

Renewable Energy Program

August 25, 2010

WIND

Several companies are interested in operating wind testing sites in the Northwest and Front Range District Offices for potential commercial development. The BLM's wind energy program is part of ongoing efforts to improve the management of energy resources found on Federal lands in a balanced way to ensure the nation's economic and energy security and quality of life.

Wind interest on BLM-managed lands within the state includes:

- Two pending wind testing applications, White River Field Office and Royal Gorge Field Office
- Two wind testing sites authorized, Grand Junction Field Office and the Royal Gorge Field Office

SOLAR

As part of the BLM's ongoing effort to increase domestic energy production and ensure greater energy security, it has initiated a joint programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) with the Department of Energy (DOE) to assess the environmental, social, and economic impacts associated with solar energy development on BLM-managed public lands in six western States: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah.

In Colorado, four Solar Study Energy Areas were identified in the San Luis Valley to look at their potential for large-scale solar projects. More than 21,000 acres will be analyzed in detail within the PEIS. The Solar Energy Development draft PEIS will be released for public comment at the end of 2010.

The need for clean, affordable domestic energy supplies is renewing interest in using solar energy to produce electricity. Solar energy can supplement other resources to serve the country's need for energy and help sustain continued economic development.

GEOTHERMAL

BLM Colorado received three nominations for geothermal parcels in Colorado. Two of those parcels are on BLM lands and the other is on National Forest Service lands. One of those parcels is located in the Mt. Princeton area of the Royal Gorge Field Office and is scheduled for the November 2010 oil and gas and geothermal lease sale. The other two parcels are in the Gunnison Field Office and are undergoing additional National Environmental Protection Act analysis to address Threatened and Endangered species, special status species, and cultural issues.

BLM Colorado and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have developed a stipulation and a lease notice to prevent potential injury to senior water right users and protect existing geothermal features. The BLM is also working with the state to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to address areas of overlapping concerns related to both leasing and permitting.



TRANSMISSION

New electric transmission lines are being proposed in Colorado to accommodate additional electricity generation capacity for the next several decades, including new renewable generation, improved reliability and to reduce congestion on the grid.

Right-of-way electric transmission applications proceeding within the state include:

- Energy Gateway South, a PacifiCorp (dba Rocky Mountain Power) project, is a 750 mile 500 kV AC transmission project across 357 miles of BLM-managed public land. BLM is the lead agency on this multi-agency project. Cost recovery is initiated, and public scoping meetings are scheduled for fall 2010
- TransWest Express, a TransWest Express, LLC project, is a 765 mile 600kV DC transmission project. BLM is the lead agency on this multi-agency project. Cost recovery is initiated. Public scoping meetings are scheduled for winter 2010. A draft EIS is expected to be published summer 2012.