

HIGHLIGHTS
PALM SPRINGS-SOUTH COAST FIELD OFFICE
California Desert District
Advisory Council Meeting
May 21 , 2016

Energy Projects

BLM Action: The BLM continues to process several energy related proposals. Due to the current energy situation, considerable policy emphasis is still placed on expediting processes and timelines. The following is a summary of the major energy related proposals:

West of Devers Transmission System Upgrade

Project proponent: Southern California Edison (SCE);

Co-lead: California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

Status: Southern California Edison (SCE) is proposing to upgrade and adjust the routes of the following existing 220 kV transmission lines between the communities of North Palm Springs and San Bernardino, in incorporated and unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties: Devers-El Casco (30 miles), El Casco-San Bernardino (14 miles), Devers-San Bernardino (43 miles), Devers-Vista No. 1 and No. 2 (45 miles), Etiwanda-San Bernardino (3.5 miles), and San Bernardino-Vista (3.5 miles). Of the overall 48-mile length of the transmission corridor, approximately 6 miles would cross the reservation Trust Lands of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and approximately 1 mile is on BLM-administered public lands. The BLM lands are located east of the City of Banning and west of the City of Desert Hot Springs in Riverside County.

In addition to the transmission line improvements, substation equipment at Devers, El Casco, Etiwanda, San Bernardino, Timoteo and Tennessee and Vista Substations would be upgraded to accommodate the project changes to transmission and sub-transmission systems. The project would consist of the upgrade and removal of 48 corridor miles of 220 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines, relocation of 66 kV and 12 kV lines, and associated telecommunications and substation upgrades in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The BLM is the lead Federal agency for the preparation of this EIS in compliance with the requirements of NEPA. The CPUC is the lead State of California agency for the preparation of this EIR in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The CPUC held 4 scoping meetings in the project area in May, 2014 and the BLM held one scoping meeting in July, 2014. The Draft EIS/EIR was released on August 7, 2015 for a 45 day comment period. Public meetings were held on August 26 and September 1, 2015. The CPUC held evidentiary hearings on the Project on November 16 & 17, 2015 as part of their proceedings leading to a

decision on the project. An additional hearing on the project was held on December 7, 2015. The CPUC released their FEIR on December 11, 2015 in order for this analysis to be brought into their proceedings. The BLM will issue the Final EIS as these proceeding are concluding and a CPUC proposed decision on the project is being released. Separating the BLM's EIS and CPUC's EIR will allow for BLM to utilize these proceedings to make a more informed decision on an agency preferred alternative.

Ten West Link Transmission Project

Project proponent: Delaney-Colorado River Transmission, LLC (DCR Transmission), is a joint venture company owned by Abengoa Transmission & Infrastructure, LLC, and is an affiliate of Starwood Energy Group Global, Inc.. DCR Transmission was selected as the Project Sponsor by the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) as part of a competitive solicitation process authorized by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Order No. 1000 (Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation).

Status: The Project would include construction of a new 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line between the Arizona Public Service (APS) Delaney Substation in Tonopah, Arizona, and the Southern California Edison (SCE) Colorado River Substation, west of Blythe, California. DCR Transmission submitted a right-of-way grant application with BLM on September 14, 2015. The Project would span approximately 114 miles, including 97 miles in Arizona and 17 miles in California, largely following the existing Devers Palo Verde #1 Transmission Line in an established utility corridor. Public open houses were held in November, 2015. Three public scoping meetings have taken place and the project is in the early stages of processing.

Wind Energy:

Project proponent: Various.

Status: We oversee 20 wind energy rights-of-way grants in the San Geronio Pass and Coachella Valley areas including processing r/w applications and assignments, assessing and monitoring cost recovery accounts, completing environmental reviews, and issuing notices and decisions. As part of on-going monitoring of these right-of-way grants, we are initiating additional studies to assess the impact of these facilities on avian populations. In addition, we are in the early stages of processing two re-power projects.

Solar Energy:

Project proponent: various.

Status: We continue to process multiple applications for solar energy projects as part of the District-wide process. Our most recent actions are as follows.

