

HIGHLIGHTS NEEDLES FIELD OFFICE

California Desert District Advisory Council Meeting

February 8 and 9, 2013

First Solar Stateline Solar Farm

BLM Action: Desert Stateline, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of First Solar Development, Inc. (First Solar) proposes to develop and construct a 300-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating project known as the Stateline Solar Farm (Project). The PV generating facility (Solar Farm), the corridor for the Project's 220-kilovolt (kV) generation interconnection (gen-tie) transmission line, and the access road would be located in western Ivanpah Valley, east of Interstate 15 and northeast of the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generation System project. The proposed project would include the solar farm, an on-site substation, the 220 kV gen-tie line within the Utility Corridor, and an access road. The project would connect to the Southern California Edison (SCE) regional transmission grid via SCE's Ivanpah Substation. First Solar proposed Alternative 1 would encompass 2,143 acres. The Bureau's preferred alternative, Alternative 3, would reconfigure the Alternative 1 boundary to improve desert tortoise connectivity corridors and encompass 2,150 acres.

Contacts: Jeff Childers, Project Manager
George R. Meckfessel, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Agencies: California Desert District Renewable Energy Action Team and Needles Field Office

Status: A Final Environmental Impact Statement is in preparation and is scheduled to be distributed for public comment in the summer 2013.

Environmental Protection Agency and Bureau of Land Management Notices of Availability of the Stateline Solar Farm Draft Environmental Impact Statement were published in the Federal Register on November 23, 2012. The public comment period for the Draft EIS closes on February 21, 2013. A Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Stateline Solar Farm and possible land use plan amendments and Notice of Segregation of Public Lands was published in the Federal Register on August 4, 2011.

Ivanpah Solar Electric Generation System

BLM Action: Solar Partners', LLC are in the process of constructing the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generation System, a concentrated solar electrical generating facility capable of generating 370 megawatts (MW) of renewable power. The project will be located in Ivanpah Valley, southwest of

Primm, Nevada, and consist of three power plants, Ivanpah 1, Ivanpah 2 and Ivanpah 3. Shared facilities include a substation and natural gas pipeline. The three independent power plants and shared substation will be co-located on approximately 3,671 acres of Bureau administered public land.

Contacts: George R. Meckfessel, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office

Status: As of the last update in early June, the project's status was as follows.

Power Plant Unit 1

- Installation of the heliostat pylons in Power Plant Unit 1 is 100% complete (53,527 out of 53,527 pylons)
- Erection of the 459-foot tall power tower is 100% complete (14 out of 14 tiers)
- Mowing is complete in solar field
- Placement of heliostat mirror assemblies on pylons is 100% complete (53,527 out of 53,527), commissioning activities on going.
- Installation of the desert tortoise exclusion fence and security fence around Unit 1 is complete
- 76.7% of Heliostats are now Calibrated

Power Plant Unit 2

- Mowing in solar field is 100% complete.
- 100% pylons installed (60,147 out of 60,147)
- Erection of the power tower is 100% complete (14 out of 14 tiers), placement of heliostats on pylons is 93.9% complete (56,416 of 60,147)
- Installation of desert tortoise exclusion fence is complete and the combination security fence/tortoise fence is 100%
- 18.3% of Heliostats are calibrated

Power Plant Unit 3

- Erection of the power tower is 100% complete (14 of 14 tiers)
- The desert tortoise exclusion fence is complete and the combination security fence/tortoise fence is 100%
- Mowing is 100% complete
- 99% pylons installed (59,457 out of 60,000)
- Placement of heliostats on pylons is 82.4% complete (49,509 out of 60,000)
- 3.2% of Heliostats are calibrated

Construction Logistics Area

- Helio-stat assembly building and pad bonding building are complete. Certifications of Occupancy received.
- Administration building is complete with temporary occupancy
- Switchyard/substation work expected to commence in the month of July and is expected to be complete by the end of April
- Pipeline installation to Kern River natural gas pipeline is 100% complete

Secretary Salazar signed a Record of Decision approving the Mitigated Ivanpah 3 Alternative project on October 7, 2010.

Eldorado-Ivanpah Transmission Project

BLM Action: Southern California Edison's Eldorado-Ivanpah Transmission Project will consist of replacing an existing 115kV transmission line with a new double circuit 230kV electric transmission line, building a new Ivanpah substation, and building new fiber optics telecommunications facilities.

The transmission line will handle projected electricity produced from up to 13 proposed renewable energy projects in and around the Ivanpah and Eldorado Valleys, in addition to the Ivanpah Solar Energy Generation System being constructed by Solar Partners, LLC. The electric transmission line and a new substation will be constructed within an existing designated utility corridor.

Contacts: George R. Meckfessel, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office - lead
BLM, Las Vegas Field Office

Status: Southern California Edison initiated construction of the 35 mile long transmission line in February 2012. The status of the project's construction as of early June 2013 was as follows:

115-kV Transmission Line Removal: Average: 92%

- Project Zones
- Ivanpah: 66% 100%
- Jean: 100% correct
- McCullough: 100% correct
- Eldorado: 100% correct

220-kV Transmission Line Construction: Average: 40%

- Project Zones
- Ivanpah: 3% 100%
- Jean: 45% 100%
- McCullough: 11% 100%
- Eldorado: 100%

Other Facilities

- Nipton MW Tower Installation: 85% (only concrete block wall construction remains)
- Ivanpah and Eldorado Substations will be in full service June 20, 2013.
- Primm 33kV Distribution Line: 50%
- Crossroads Yard: Decommissioned
- Nipton, Eldorado, and Jean Yard: Not yet decommissioned

A Record of Decision approving the project was signed May 19, 2011.

