Solar
Regional Mitigation Strategy and Landscape Assessment
Objectives and Approach

Improving DOI-BLM Mitigation Practices and Outcomes

SEZ FIELD VISITS, OPEN HOUSES, & PUBLIC WORKSHOP

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Background

- DOI Western Solar Plan - BLM Solar Energy Program, Solar PEIS Record of Decision, Oct, 2012

- 17 solar energy zones covering 285,000 acres for priority development. in CA, NV, AZ, NM, UT and CO and 79 million acres excluded from solar development

- Secretarial Order 3330 – Improving Mitigation Practices and Policies, Oct , 2013

DOI Western Solar Plan & BLM Solar Program Mitigation Hierarchy (Solar PEIS ROD, 2012)

Avoid Impacts → Exclusion Areas, Solar Energy Zones , Variance Process

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Minimize Impacts → Design Features

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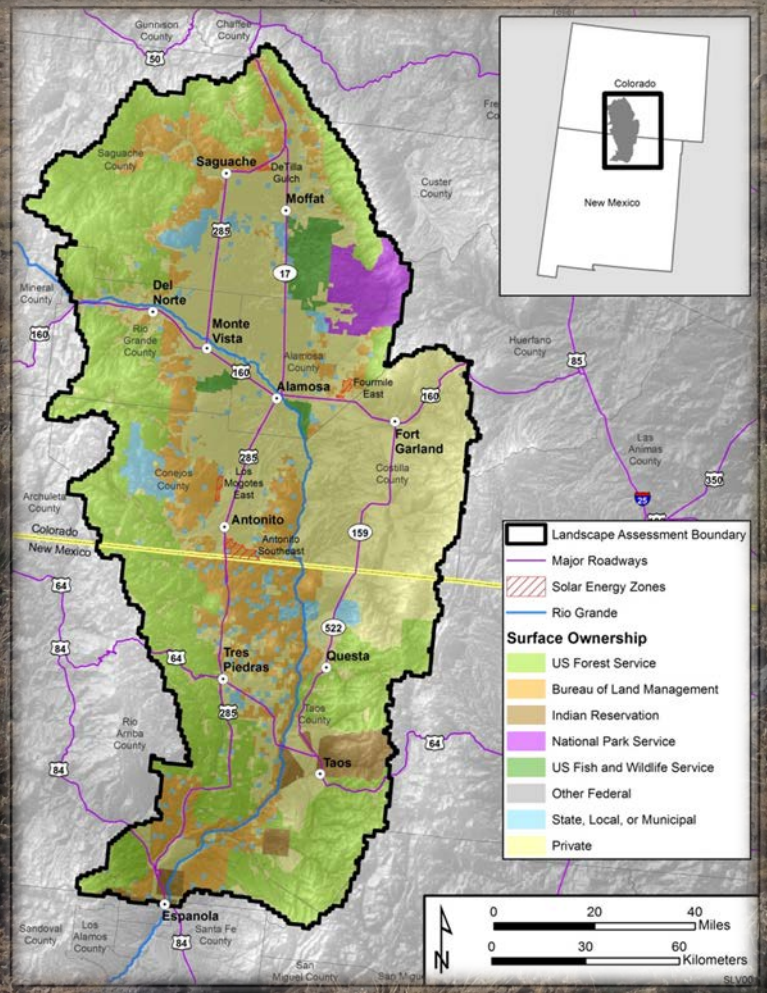
Offset Residual (unavoidable) Impacts → Regional Mitigation Strategy

Solar PEIS p. A-112

DOI Western Solar Plan & Landscape Approach
BLM Solar Program Mitigation Hierarchy
(Solar PEIS ROD, 2012)