Blythe Solar Power Project

The Blythe Solar Power Project, proposed by Solar Millennium, LLC (later Solar Trust of America), was a concentrated solar trough electric generating facility with four adjacent, independent, and identical solar plants of 250 megawatt (MW) capacity each for a total capacity of about 1,000 MWs. The BLM Record of Decision was issued October 25, 2010 followed by the right-of-way grant on November 4, 2010. Solar Trust of America filed for bankruptcy prior to any significant project work commencing. The project was subsequently sold to Nextera Energy under the Solar Trust bankruptcy auction.

An amendment to the existing ROW authorization was submitted to reduce the acreage of the project and change the technology from concentrating solar trough to photovoltaic with a reduction from 1,000 to 485 megawatts. The Draft EIS published on February 7, 2014 and the public comment period closed on March 24, 2014. The final EIS/Record of Decision was issued August 1, 2014 and the Right-of-Way Grant was issued August 12, 2014. A notice to proceed for project construction was issued on March 19, 2015. The project is estimated to be complete in August, 2016.

Palen Solar Power Project

The Palen Solar Power Project, proposed by Solar Millennium, LLC (later Solar Trust of America), was for a concentrated solar trough electric generating facility with two adjacent, independent, and identical solar plants of 250 megawatts (MW) each for a total capacity of 500 MW. A joint BLM Draft Environmental Impact Statement and California Energy Commission (CEC) Staff Assessment for the project was published on April 7, 2010. The Final BLM EIS was published on May 13, 2011, however, a Record of Decision was not issued due to a bankruptcy filing by Solar Trust of America. The project was subsequently purchased by BrightSource Energy during a Solar Trust bankruptcy auction. BrightSource Energy then proposed a technology change for project involving two concentrated solar towers with a combined generation capability of 500 MW. BrightSource submitted a right-of-way amendment application to the BLM and an Amendment Petition to the CEC involving using solar towers in lieu of the original concentrated solar trough technology.

A BLM Supplemental Draft EIS was released for this amended project on July 26, 2013 while the CEC proceeded with their permitting process. Release of the Final BLM Supplemental EIS was being timed to correspond with the CEC decision on this project. On September 26, 2014, however, BrightSource (Palen Solar Holdings, LLC) withdrew their Amendment Petition to the CEC involving the proposed use of the solar tower technology. On September 29, 2014, the CEC issued an order terminating their proceedings on this proposed amendment. The

partnership between BrightSource and Abengoa Solar on this project has been terminated with the project being acquired by EDF Renewable Energy.

EDF Renewable Energy submitted an application and Plan of Development, dated December 22, 2015, for a 500 MW photovoltaic solar generating facility. The project would be constructed entirely on BLM lands within the original project footprint and consist of a single solar field with two smaller adjacent solar fields, a main access road from the Corn Springs off-ramp, and a 230kV generation tie-line extending from the project switchyard to the Red Bluff Substation. The BLM is beginning processing of this application.

NextEra - Ford Dry Lake (Genesis) Solar Project

Genesis Solar LLC, a Delaware limited liability company and wholly owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources LLC, is authorized to construct and operate the Genesis Solar Energy Project consisting of a concentrated solar thermal electric generating facility with a total net electrical output of 250 MW. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Staff Assessment for the project was published in March, 2010; public comment period on the Final BLM EIS ended 9/27/10; the BLM Record of Decision was issued November 4, 2010; a Notice to Proceed for site preparation and facility construction was issued on August 24, 2011; and construction was completed in April, 2014. The facility is in full operation.

Desert Sunlight Solar Farm

First Solar Development, Inc. is authorized to construct and operate a 4,245 acre 550-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant project known as the Desert Sunlight Solar Farm (DSSF). The DSSF includes three main components: 1) the Solar Farm site, 2) a transmission line, and 3) a Southern California Edison (SCE) owned and operated substation (Red Bluff Substation). The Notice of Intent was published January 13, 2010, the public comment period for the draft EIS ended November 26, 2010, the Notice of Availability for the Final EIS was published on April 15, 2011; the Record of Decision signed on August 8, 2011, project construction is complete and the project formally commissioned on February 9, 2015. A request for additional 50 acre feet of water annually was filed in November, 2014. This variance was approved on August 31, 2015 with the environmental assessment and decision record posted on our office website.

