

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALTURAS FIELD OFFICE

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION

A. Background

BLM Office: Alturas Field Office – LLCAN02000

NEPA File No.: DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2012-0016-CX

Proposed Action Title/Type: Arrowhead Type II Wind Energy ROW

Location of Proposed Action: The right-of-way would be located west of Madeline, California, in Lassen County. See attached legal description and map.

Description of Proposed Action: The proposed action is to grant a Type II right-of-way (ROW) as described in the Wind Energy Development Policy (IM 2009-043) in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and 43 CFR 2800.

The FLPMA ROW grant (Form 2800-14) would include provisions for renewal beyond the 3-year term (43 CFR 2807.22). The interest retained by the holder of the project area is only an interest to preclude other wind energy ROW applications during the 3-year term of the grant. The holder of the project area grant establishes no right to development and is required to submit a separate ROW application for wind energy development to the BLM for analysis, review, and decision. The BLM retains the right to authorize other compatible uses of the public lands.

The ROW would encompass approximately 37,790 acres and would be granted for a term of 3-years. There will be no ground disturbing activities on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). No new roads or improvements to existing roads will be made on land managed by the BLM.

The applicant would park a trailer mounted Sodar unit on public land on Knox Mountain (see attached map for Sodar location). The Sodar unit that is proposed is manufactured by Second Wind, which is referred to as “Triton”, is designed to use sodar for the purpose of wind energy measurement. Similar to how a submarine uses sound waves to detect nearby vessels in water, sodar (sonic detection and ranging) systems use sound waves to collect data such as wind speed. The Triton is rugged and weather resistant, constructed from recyclable low density polyethylene plastic, aluminum and stainless steel. It stands approximately six feet tall on a rectangular base which is six feet long and four feet wide. The unit weighs approximately 700 pounds and is designed to fit in a pickup truck bed for transport. Because the Triton unit will be on a trailer there will be minimal ground disturbance or visual impacts.



Triton (Sodar) unit assembled

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

This action conforms to the Alturas Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD), approved on April 17, 2008 because it is specifically provided for or is clearly consistent with the RMP objectives and decisions.

C. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with H-1790-1-National Environmental Policy Act Handbook, Appendix 4, p. 151-152:

E. Realty

19. Issuance of short-term (3 years or less) rights-of-way or land use authorizations for such uses as storage sites, apiary sites, and construction sites where the proposal includes rehabilitation to restore the land to its natural or original condition.

D. Signature

This categorical exclusion is appropriate for this action because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been scoped by an interdisciplinary team of specialists in the Alturas Field Office and there were no issues or unresolved conflicts identified. I have determined that the above described project is a categorical exclusion, in conformance with the Alturas RMP, and does not require further NEPA analysis.

/s/ Timothy J. Burke
Timothy J. Burke
Field Manager

06/12/2012

Date

E. Contact

For more information, contact Emily Jennings, at (530) 233-7907

Attachments:

Legal Description
Map

Review of Extraordinary Circumstances

The Department of the Interior Manual 516 2.3A (3) requires review of the following “extraordinary circumstances” (516 DM 2 Appendix 2) to determine if an otherwise categorically excluded action would require additional environmental analysis/documentation.

Would the proposed action: (YES or NO)

1) Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Yes No

Date: 4/25/2012

Comments:

2) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

Yes No

Date: 4/10/2012 DJS; 4/25/2012 CS; 04/13/12 MPD

Comments: No adverse effects on any known historic properties or cultural resources. DJS

No impacts to wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or recreation. The 1979 Wilderness Inventory identified this area as study unit CA-020-209. The area did not meet the criteria for Naturalness or Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined type of Recreation. However, it did meet the size requirement of over 5000 acres. The area did not qualify for further wilderness study in 1979. Due to the temporary nature of this project, no ground disturbing activities, and the small size of the sodar unit, this study unit was not updated for Wilderness Characteristics in 2012. See folder CA-NO-02-209 for maps and additional information, or the 1979 Wilderness Inventory folder CA-020-209 for information on the original inventory. CS

No significant impacts to drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or other ecologically significant areas. MPD

3) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].

Yes No

Date: 4/25/2012

Comments:

4) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

Yes No

Date: 4/25/2012

Comments:

5) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

Yes No

Date: 4/25/2012

Comments:

6) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

Yes No

Date: 4/25/2012

Comments:

7) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.

Yes No

Date: 4/10/2012 DJS

Comments:

8) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat.

Yes No

Date: 04/13/12, MPD; ADK

Comments: No impacts to any listed or proposed listed T&E plant or animal species or their critical habitat.

9) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Yes No

Date: 4/25/2012

Comments:

10) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Yes No

Date: 4/25/2012

Comments:

11) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).

Yes No

Date: 4/10/2012 DJS

Comments:

12) Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or

expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

[] Yes [X] No

Date: 4/11/2012

Comments: The Arrowhead Type II Wind Energy ROW would have a low probability to contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species. Although several infestations occur within the project ROW, none exist near the sodar unit testing location. In 2009, a total of 22 noxious weed points were GPSed, 2010, 49 noxious weed points were GPSed and in 2011, 30 noxious weed points were GPSed within the 37,912 acre project ROW. All noxious weed sites were either chemically or manually treated after being inventoried. Although no ground disturbing activities will take place during the testing phase, the BLM noxious weed crews will continue to inventory and treat the Arrowhead Type II Wind Energy ROW project area.

Reviewers:

_____	_____
Botany/Riparian	Date
_____	_____
Cultural Resources	Date
_____	_____
Wildlife	Date
_____	_____
Invasive Species	Date
_____	_____
Recreation/Wilderness	Date