

Glossary

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100-year flood	A flood with a magnitude that may occur once every 100 years on average. An area has a 1-in-100 chance of being inundated during any single year.
Access (road)	Road used for passage to project sites and along utility corridors for purposes of construction, operation, and maintenance.
Acre-foot	Volume of water (43,560 cubic feet) that would cover 1 acre, 1 foot deep. Equivalent to 325,851.3 gallons.
Aesthetic quality	A perception of the beauty of a natural or cultural landscape.
Affected environment	Existing biological, physical, social, and economic conditions of an area subject to change, both directly and indirectly, as the result of a proposed human action.
Air quality	Measure of the health-related and visual characteristics of the air, often derived from quantitative measurements of the concentrations of specific injurious or contaminating substances.
Air quality classes	Classifications established under the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) portion of the Clean Air Act that limit the amount of air pollution considered significant within an area. Class I applies to areas where almost any change in air quality would be significant; Class II applies to areas where the deterioration normally accompanying moderate well-controlled growth would be permitted; and Class III applies to areas where industrial deterioration would generally be allowed.
Alluvial fan	Cone-shaped deposits of alluvium made by a stream. Fans generally form where streams emerge from mountains onto the lowland.
Alluvial, alluvium	Relating to material deposited by running water, such as clay, silt, sand, and gravel. Sedimentary material transported and deposited by the action of flowing water.
Alternative (action)	An option for meeting the stated purpose and need.
Alternative (route)	An optional path or direction for a road, pipeline, or transmission line.
Ambient	The surrounding natural conditions (or environment) in a given place and time.

Animal Unit Month (AUM)	The amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent (one cow, bull, steer, heifer, horse, burro, mule, five sheep, or five goats over the age of 6 months at the time of entering the public lands or other lands administered by BLM) for a period of 1 month.
Aquatic	Growing or living in or near the water.
Aquifer	A stratum or body of permeable rock, sand, etc. that contains water. Water source for a well.
Archaeology	The scientific study of the life and culture of ancient peoples, as by excavation of ancient cities, relics, or artifacts.
Area of Critical Environmental Concern	A BLM designation for an area within public lands where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes; or to protect life from natural hazards.
Artifact	Any object showing human workmanship or modification, especially from a prehistoric or historic culture.
Assessment (environment)	An evaluation of existing resources and potential impacts on them from a proposed act or change to the environment.
Avifauna	Birds of a specified region or time.
Ballast	Gravel or broken stone laid in a railroad bed.
Cambrian	The earliest geologic period in the Paleozoic Era, spanning the time of 570 to 500 million years ago, and marked by a profusion of marine animals.
Candidate species	A plant or animal species not yet officially listed as threatened or endangered, but which is undergoing status review by the USFWS.
Capability	The ability to generate or transmit power.
Capacity	The maximum load that can be generated or transmitted by generating or transmission facilities for a given period of time without exceeding approved limits of temperature or stress.
Clean Water Act	Provides for pollution control activities and funding at the federal level including grant programs, research and related programs, as well as provisions for setting standards and enforcement actions.
Connected action	A project that is closely related to but not a part of the proposed project.

corvid	A family of birds that contains crows, ravens, rooks, jackdaws, jays, magpies, treepies, and nutcrackers.
Council on Environmental Quality	An advisory council to the President established by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It reviews federal programs for their effort on the environment studies, and advises the President on environmental matters.
Cubic feet per second	Unit of discharge, or volume rate of flow, equal to 0.0283 cubic meters per second. As a rate of streamflow, a cubic foot of water passing a referenced section in 1 second. A measure of a moving volume of water (1 cfs = 0.0283 m ³ /s).
Cultural resources	A broad, general term meaning any cultural property reflecting past human activity or use that has a definite location, and any traditional lifeway value important to a contemporary social and/or cultural group's traditional systems of religious belief, cultural practices, or social interaction.
Cumulative impact	The impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions—regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7).
Demand	The energy requirement (load) placed upon a utility's generation at any specific point in time. A utility's demand (energy needed) increases and decreases instantaneously as consumers turn their electrical appliances on or off. Demand is increased or decreased in such terms as watts, kilowatts, and megawatts.
Direct effect	Caused by the action and occurs at the same time and place (40 CFR 1508.8(a)).
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	A detailed written statement as required by Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA.
Effect (also see Impact)	
Emergent (vegetation)	Vegetation with all or part of their vegetative and reproductive parts above the water.
Endangered species	Any species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Endemic	Plants or animals that are native to a particular region or country.