Rice Solar Power Project

The BLM permitted Rice Solar Energy, LLC to construct a 10 mile electrical transmission line that would connect a private land, 150-MW solar-powered electrical generation facility to a Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) managed substation. This project was located on the former Rice Army Airfield in Rice Valley, eastern Riverside County, California, approximately 40 miles

northwest of Blythe. Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and the California Energy Commission (CEC) were agency leads for the project; BLM was a cooperator. The CEC approved the project on December 15, 2010.

An abbreviated Final EIS was released by WAPA on August 5, 2011 and a Record of Decision approving the BLM portion of the project was signed December 8, 2011. The BLM right-of-way for the electrical transmission line was granted on April 13, 2012. However, on October 28, 2015, the BLM accepted Rice Solar Energy, LLC's request to relinquish their rights to the electrical transmission line permitted on public lands. Rice Solar Energy, LLC made its final rental payment for 2015 and the BLM is taking actions to terminate this right-of-way grant and close the casefile.

Desert Harvest Solar

EnXco proposes to construct a 150 MW photovoltaic project on approximately 1,280 acres located directly south of the approved Desert Sunlight Solar Farm near Desert Center, California. A Notice of Intent was published on September 15, 2011 with a scoping period that ended October 17, 2011. The draft EIS on the project was released on April 13, 2012 with public meetings in the communities of Desert Center and Joshua Tree on May 14, 2012. The Final EIS has been published and the ROD issued on March 13, 2013. As of this date, the project has not obtained a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and has not settled outstanding issues with the shared gen-tie line for power distribution to the Red Bluff substation. Required documentation for a Notice to Proceed (NTP) has not been submitted to BLM as of this date. The applicant requested and received through BLM an extension of one (1) year to commence construction of the project.

McCoy Solar Energy Project

McCoy Solar LLC, owned by Nextera Energy, is authorized to construct a 750 MW photovoltaic solar project on 7,700 acres of BLM and 470 acres of private lands located directly north of the Blythe Solar Project, near Blythe, California. The comment period on the Draft EIS ended August 23, 2012. The Final EIS for the project was issued on December 12, 2012 and the Record of Decision issued on March 11, 2013. The right-of-way grants were issued for Units 1 and 2 on 12/2/13 and 8/12/14. The project is estimated to be complete in August, 2016.

Desert Quartzsite Solar Project

Desert Quartzite, LLC proposes to construct and operate a 300 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) energy-generating project known as the Desert Quartzite Solar Project (Project). Desert Quartzite, LLC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of First Solar Development, Inc. The facility will utilize First Solar's thin-film cadmium telluride (CdTe) photovoltaic modules. The Project Site is located on BLM lands in eastern Riverside County, approximately 2.75 miles southwest of

the western extent of the City of Blythe, California. The facility footprint will occupy approximately 2,453 acres, and the 600-footwide Gen-Tie Line study corridor occupies approximately 205 acres. The Gen-Tie Line is approximately 2.8 miles long ending at the Colorado River Substation.

A Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the project was published in the Federal Register on March 6, 2015. Public meetings were held in Parker, Arizona and Blythe, California in March, 2015. The BLM is writing a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report with the Riverside County Planning Department. This document is anticipated to be released in early summer, 2016.

Crimson Solar Project

Sonoran West Holdings, LLC (Applicant), a wholly owned subsidiary of Recurrent Energy LLC, proposes to construct and operate the RE Crimson Solar Project (Project), a utility-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) and energy storage project that would be located on lands managed by the BLM. The project would be located on up to 4,000 acres of public lands and would generate up to 450 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy using photovoltaic technology and would include up to 450 MW of integrated energy storage capacity.

The proposed Project is located in unincorporated eastern Riverside County, approximately 13 miles west of Blythe, just north of Mule Mountain and just south of I-10. The Project site was formerly proposed for development as the Sonoran West Solar Energy Generating Station proposed by BrightSource Energy with submittal of an SF-299 application for CACA-051967 in 2009. This project is in the early stages of consideration by the BLM.

