

**RE: Proposed Increase in Conventional Balloon Missions from the Columbia Scientific  
Balloon Facility, Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico**

Your letter regarding the above named project was received in the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and was sent to various Bureaus for review and comment. Comments were provided by the Air Quality Bureau and are as follows.

**Air Quality Bureau**

The New Mexico Environment Department-Air Quality Bureau has reviewed the documents submitted with respect to the proposed increase in suborbital balloon launches from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) located in Fort Sumner, De Baca County. De Baca County is currently considered to be in attainment with all New Mexico and National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Support engine use associated with conventional balloon missions, such as emergency or stand-by generators at launch sites within the CSBF, may be subject to air quality permitting and modeling requirements in 20.2.72 NMAC. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the regulatory authority responsible for the assessment of the permitting and regulatory requirements of air quality impacts associated with the operation and deployment of suborbital balloons.

I hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Georgia Cleverley, Environmental Impact Review Coordinator  
NMED File #3075



**Oklahoma Historical Society**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**

*Founded May 27, 1893*

Oklahoma History Center • 2401 North Laird Ave. • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7914  
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • [www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm)

November 4, 2009

Mr. Joshua A. Bundick  
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center  
Wallops Flight Facility  
Wallops Island, VA 23337

RE: File #0113-10; NASA Proposed Suborbital Balloon Launches

Dear Mr. Bundick:

The referenced project does not include construction or earth-moving activities. Comments or opinions by this office are inappropriate for this project.

Should further projects include construction or earth-moving activities, an opinion should be requested from this office.

If you have any questions, please contact Timothy G. Baugh, Ph.D., Historical Archaeologist, at 405/521-6381.

Further correspondence pertaining to this project must reference the above underlined file number. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

MH:jr



JAS  
11/16/09

# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

New Mexico State Office

1474 Rodeo Rd.

P.O. Box 27115

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0115

[www.blm.gov/nm](http://www.blm.gov/nm)



IN REPLY REFER TO:

10CC008  
1790 (P0100)

November 10, 2009

Joshua A. Bundick  
Goddard Space Flight Center  
Wallops Flight Facility  
Wallops Island, VA 23337

Dear Mr. Bundick:

This is in reply to your letter dated October 9, 2009, on the proposal to increase suborbital balloon flights from 15 to 25. The flights originate from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility (CSBF) in Fort Sumner, NM.

Suborbital balloon flights are used to conduct scientific studies. The helium-filled balloon can reach altitudes of 26 miles and carry payloads of up to 8,000 pounds. After the data is collected the payload is separated from the balloon and descends via parachute. The balloon itself descends separately. A team of four to six people recover the payload, parachute and balloon.

Recovery of the payload, parachute and balloon requires cross-country (off road) travel. The only resource issue of concern is off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel. The bulk of the Roswell Field Office has an OHV designation of "Limited," meaning OHV use is limited to existing roads and trails. There can be, however, exceptions to this designation as described on page 28 of the 2008 Special Status Species Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA). The RMPA describes scientific groups engaged in research or resource assessment as being exempt from OHV restrictions. Recovery of scientific balloon missions falls into this exemption.

Given the randomness of the payload collection points (see the map that accompanied this request), it is highly unlikely that payloads would land in the same place more than once. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) does not feel it is necessary to issue a permit for this activity, but should some entity insist that CSBF obtain a permit from the (BLM) to conduct its operations, the BLM could grant a blanket permit per the National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (H-1790-1), Appendix 3, BLM Categorical Exclusions, J. 6, which states:

"A single trip in a one month period for data collection or observation sites."

Finally, the Roswell Field Office encourages continued scientific flights from CSBF in Fort Sumner, NM. Experience has shown on those occasions when a balloon is visible just before dusk, the general populace in and around Roswell asks questions about the shiny, metallic object in the sky. This in turn adds to the mystique and legend of Roswell, NM.

For additional information contact Howard Parman, Planning & Environmental Coordinator, at (575) 627-0212.

Sincerely,



Linda S.C. Rundell  
State Director

**White Mountain Apache Tribe Heritage Program**  
**PO Box 507 Fort Apache,AZ 85926**  
**1 (928) 338-3033 Fax: (928) 338-6055**

**To:** Joshua A. Bundick, NASA Lead Environmental Planning  
**Date:** April 21, 2010  
**Project:** EA to analyze possible effects from the Conventional Suborbital Scientific Balloons.

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The White Mountain Apache Historic Preservation Office (THPO) appreciates receiving information on the proposed project, dated April 13, 2010. In regards to this, please attend to the checked items below.

- ***There is no need to send additional information unless project planning or implementation results in the discovery of sites and/or items having known or suspected Apache Cultural affiliation.***
- The proposed project is located within an area of probable cultural or historical importance to the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT). As part of the effort to identify historical properties that maybe affected by the project we recommend an ethno-historic study and interviews with Apache Elders. The Cultural Resource Director, **Mr. Ramon Riley** would be the contact person at (928) 338-4625 should this become necessary.
- Please refer to the attached additional notes in regards to the proposed project:

We have received and reviewed the information regarding the proposed development of an Environmental Assessment to analyze potential impacts associated with an increase in conventional suborbital scientific balloon missions and we've determined the proposed project to increase the number of launches will not have an effect on the White Mountain Apache tribe's Cultural Heritage Resources and/or historic properties. In conclusion, should it become necessary to contact tribal officials for retrieving such equipments from tribal lands you may contact myself and/or the tribe's Game & Fish Department at (928) 338-4385.

We look forward to continued collaborations in the protection and preservation of places of cultural and historical significance.

Sincerely,

Mark T. Altaha  
White Mountain Apache Tribe  
Historic Preservation Officer  
Email: [markaltaha@wmat.nsn.us](mailto:markaltaha@wmat.nsn.us)