Environment	The surrounding conditions, influences or forces that affect or modify an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival.
Environmental Impact Statement	A formal public document prepared to analyze the impacts on the environment of the proposed project or action and released for comment and review. An EIS must meet the requirements of NEPA, CEQ guidelines, and directives of the agency responsible for the proposed project or action.
Environmental Impact Statement, Final	The final version of the public document required by NEPA.
Ephemeral	Present only during a portion of the year. Generally refers to water courses.
Evapotranspiration	The combined loss of water from a given area and during a specific period of time by evaporation from the soil surface and by transpiration from plants.
Fault	A fracture or fracture zone in the earth's surface along which there has been displacement of the sides relative to one another.
Fauna	The wildlife or animals of a specified region or time.
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	Agency primarily responsible for ensuring adequate energy supplies at just and reasonable rates and providing regulatory incentives for increased productivity, efficiency, and competition.
Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976	Public Law 94-579 signed by the President on October 21, 1976. Established public land policy for management lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). FLPMA specifies several key directions for the BLM, notably: 1) management on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield; 2) land use plans prepared to guide management actions; 3) public lands for the protection, development, and enhancement of resources; 4) public lands retained in federal ownership; and 5) public participation used in reaching management decisions.
Floodplain	That flat portion of a river or stream valley adjacent to the river channel that is built of sediments and is inundated with water when the stream overflows its banks.
Fossil	The remains or traces of an organism or assemblage of organisms that have been preserved by natural processes in the earth's crust.

Generation	Process of producing electrical energy by transforming other forms of energy; also, amount of electric energy produced, expressed in kilowatt hours.
Geologic formation	A rock unit distinguished from adjacent deposits by some common physical characteristic, such as its composition, origin, color, or age.
Geology	The science that studies the earth. The materials, processes, environments, and history of the planet, especially the lithosphere, including the rocks and their formation and structure.
Habitat	The region where a plant or animal naturally grows or lives. A specific set of physical conditions that surround a single species, a group of species, or a large community. In wildlife management, the major components of habitat are considered to be food, water, cover, and home range.
Hydrology	The science that studies the properties, distribution, and circulation of natural surface water and ground water.
Impact	A modification in the status of the environment brought about by a proposed action.
Indirect effect	Caused by the action later in time or farther removed in distance, but still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include: growth inducing effect and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use; population density or growth rate; and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.
Infrastructure	The basic installations and facilities on which the continuance and growth of a community depend (for example, roads, schools, sewers, power plants, transportation, and communication systems).
Isolate/Isolated Artifact	A single artifact, feature, or object not associated with other cultural resources. An isolate is not normally considered a property.
Isopleth	A line on a map connecting points at which a given variable has a specified constant value.
Kilovolt	1,000 volts (a volt is a measure of electrical potential difference that would cause a current of 1 ampere to flow through a conductor whose resistance is 1 ohm).
Kilowatt	A unit of power equivalent to 1,000 watts.

Landform	A term used to describe the many types of land surfaces that exist as a result of geologic activity and weathering (for example, plateaus, mountains, plains, and valleys).
Lithic	Pertaining to stone or a stone tool (for example, lithic artifact).
Lithology	The appearance, structure, and composition of rocks as determined by study with the unaided eye or with little magnification.
Megawatt	1,000 kilowatts or 1 million watts (a watt is a unit of electrical power equal to 1/756th horsepower).
Migratory	Birds, animals, or people that migrate or move from one region or country to another.
Mineral resource	Any inorganic or organic substance occurring naturally in the earth that has a consistent and distinctive set of physical properties. Examples of mineral resources include coal, nickel, gold, silver, and copper.
Mississippian	A period of the Paleozoic Era, spanning in time from about 345 to 320 million years ago.
Mitigate	To alleviate, reduce, or render less intense or severe.
Mitigation	Action taken to avoid, reduce the severity of, or eliminate an adverse impact.
National Ambient Air Quality Standards	Air quality standards established by the Clean Air Act. The primary NAAQS are intended to protect the public health with an adequate margin of safety; the secondary NAAQS are intended to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969	Public Law 91-190. Establishes environmental policy for the nation. Among other items, NEPA requires federal agencies to consider environmental values in decision-making processes.
National Register of Historic Places	A listing of architectural, historical, archaeological, and cultural sites of local, state, or national significance, established by the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and maintained by the National Park Service.
Native vegetation	Vegetation originating in a certain region or country.
Nonattainment area	An air quality control region (or portion thereof) in which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that ambient air concentrations exceed national ambient air quality standards for one or more criteria pollutants.

Ozone	A form of oxygen, O ₃ , produced especially when an electric spark is passed through oxygen or air.
Paleontology	The science that deals with the life of past geological ages through the study of the fossil remains of organisms.
Paleozoic	The geologic era between the Precambrian and Mesozoic eras covering the time between 550 million and 225 million years ago. The era was characterized by the development of the first fishes, amphibians, reptiles, and land plants.
Particulates	Minute, separate particles, such as dust or other air pollutants.
Pennsylvanian	A period of the Paleozoic Era, spanning from about 320 million to 280 million years ago.
Perennial	Lasting, or active through the whole year. May refer to rivers, streams, or plants.
Permeability	The measure of the ease with which a fluid can diffuse through a particular porous materials.
Permian	The seventh and last period of the Paleozoic Era, spanning from about 280 to 225 million years ago, characterized by increased reptile life and major mountain building in North America.
Petroglyph	A symbolic design or drawing or an animal or human pecked or carved into a rock or cliff face—generally prehistoric.
Physiographic Province	A large area characterized by distinctive topography, geologic structure, and other features and phenomena of nature.
Plateau	An elevated tract of relatively level land, such as a tableland or large mesa.
Playa	The shallow central lake basin of a desert plain, in which water gathers after a rain and is evaporated.
Pleistocene	The first geologic epoch during the Quaternary period, spanning from 1.8 million years ago to approximately 10,000 years ago, characterized by extensive continental glaciation in the Northern Hemisphere.
Policy	A guiding principle upon which is based a specific decision or set of decisions.
Power	Measure of the amount of energy (work) being used at a specific point in time. Power is measured in such terms as watts, kilowatts, and megawatts. Power implies capacity in addition to energy.