Blythe Mesa Solar Project

On August 18, 2015, the BLM issued a Record of Decision approving issuance of a right-of-way grant in support of the Blythe Mesa Solar Project, owned by the Renewable Energy Group, Los Angeles, California. This 485 MW photovoltaic project will occupy 3,665 acres located on lands under the jurisdiction of the County of Riverside, BLM, and the City of Blythe. The project will likely be developed in phases that extend over several years.

The project includes construction of a 230 kV gen-tie line to connect the solar facility to the Colorado River Substation. The total length of this line will be 8.8 miles; 3.6 miles will be located on private lands within the array site boundary and 5.2 miles will be located off site on 72 acres of BLM-managed lands. The solar plant will be constructed entirely on private lands. No initiation of construction has begun.

For additional information on these and the other pending projects, see:

<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html>

Contact: Doug Herrema, Acting Field Manager @ 760-833-7100

Status: On-going

Land Exchange with Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

BLM Action: The BLM and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians entered into an agreement in 2002 to initiate an assembled land exchange pursuant to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Act of 2000 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended. The proposed land exchange would reduce the extent of checkerboard landownership within and outside the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation, thereby facilitating effective and efficient management of public and Tribal lands in the National Monument.

In July 2010, the BLM released an environmental assessment to the public addressing environmental effects of the proposed land exchange. Comments were received from 144 individuals, ten nongovernmental organizations, and three government entities. Based on public comments and upon further internal review, it was determined that preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) was necessary to address potentially significant effects of the proposed land exchange.

Two public scoping meetings were held in March, 2012 to identify issues, impacts, and potential alternatives that should be addressed in the EIS. About 125 members of the public attended the scoping meetings. Additional scoping comments were submitted to the BLM by mail and email.

The draft EIS, released to the public on December 29, 2014, analyzes the exchange of certain federal lands (5,799 acres) for properties owned by the Tribe (1,470 acres) within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. This draft EIS describes and analyzes alternatives based on varying amounts of public lands to be exchanged for Tribal lands, as well as the no-action alternative. Lands would be exchanged on an equal value basis between BLM and the Tribe pending outcome of the land appraisal. The comment period for this draft EIS closed on Sunday, March 29, 2015. The draft EIS is found under the heading "Other Ongoing Projects" at:

<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings.html>

Comments on the draft EIS were received from 469 individuals, nine nongovernmental organizations, and three government entities. The Environmental Protection Agency rated the preferred alternative as *Lack of*

Objections, which means it did not identify any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through informal consultation, concurred with BLM's determination that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect Peninsular bighorn sheep or its designated critical habitat, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, or desert tortoise.

The administrative review draft of the final EIS has been prepared. BLM's publication of a joint Notice of Availability (NOA) for the final EIS and Notice of Decision (NOD) will occur upon completion of review of the exchange package by the Washington Office. Publication of the joint NOA/NOD launches a 45-day protest period of the decision.

Contact: Doug Herrema, Acting Field Manager @ 760-833-7100

Status: On-going.

Off-Highway Vehicle Green Sticker Grant Program

BLM Action: We continue to install signage and provide information to the public regarding riding opportunities in the Palm Springs Field Office. Perform BLM Ranger patrols to inform the public of OHV designations, provide assists and enforce regulations. BLM has a law enforcement grant proposal for FY 16 in order to continue resource protection and public safety activities within this area.

We continue to work on grant closeouts where applicable.

Contact: Jill Williams, Assistant Field Manager for Resources & Recreation 760-833-7149

Status: Grants were provided to BLM Palm Springs in 2008-17 for ongoing restoration work, outreach, enforcement and signage conducted in the Mecca Hills, Dos Palmas, Big Morongo ACEC, Coachella Valley Preserve and eastern Riverside County. The BLM Palm Springs Office is currently working through the 2016 grant applications for law enforcement and restoration at the Steele Peak area. A public meeting was held on January 29, 2016 regarding the 2017 grant proposal cycle.

Water Projects: Implement Canal Lining Projects as part of PL100-675

BLM Action: PL 100-675 established the All American and Coachella Canal Lining Projects and commits the federal government to providing potential habitat creation/restoration sites and groundwater from public lands to help meet project environmental requirements. The Dos Palmas ACEC is a focus area for these efforts.

