

# HIGHLIGHTS NEEDLES FIELD OFFICE

## California Desert District Advisory Council Meeting

May 9-10, 2014

### 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:** Jeffery Childers, Project Manager  
Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

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

**Status:** The right of way has been issued as well as a limited notice to proceed. Construction will be phased in roughly three 500 acre portions. The first phase is underway including development and tortoise fencing of the access road and fencing of the of the first construction area. BLM has contracted with SWCA Environmental Consultants to provide third party compliance monitoring throughout construction.

### 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:** Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

**Agencies:** BLM, Needles Field Office

**Status:** NEFO is continues to work with NRG to complete a few mitigation projects and monitor operational compliance. Monitoring of desert tortoise, impacts to avian species, and glare continue as well.

**Route 66 5-Mile Interpretive Center**

**BLM Action:** The NEFO has authorized the construction of an Interpretive Center at the intersection of I40 and 5-Mile Rd. The site represents the start of east bound R66 travel in California. The site will include a ramada, picnic tables, kiosk, BLM Image sign, and landscaping.

**Agencies:** BLM, Needles Field Office

**Contact:** Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

**Status:** The Route 66 Interpretive Center at 5 Mile Road is complete. The DAC will participate in the Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting ceremony on May 9, 2014.

**Camp Iron Mtn**

**BLM Action:** The NEFO is considering opportunities to further protection and interpretation of the Camp Iron site. Camp Iron Mtn was one of the Divisional Camps at the Desert Training Center where our troops trained during WWII. Measures could include Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, development of interpretive facilities, brochures, web based education materials, interpretive walks etc.

**Agencies:** BLM Needles Field Office

**Contact:** Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

**Status:** There is an ACEC Management plan that was prepared for Camp Iron Mtn in 1984. Additionally, there is a wealth of information stored in the Needles Field Office from an outreach campaign that culminated in hundreds of letters from soldiers that trained at the Desert Training Center. NEFO staff is reviewing those materials and will either update the Camp Iron Mtn ACEC plan or tier off of it to enhance protection and interpretation of the site.

## **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:** Sterling White, CDD AML  
Mike Ahrens, Field Manager

**Status:** 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.

## **Partnerships**

Chicago Botanical Garden – A intern will report to the NEFO in May in support of the Seeds of Success program. The program collects native plant seeds which are stored for use in future restoration projects.

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 includes the development of a three map series covering our jurisdiction. The maps are 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.

All three maps 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. Sadly, that intern, Dana Fernbach, time with us is up. Dana has done a terrific job for us and provided a great service to the public. She now moves on to Yellowstone

where we are sure she will continue to excel.

Two new interns will report soon in support of an OHMVR Grant funded Invasive and Sensitive plant inventory project. The three year project will focus on invasive and sensitive plant species adjacent to our system of roads and trails.

Native American Lands Conservancy (NALC) – The NEFO is partnering with the NALC to support the management of the Old Woman Mtn. Wilderness and the adjacent NALC Old Woman Mtn Preserve. The NEFO supported the NALC in the development of a OHMVR restoration grant to provide restoration and barriers along the borders of the Old Woman Mtn Wilderness and the Old Woman Mtn Preserve. The grant will be administered by the NALC.