Precambrian	The earliest geologic era covering all time from the formation of the earth and ending at the Paleozoic Era, which began about 520 million years ago.
Primitive	An area that is not developed, a pristine natural area.
Quaternary	The geologic period following the Tertiary in the Cenozoic Era, beginning about 1.8 million years ago, composed of the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs, characterized by the evolution of Hominids into modern humans.
Range	A large, open area of land over which livestock can wander and graze.
Raptor	A bird of prey.
Rare	A plant or animal restricted in distribution. May be locally abundant in a limited area or few in number over a wide area.
Reclamation	Returning disturbed lands to a form and productivity that will be ecologically balanced.
Region	A large tract of land generally recognized as having similar character types and physiographic types.
Revegetation	The reestablishment and development of self-sustaining plant cover. On disturbed sites, this normally requires human assistance such as reseeding.
Right-of-way	Strip of land acquired by legal means, over which the utility corridors and access roads would pass.
Sacred site	Any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative has informed the agency of the existence of such a site.
Scenic quality class	The designation (A, B, or C) assigned a scenic quality rating unit to indicate the visual importance or quality of a unit relative to other units within the same physiographic province (BLM designation).
Scenic quality rating unit	A portion of the landscape that displays primarily homogeneous visual characteristics of the basic landscape features (landform, water, vegetation, and structures and modifications) that separate it from the surrounding landscape.

Sediment	Solid fragmental material, either mineral or organic, that is transported or deposited by air, water, gravity, or ice.
Seismicity	The relative frequency and distribution of earthquakes.
Semiarid	A climate or region characterized by little yearly rainfall and by the growth of a number of short grasses and shrubs.
Sensitive species	Species whose populations are small and widely dispersed or restricted to a few localities. Species that are listed or candidates for listing by the state or federal government.
Sensitivity	The state of being readily affected by the actions of external influence.
Site	In archaeology, any locale showing evidence of human activity.
Socioeconomic	Of or involving both social and economic factors.
Species	A group of individuals of common ancestry that closely resemble each other structurally and physiologically, and in nature interbreed to produce fertile offspring.
Spring	A place where ground water flows naturally onto the land surface; often the source of a stream.
Strata	Plural of stratum, which is a layer of sedimentary rock that was originally deposited horizontally.
Study area	A given geographical area delineated for specific research.
Subspecies	Any natural subdivision of a species that exhibits small, but persistent morphological variations from other subdivisions of the same species living in different geographical regions or times.
Substrate	Sediment that lies beneath the surface of the earth.
Take	A prohibited action under federal law, except where authorized. To harass, harm, pursue, hunt, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect a federally listed threatened or endangered species, or to attempt to do so. Take may include disturbance of the listed species, nest, or habitat, when disturbance is extensive enough to disrupt normal behavioral patterns for the species, although the affected individuals may not actually die.
Talus	A pile of rock debris at the foot of a cliff or steep slope.
Tertiary	The first period in the Cenozoic Era, spanning from 65 to 1.8 million years ago characterized by the development of mammals.

Threatened species	Any species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant part of its range.
Topography	The relative positions and elevations of surface features of an area.
Traditional cultural property	A term referring to a tangible site, district, structure, building, or object with defensible boundaries that is important to a contemporary human community and has been for 50 years or more, that has significance under one or more criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, and with integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association in the perspective of those who value the place.
Triassic	The first period in the Mesozoic Era, spanning from 225 to 190 million years ago and following the Permian Period of the Paleozoic Era; characterized by the first appearance of many reptiles, including the dinosaurs.
Tributary	A stream or river that flows into a larger stream or river.
Utility corridor	A route used by a utility for pipelines and transmission lines.
Vegetation community	Species of plants that commonly live together in the same region or ecotone.
View shed	Visible portion of the specific landscape seen from a specific viewpoint, normally limited by landform, vegetation, distance, and existing cultural modifications.
Visual resource management class	Classification of landscapes according to the kinds of structures and changes that are acceptable to meet established visual goals (BLM).
Waters of the United States	All waters that are currently used, were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce including adjacent wetlands and tributaries to waters of the United States; and all waters by which the use, degradation, or destruction of which would affect or could affect interstate or foreign commerce.
Wetlands	Lands or areas exhibiting hydric soils, saturated or inundated soil during some portion of the plant growing season, and plant species tolerant of such conditions (includes swamps, marshes, bogs).
Wind rose	A diagram which depicts the frequency and intensity of winds from various directions for a particular location.

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