

SunZia Southwest TRANSMISSION PROJECT

NEWSLETTER #5



JUNE 2013

SUNZIA SOUTHWEST FINAL EIS AND PROPOSED RMP AMENDMENTS AVAILABLE MID-JUNE



Look inside to learn about:

- How to access the Final EIS
- The proposed land use plan amendments
- The BLM preferred alternative
- Project timeline

The Bureau of Land Management will release the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project for public review in mid-June 2013.

For more information:

- Go online to www.blm.gov/nm/sunzia
- Email BLM project manager Adrian Garcia at agarcia@blm.gov or telephone (505) 954-2199
- Write to the BLM SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, New Mexico State Office, 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508-1560

SunZia Southwest TRANSMISSION PROJECT

Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will release the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments (EIS) for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project in mid-June 2013. This document has been prepared under the guidance of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Included in the Final EIS

- The BLM's responses to over 900 comment letters received on the Draft EIS
- The BLM's preferred alternative
- Proposed amendments to the BLM's land use plans

About the Project

The SunZia Southwest Transmission Project is a proposed high-capacity electrical transmission project in New Mexico and Arizona. It includes the construction, operation, and maintenance of approximately 515 miles of two 500-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission lines.

How to access the Final EIS

- View and download a copy at www.blm.gov/nm/sunzia
- Review a copy at a public library, or BLM and other agency offices (complete list on page 2)
- Request a CD version of the EIS

Alternative Routes and the BLM Preferred Alternative

Following is a brief description of the BLM's preferred alternative route (subroutes). For a more detailed view of each route(s), please access the Interactive Map Viewer or Map Volume at the BLM Project website: www.blm.gov/nm/sunzia

Route Group 1: SunZia East Substation to Midpoint Substation

Subroute 1A2 (230.3 miles) proceeds west from the SunZia Substation site through Lincoln, Torrance, and Socorro counties, and crosses the Rio Grande near Socorro, New Mexico. The subroute continues south through Sierra and Luna counties, along the I-25 highway corridor,

toward the Midpoint Substation site near Deming, New Mexico. Subroute 1A2 parallels approximately 141 miles of existing or designated utility corridors, and crosses approximately 108 miles of public land administered by the BLM.

Subroute 1A1 was identified as the BLM preferred alternative for Route Group 1 in the Draft EIS. The subsequent selection of Subroute 1A2 as the BLM preferred alternative in this Final EIS was made in response to comments on the Draft EIS that requested an increase in the distance between the proposed transmission lines and military testing facilities, located 30 miles north of the White Sands Missile Range on non-federal lands, and in response to comments on the Draft EIS regarding views from Gran Quivira unit of the Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument.

Route Group 3: Midpoint Substation to Willow-500 kV Substation

Subroute 3A2 (123.9 miles) proceeds west from the Midpoint Substation site through Luna, Grant, and Hidalgo counties in New Mexico and Greenlee and Graham counties in Arizona, along the I-10 highway corridor, toward the Willow-500 kV Substation site. The subroute parallels approximately 42 miles of existing or designated utility corridors, and crosses approximately 62 miles of public land administered by the BLM.

Subroute 3A1 was identified as the BLM preferred alternative for Route Group 3 in the Draft EIS. The subsequent selection of Subroute 3A2 as the BLM preferred alternative in this Final EIS was made in response to comments on the Draft EIS that requested a modification of the transmission line route in order to avoid the Lordsburg Playa, and the Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area.

Route Group 4: Willow-500 kV Substation to Pinal Central Substation

Subroute 4C2c (161.2 miles) proceeds southwest from the Willow-500 kV Substation site through Graham and Cochise counties in Arizona, along the I-10 highway corridor, and crosses the San Pedro River north of Benson. The subroute proceeds north on the west side of the San Pedro River towards Oracle through Cochise and Pima counties. The subroute continues west through Pinal County toward I-10, then turns to the north, before heading west toward the Pinal Central Substation. Subroute 4C2c

BLM Preferred Alternative

The BLM identified the preferred alternative following consideration of comments submitted on the Draft EIS and proposed resource management plan amendments, and in coordination with federal, state, and local government agencies.

Notice of Availability for the Final EIS/Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments – June 2013

The Notice of Availability is expected to be published in the *Federal Register* on or about June 14, 2013.