Contact: Doug Herrema, Acting Field Manager @ 760-833-7100

Status: In cooperation with multiple parties including the Coachella Valley Water District, San Diego County Water Authority, US Bureau of Reclamation, FWS, and DF&G; the BLM is implementing an assistance agreement that includes BLM managing the restoration of 352 acres of desert riparian habitat, making lands available for the creation of 17 acre marsh/aquatic habitat (completed), preserving 105 acres of marsh/aquatic habitat, acquisition of up to 875 acres of additional lands within the ACEC, and long-term management of these projects. This habitat management focuses on protection and enhancement of habitat for the endangered desert pupfish and Yuma clapper rail.

Riparian Restoration Activities Update – Palm Springs South Coast Field Office

BLM Action: Approximately 2,000 acres are annually inventoried for ecological condition including stream corridors, mountain and desert oases, and other desert riparian communities. Riparian Assessments review avian riparian species present, noxious weed infestations, disturbances etc.

Approximately 250 acres are annually treated; techniques include:

- Manual: Hand pulling isolated noxious weed infestations such as Sahara mustard, Mexican tree tobacco, Salt cedar.
- Mechanical: Chainsaw, dozer use for removal of Salt cedar
- Chemical: Herbicide cut stumps of Salt cedar
- Biological: Excessive aquatic vegetation removal within sensitive desert oasis using sterile Grass Carp in Dos Palmas ponds. The vast majority of the restoration is with the removal of Tamarisk (Salt cedar). Once the salt cedar is removed the existing native seed bank responds quickly re-establishing itself.
- Locations: Numerous locations, including ACECs Dos Palmas, Big Morongo, Edom Hill/ Willow Hole; isolated oasis within the Santa Rosa's including Boo Hoff, Blasdell Canyon, Bear Creek, Magnesia Springs, Cathedral Canyon drainages etc.

Contact: Doug Herrema, Acting Field Manager @ 760-833-7100

Status: On-going.

National Monuments

BLM Action: Sand to Snow National Monument was authorized by President Obama on February 12, 2016:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/12/presidential-proclamation-establishment-sand-snow-national-monument>

Encompassing 154,000 acres, including just over 100,000 acres of already congressionally-designated Wilderness, Sand to Snow National Monument is an ecological and cultural treasure and one of the most biodiverse areas in southern California. The new monument supports more than 240 species of birds and twelve threatened and endangered wildlife species and will protect outstanding sacred, archaeological and cultural sites including an estimated 1,700 Native American petroglyphs.

The Monument is home to the regions tallest alpine mountain, at 11,500 feet, and lies at the cross-roads of the Mojave, Colorado and Sonoran Deserts. Featuring thirty miles of the world famous Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the area is a favorite for camping, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, photography, wildlife viewing, and even skiing.

Sand to Snow National Monument is jointly managed by the BLM and US Forest Service. Both agencies, together, are initiating actions to meet these new responsibilities in managing this new national monument. Rebecca Wong is the interim acting monument manager located at the San Bernadino Forest Service offices. Rebecca will be leading an effort to begin the early phases of planning.

Wildland Conservancy launched a celebration May 5th to commemorate the work and partnerships that created these monuments. Speakers included: Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird, Rep. Raul Ruiz, D-Palm Desert, San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor Jody Noiron and San Bernardino County Supervisor James Ramos.

Contact: Doug Herrema, Acting Field Manager @ 760-833-7100

Status: Planning

Volunteers

BLM Action: The office promotes volunteerism in a wide range of public land management initiatives. This program is mainly focused on management of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument and the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC/Preserve. Extensive volunteer programs within the Monument are

developed by the Friends of the Desert Mountains and are outlined on their website: <http://www.desertmountains.org/volunteer.html>

Extensive volunteer programs within the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve are developed by the Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and are outlined on their web site: <http://www.bigmorongo.org/a8Volunteer.htm>

Other volunteer efforts are implemented throughout the year including habitat restoration, public land clean-ups, archaeological site monitoring and facility development/maintenance. These volunteer programs and contributions are invaluable in effectively managing our lands and programs. Of special note, offering high quality environmental education and interpretation programs to the public and schools is dependent on these volunteer contributions.

Contact: Doug Herrema, Acting Field Manager @ 760-833-7100

Status: On-going.