

# SunZia Southwest TRANSMISSION PROJECT

NEWSLETTER #3

APRIL 2010

## PROJECT UPDATE

### Additional Scoping Meetings in Arizona and New Mexico

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is holding additional scoping meetings in two locations to discuss with the public the expansion of the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project (SunZia Project) study area to include potential alternative routes. Two open house meetings will be held in the following communities:

- Socorro, New Mexico – April 27, 2010
- Tucson, Arizona – April 29, 2010

The BLM is soliciting public comment on the study area expansion during the **scoping comment period that will end on June 10, 2010.**

*Meeting details are provided on the back page of this newsletter.*

## Project Background

The SunZia Project is a proposed high-capacity transmission project planned between New Mexico and Arizona. The SunZia Project would include the construction and operation of up to two 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines and new intermediary substations within an estimated 500-mile-long corridor. The project is focused on delivering renewable energy resources to the western United States by providing an expected 3,000 megawatts or more of new transmission capacity. The BLM is considering a right-of-way application submitted by the project proponent, SunZia Transmission, LLC, and is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Cooperating agencies include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico State Land Office, Arizona State Land Department, and Arizona Game and Fish Department. The BLM is also in consultation with local, state, and tribal governments.

For more background information on the SunZia Project and the EIS process, visit the BLM project website at [www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands\\_realty.html](http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands_realty.html).

## Scoping Process Overview

The Notice of Intent to prepare the SunZia Project EIS was issued May 29, 2009, followed by nine scoping meetings conducted throughout New Mexico and Arizona during the initial scoping comment period that closed August 28, 2009. Based on the BLM's evaluation of comments received during the initial scoping period, the study area was expanded to include alternative routes east of the WSMR in New Mexico. Three scoping meetings were announced (Newsletter #2) and held within the expanded study area in October 2009. Additional comments were received and recorded during the period that ended November 27, 2009.

In response to scoping comments, preliminary studies, and consultations with interested parties, the BLM will consider potential alternative routes in two areas, as shown on the Study Area Map (next page):

**Arizona** – Alternative routes within Pima County in the Tucson area and west of the San Pedro River will be evaluated. These potential routes are in addition to the initial range of alternative routes located in the vicinity of the San Pedro River Valley and Sulphur Springs Valley. The additional alternative routes are in response to scoping comments that included support for locating the proposed project within the existing Interstate 10 highway corridor. Other comments expressed concern for potential environmental impacts to grazing/ranching operations and private lands/property values; biological resources (especially waterfowl/migratory birds, special status species, and wildlife corridors); cultural and visual resources; local economics; and unauthorized off-road traffic on the proposed access roads.

**New Mexico** – Alternative routes within Lincoln, Torrance, Valencia, and Socorro counties north of Socorro will be evaluated. These potential routes have been suggested as options to the initially proposed and alternative routes located north of WSMR in the vicinity of Highway 380 to avoid impacts to military training and testing operations based at WSMR, Holloman, Kirtland, and Canon Air Force Bases, and Fort Bliss.

## ATTENTION: PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS IN YOUR AREA

All meetings will be in an open house format from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

**April 27, 2010**

**Kelly Hall  
Socorro County Fairgrounds  
1 Fairgrounds Road  
Socorro, NM 87801**

**April 29, 2010**

**Holiday Inn – Airport  
4550 S. Palo Verde Road  
Tucson, AZ 85714**

**SunZia Southwest** TRANSMISSION PROJECT



## Project Contact

Adrian Garcia, *Project Manager*  
SunZia Southwest  
Transmission Project  
BLM New Mexico State Office  
P.O. Box 27115  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0115  
(505) 954-2199  
NMSunZiaProject@blm.gov



## Comment Submittal by June 10, 2010

Opportunities to submit written public comments are available by:

- **Attending a public scoping meeting and registering comments in person** (See the public scoping meeting schedule on back cover)
- **Emailing comments to:** NMSunZiaProject@blm.gov
- **Mailing comments to:** Bureau of Land Management New Mexico State Office SunZia Southwest Transmission Project P.O. Box 27115 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0115
- **Courier/Hand Delivery:** Bureau of Land Management SunZia Southwest Transmission Project 301 Dinosaur Trail Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

The range of alternatives to be considered for additional study in the EIS will include routes that are practical or feasible according to the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) and BLM NEPA regulations. Any new alternatives identified within the expanded study area will be included in addition to alternatives within the initial study area.

## BLM Seeking Public Participation

In accordance with NEPA, the BLM's EIS will address the construction, operation, and maintenance of the SunZia Project's proposed 500kV transmission line(s). The EIS process will involve multiple engineering and environmental studies to determine the project's final configuration, route, and substation location(s). The EIS will address the project's potential effect on the quality of the human environment, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to the following resources: land use, recreation, socioeconomic, visual, biological, cultural, paleontological, geological, soils, water, noise, and air quality.

## BLM Project Website

Do you want to know more about the SunZia Project EIS? Visit the BLM project website [www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands\\_realty.html](http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands_realty.html) for more information:

- SunZia Project overview
- Project newsletters
- BLM announcements and news releases
- Project schedule and maps
- Scoping comment form
- CEQ's *A Citizen's Guide to NEPA*
- Notice of Intent

## Upcoming Scoping Meetings

<p><b>April 27, 2010</b> Kelly Hall Socorro County Fairgrounds 1 Fairgrounds Road Socorro, New Mexico 87801</p>	<p><b>April 29, 2010</b> Holiday Inn – Airport 4550 S. Palo Verde Road Tucson, Arizona 85714</p>
---	--

All meetings will be in an open house format from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

The BLM is seeking public comment on the proposed study area expansion and has opened a public comment period ending June 10, 2010. Please focus your comments on issues relating primarily to the proposed study area expansion so that the BLM may provide a timely review and evaluation of comments. New and previously received scoping comments are being used to determine the appropriate study plan for the EIS. Alternative routes or subroutes considered may be added, modified, or deleted from further study.

You are invited to attend either of the two scoping meetings that will be held within the expanded study area. Meeting details are provided on the back page of this newsletter.

## Project Mailing List

During the course of the SunZia Project, updates on the EIS process will be sent to those on the project mailing list. To be included in the distribution, please forward your full mailing address to NMSunZiaProject@blm.gov, or submit via the project website at [www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands\\_realty.html](http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands_realty.html).

## SUNZIA SOUTHWEST TRANSMISSION STUDY AREA



## PROJECT TIMELINE