Land Use Plan Amendment Protest Period – 30 days

Two plan amendments are needed in order for the preferred route to be consistent with the BLM's Socorro RMP (2010, Socorro Field Office) and Mimbres RMP (1993, Las Cruces District Office). The plan amendments include proposed modifications to visual resource management objectives and right-of-way avoidance area management.

Protests on any of the proposed plan amendments must be filed with the BLM Director in Washington, D.C. within 30 days of the date the EPA publishes the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. For more information on the protest process, please refer to the Dear Reader letter at the beginning of the Final EIS or online at www.blm.gov/pgdata/content/wo/en/prog/planning/planning_overview/protest_resolution.html.

parallels approximately 90 miles of existing or designated utility corridors, and crosses approximately 15 miles of public land administered by the BLM.

Record of Decision

A Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued by the BLM to address the alternatives analyzed in the Final EIS. The ROD will include BLM's decisions

on (1) whether to approve SunZia's application for right-of-way on federal lands, and (2) whether to approve proposed land use plan amendments for BLM resource management plans.

The ROD is expected in September 2013. For further information on the NEPA process, see Section 1.10 of the Final EIS.

Locations of Final EIS for Public Review

BLM Offices

Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Socorro Field Office
901 S. Highway 85
Socorro, NM 87801

Roswell Field Office
2909 W. Second Street
Roswell, NM 88201

Other Agency Offices

New Mexico State Land Office
310 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87504

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Division
4101 Jefferson Plaza, N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Libraries

New Mexico

Lordsburg-Hidalgo Library (Lordsburg)
Marshall Memorial Library (Deming)
Socorro Public Library
Thomas Branigan Memorial Library (Las Cruces)
Truth or Consequences Public Library
Village of Corona Public Library

Arizona

Benson Public Library
Bowie Jimmie Libhart Library

Rio Puerco Field Office
435 Montaña N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Tucson Field Office
3201 E. Universal Way
Tucson, AZ 85756

Safford Field Office
711 14th Avenue
Safford, AZ 85546

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services
500 Gold Avenue S.W.
Albuquerque, NM 87102

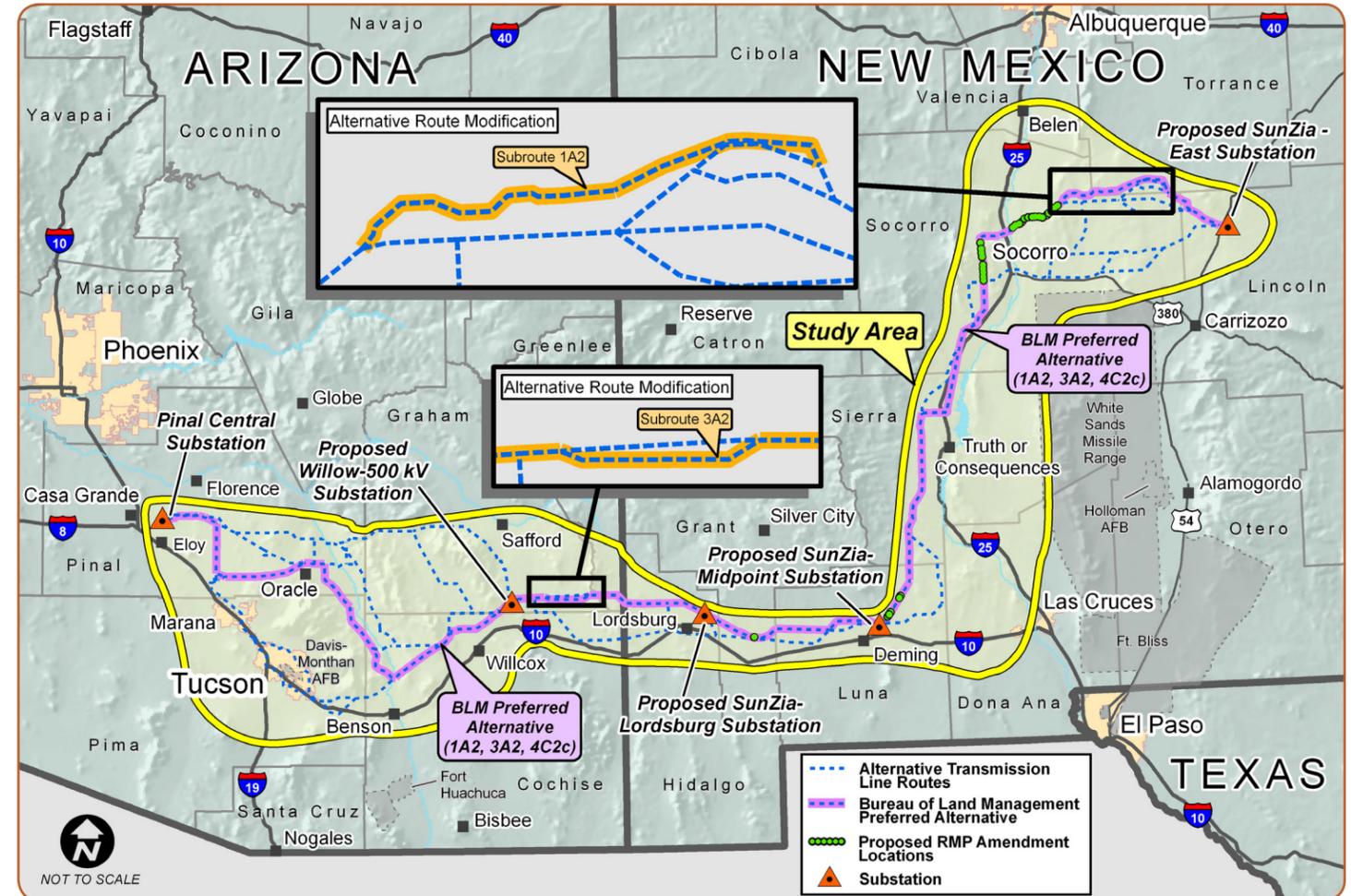
Arizona State Land Department
1616 W. Adams
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Gila District Office
1763 Paseo San Luis
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

