

SunZia Southwest TRANSMISSION PROJECT

NEWSLETTER #2

OCTOBER 2009

PROJECT UPDATE Additional Scoping Meetings in New Mexico

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is holding additional scoping meetings to discuss with the public the proposed study area expansion of the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project (SunZia Project) in the following New Mexico communities:

- Las Cruces, October 26, 2009
- Alamogordo, October 27, 2009
- Chaparral, October 28, 2009

See the back of this newsletter for meeting details.

As a result of the proposed study area expansion, the BLM has opened an additional 30-day public comment period ending November 27, 2009.

Background

This is the second newsletter regarding the SunZia Project, a proposed, high-capacity transmission project planned between New Mexico and Arizona. The SunZia Project would include the construction and operation of up to two 500 kilovolt (kV) lines and new intermediary substations within a 460-mile or greater corridor. The project is focused on delivering renewable energy resources to the western United States by providing an expected 3,000 megawatts or more of new transmission capacity. The BLM is considering a right-of-way application submitted by the project proponent, SunZia Transmission, LLC, and is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Cooperating agencies include the Army Corps of Engineers, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico State Land Office, Arizona State Land Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and Arizona Game and Fish Department. Others have also been invited. Consultation with local, state, and tribal governments will continue.

For more background information on the SunZia Project and EIS process, visit the BLM project website at http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands_realty.html.

Public Scoping Overview

The Notice of Intent to prepare the SunZia Project EIS was issued May 29, 2009, followed by a formal scoping comment period that closed August 28, 2009. Nine scoping meetings within the preliminary study area were held June 22 through July 9, 2009, to gather public input. During the initial scoping process for the SunZia Project, the BLM received numerous comments regarding the proposed and alternative transmission line routes. The results of scoping are being used to determine the appropriate study plan for the EIS. In order to address the issues and concerns identified by the public and agencies, the scope of the study must include an adequate range of alternatives. Alternative routes or sub-route segments will be added, modified, or deleted from further study.

Primary Topics Addressed in Comments

Of the comments received thus far, the primary topics were the following:

- The purpose of and need for the project
- Potential impacts resulting from the proposed transmission line(s) in the areas of the San Pedro River Valley, Aravaipa/Klondyke, Bosque del Apache/San Antonio, and the Rio Grande corridor
- Support for location of the proposed transmission line project within existing linear corridors
- Potential impacts to wilderness, grazing/ranching operations, and private lands/property values
- Potential for unauthorized off-road traffic and impacts to wildlife habitat and corridors due to the proposed project's new access roads
- Potential visual impacts as a result of new transmission lines and structures in scenic areas
- Potential effects on biological resources, especially waterfowl/migratory birds, special status species, and vegetation/grasslands
- Potential impacts to cultural resources
- Potential economic impacts as a result of new transmission lines

ATTENTION: PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS IN YOUR AREA

All meetings will be in an open house format from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

October 26, 2009

Court Youth Center
 402 West Court Avenue
 Las Cruces, NM 88005

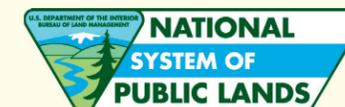
October 27, 2009

First National Bank
 414 Tenth Street
 Alamogordo, NM 88310

October 28, 2009

Chaparral High School
 800 County Line Drive
 Chaparral, NM 88081

SunZia Southwest TRANSMISSION PROJECT



Project Contact

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Comment Submittal

Opportunities to submit written public comments are available by:

- **Attending a public scoping meeting and registering comments in person** (See the public scoping meeting schedule on back cover)
- **Emailing comments to:** NMSunZiaProject@blm.gov
- **Mailing comments to:** Bureau of Land Management New Mexico State Office SunZia Southwest Transmission Project P.O. Box 27115 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0115
- **Courier/Hand Delivery:** Bureau of Land Management SunZia Southwest Transmission Project 301 Dinosaur Trail Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508

- Requests for extending the initial 45-day public comment period beyond the July 13, 2009, deadline

This last item was addressed by the BLM, which extended the public comment period for a total of 90 days, which closed August 28, 2009.

Comments on Arizona Study Area

Numerous comments were received that expressed concern for key areas in the Arizona portion of the SunZia Project's study area, namely:

- San Pedro River Valley
- Galiuro Wilderness
- Sulphur Springs Valley
- Aravaipa/Klondyke
- Mt. Graham/Safford
- US 191 Corridor/San Simon Valley

To address these concerns, the proposed and alternative routes are undergoing a review to adjust the routing of alternative transmission lines to avoid or reduce impacts in these areas. The resulting modifications will be evaluated in the EIS.

Comments on New Mexico Study Area

Among the many public and agency comments received to date regarding the New Mexico portion of the SunZia Project, numerous comments noted concerns regarding the location of the proposed route crossing the Rio Grande in the vicinity of the San Antonio community, north of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, and included requests to consider alternatives that avoid that location. Suggested transmission line corridors for consideration are:

- A route along the western boundary and in the northwest corner of the White Sands Missile Range (WSMR).
- A route south of the WSMR in Doña Ana County and along the eastern boundary of the WSMR in Otero and Lincoln counties.

These corridors in the New Mexico area could provide alternative routes between the proposed Midpoint Substation site near

Deming, and the proposed SunZia-East Substation termination site in Lincoln County. In response to these comments, additional alternative transmission line corridors for the proposed SunZia Project will be considered within the expanded study area, as shown on the map (opposite).

Public Participation Sought

The EIS will address the construction, operation, and maintenance of the SunZia Project's proposed 500kV transmission line(s). Studies undertaken as part of this EIS process will determine the final configuration, route, and substation location. To be addressed in the EIS are potential impacts to environmental resources, including: land use and recreation, visual, biological, cultural and historical, paleontological, geological, water (including floodplains and wetlands), and air.

The BLM is seeking to discuss the proposed study area expansion with the public, especially those potentially affected by the SunZia Project. Three additional public scoping meetings have been scheduled within the expanded study area for this purpose, and your attendance is welcome. (See the back page for meeting details.)

As a result of the proposed study area expansion, the BLM has opened an additional 30-day public comment period ending November 27, 2009. Comments will be documented in a scoping report following the scoping period.

Additional comments may still be submitted for consideration by the BLM after this date.

Project Mailing List and Newsletter

During the course of the SunZia Project, updates will be sent to individuals on the mailing list. To have your name included in the mailing list, forward your information to:

NMSunZiaProject@blm.gov
 or submit via the project website at:
http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands_realty.html

SUNZIA SOUTHWEST TRANSMISSION PROJECT AREA



PROJECT TIMELINE