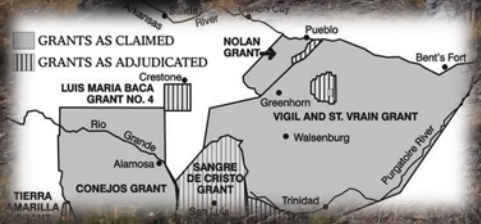


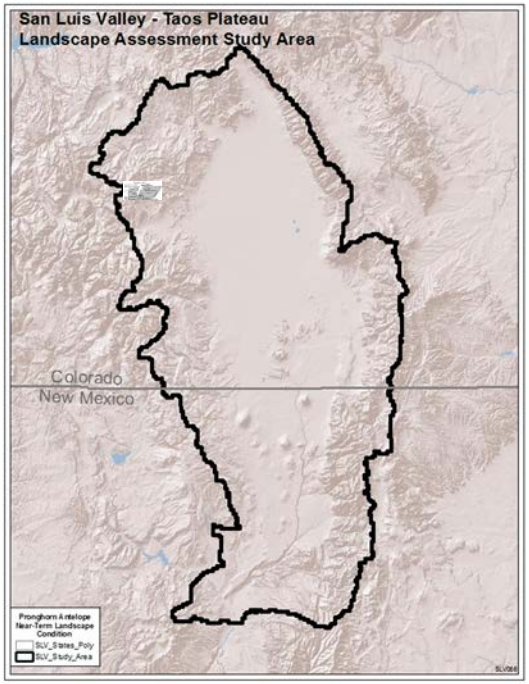
Solar PEIS p. A-112

Multiple Scale

Project(s) – Land & People – Landscape – Ecological Region

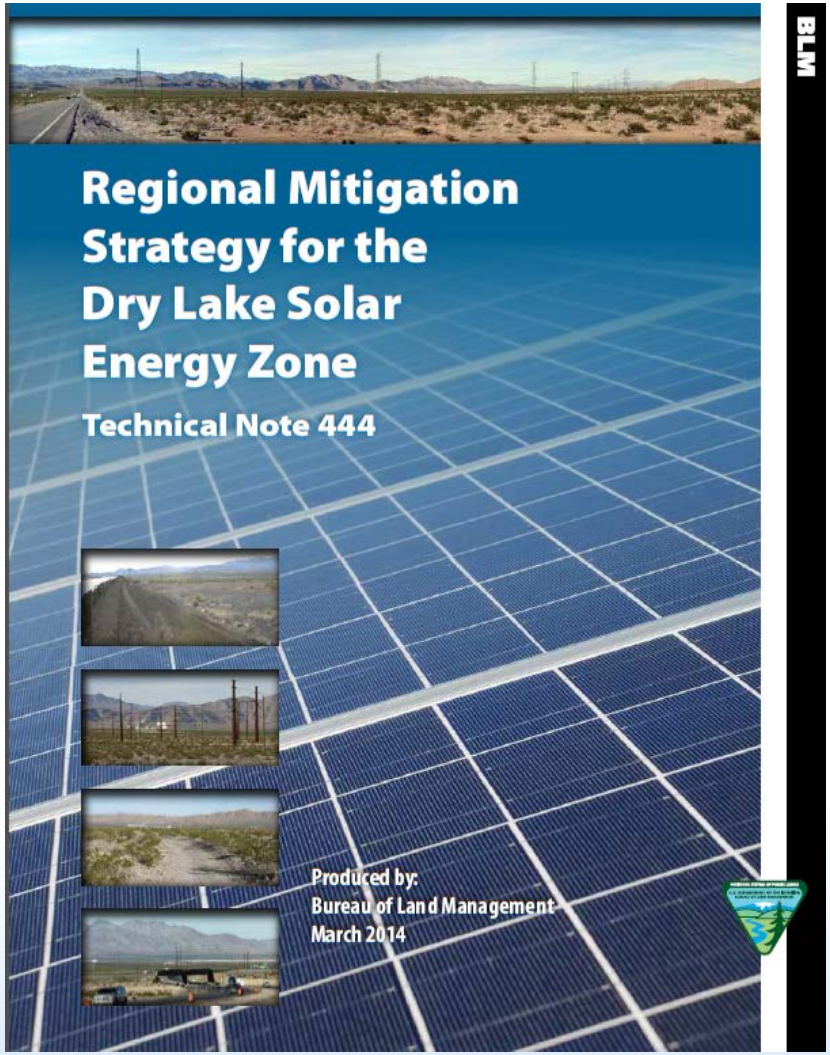
FIGURE 3.1.4 Utility-Scale Flat-Plate PV System at the Prescott, Arizona, Airport Operated by Arizona Public Service Company (This system incorporates flat-plate non-concentrating solar panels [foreground] and concentrating flat-plate solar panels [background]) (Credit: Arizona Public Service).





Dry Lake SEZ Pilot SRMS

- Pilot project conducted for Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone in Nevada August 2012 through June 2013
- Extensive stakeholder involvement – workshops and webinars
- SRMS released in March 2014 – available on-line
- Applying Lessons Learned and aiming to continuously improve a new process



Project Approach: Solar Regional Mitigation Strategy

Element 1 Collect Baseline Data for Assessing Unavoidable Impacts

We are here →

Element 2 Assess Degree of Impacts and Identify Resources that May Warrant Regional Mitigation

Element 3 Identify Regional Mitigation Goals

Element 4 Evaluation of Appropriate Mitigation Locations, Objectives, and Actions

Element 5 Recommend Method for Calculating Mitigation Compensation for SEZs

Element 6 Recommend Solar Regional Mitigation Fee Structure

Element 7 Develop Mitigation Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan

Assess Degree of Impacts from Solar Development

- Consider broad range of resources and assess at larger geographic scales: impacts from project in landscape context
- Use existing documentation (Solar PEIS) and supplement with local BLM field office staff knowledge
- Factor in required avoidance and minimization measures to determine if impacts are unavoidable
- Consider additional impact avoidance areas or other measures for project-level environmental review (NEPA)

Stakeholder Involvement is a Key Goal

- Aim to reach multiple stakeholders
  - Federal & State agencies
  - County government
  - SLV & NM Public
  - Conservation organizations
  - Solar industry
  - Other

- BLM-Argonne team goal to share, listen, learn, and apply

Workshop Logistics

Karen Smith, Argonne National Laboratory Program Manager