I-15 Joint Point of Entry

BLM Action: The state of California will construct and operate a Joint Port of Entry (JPOE) on Interstate 15 located in Ivanpah Valley, southwest of Primm, Nevada. The JPOE will include an Agricultural Inspection Facility and a Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility. Upon completion of the project, all traffic entering California on the southbound I-15 will be diverted through the JPOE.

Contact: George R. Meckfessel, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Agencies BLM, Needles Field Office - lead
Caltrans - roads and traffic control
California Department of Food and Agriculture - agricultural inspection facility
California Department of General Services - state facilities administration
California Highway Patrol - commercial vehicle enforcement facility

Status: The JPOE project will be constructed in two stages. The Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility (CVEF), to be operated by the California Highway Patrol, will be constructed in Stage 1, and the Agricultural Inspection Facility, to be operated by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, will be constructed in Stage 2. Construction on the CVEF portion of the project is scheduled to begin in 2013. A Decision Record approving the JPOE project was issued on November 9, 2011.

Abandoned Mine Lands

BLM Action: The NFO is actively pursuing inventories, prioritization and closures of abandoned mines that may present a public safety hazard.

Agencies: BLM, Needles Field Office with support from the California Desert District and California Department of Conservation

Contact: Kenneth Downing, Geologist

Status: The NFO has closed 14 openings and repaired one bat gate at the Umberci Mine. Several features have been identified in the Sheep Hole Mountains and in the Western Whipple Mountains that may present hazards to winter visitors in that area. Bat surveys and other natural and cultural resource surveys are being conducted as funds and staffing allow for the development of a

NEPA document and a possible contract for the closures. Much of the inventory work and bat surveys are accomplished by contractors, staff, and volunteers. Although available funding for closures under the Continuing Resolution is well below FY 2012 levels, it is hoped that the closures in the Sheep Hole Pass and Western Whipple Mountains areas can be funded and implemented in FY 2014.

Horse Thief Springs Riparian Area Damages

BLM Action: The NFO received restitution from US Iron, LLC, a private company, for damages to the riparian habitat at Horse Thief Springs in the Kingston Range at the northernmost boundary of the Field Office's jurisdiction.

Contact: Kenneth Downing, Geologist

Status: Resolution of a trespass by US Iron which uprooted approximately 60 cottonwood and willow trees and saplings and denuded over 1.5 acres provided the funds necessary to conduct damage assessments and prepare rehabilitation plans. As a result, US Iron has provided the BLM with the full amount agreed upon in a restitution agreement, and a contract for the remediation work was awarded to Logan Simpson Design. Archeological review of the environmental document has been completed and remediation work should begin in the fall of 2013.

Horsethief Springs Grazing Allotment

BLM Actions: Approval of a 10-year grazing lease for the Horsethief Springs

Contact: Lara Kobelt, Natural Resources Specialist

Status: The Field Office Manager signed a Final Decision approving the 10-year grazing lease for the Horsethief Springs Allotment on May 12, 2011. On June 15, 2011 the Decision was appealed by Western Watersheds Project and the Defenders of Wildlife. The lessee also filed an appeal, but that it was received after the deadline and was thus not accepted by the Department of Interior Office of Hearings and Appeals.

Western Watersheds and the Defenders of Wildlife filed a Joint Motion for Summary Judgment on December 30, 2011. The Solicitor's Office subsequently filed a Cross Motion for Summary Judgment in response to the Appellants' Motion. Through an August 8, 2012 Order issued by the Interior Department's Office of Hearings and Appeals, the Appellant' Motion for Summary Judgment was denied and DOI's Cross-Motion was Granted with the result that the Appeal was dismissed. On September 9, 2012, the Appellants immediately appealed the Administrative Law Judge's Order with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, submitting their Statement of Reasons on October 9, 2012.

Partnerships

Chicago Botanical Garden – The NFO has decided to defer its involvement in the Seeds of Success program until next spring due to funding/staffing uncertainties. We look forward to more robust

involvement next spring.

Amargosa Conservancy - The NFO and the Amargosa Conservancy (AC) are working together in protective and conservation efforts at Crystal Springs, Wildhorse Spring, and Horse Thief Springs in the Kingston Range. AC has provided cleanup efforts and are “eyes and ears” for the field office in this remote area.

California Trail Users Coalition - The NFO has entered into an agreement with the California Trail Users Coalition (CTUC) to extend their successful map series to include the NFO. This will include the development of three maps covering our jurisdiction. The maps will be available through the CTUC distribution network and at the NFO. The project is funded through a grant from the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division.

Two of the three map series covering the Needles Field Office jurisdiction have been completed and are now available through the CTUC, the Needles Field Office. The NFO has also initiated a distribution network utilizing local RV Resorts along the Colorado River.

All maps will use a comprehensive route network, developed by staff based on the designated open route system for the map series. This network highlights long distance touring opportunities and access to recreational points of interest. The routes are marked; those with assigned names have been marked with stickers showing the names and numbers that correspond to labels on the maps.

Great Basin Institute – The NFO has entered into an agreement with the Great Basin Institute to provide a Research Associate to support our GIS needs on several wilderness monitoring and characteristic inventory projects. The Research Associate will be funded through an OHMVR grant and will support the project for the remainder of the fiscal year.