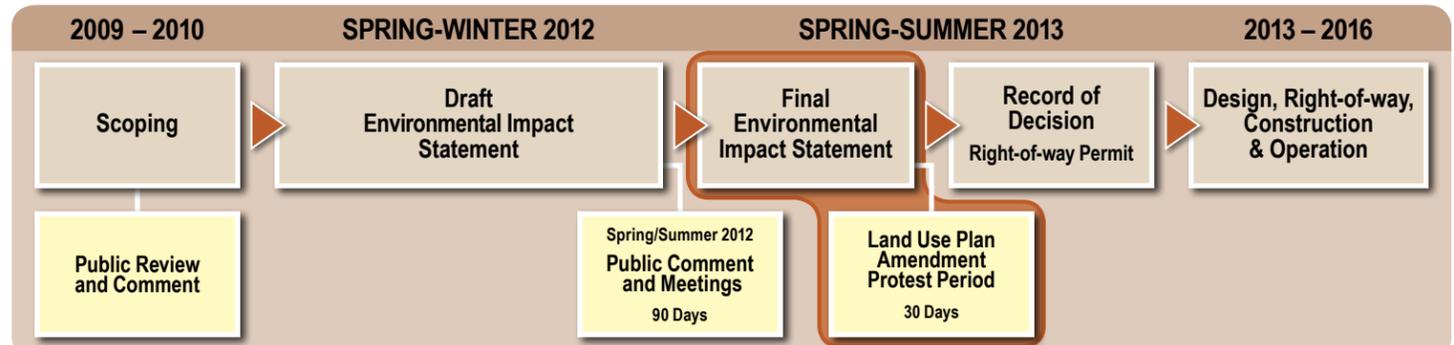
Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086

Casa Grande Public Library
Coolidge Public Library
Eloy Public Library
Mammoth Public Library
Geasa-Marana Branch Library (Marana)
Oracle Public Library
Safford City-Graham County Library
San Manuel Public Library
Pima County Public Library (Tucson)
Elsie S. Hogan Community Library (Willcox)

SUNZIA PROJECT STUDY AREA



PROJECT TIMELINE



BLM Project Website

Do you want to know more about the SunZia Project EIS? Visit the BLM Project website at www.blm.gov/nm/sunzia for more information on the following:

- Final EIS and Proposed RMP Amendments
- SunZia Project overview
- Map Volume and Interactive Map Viewer
- BLM announcements and news releases
- Draft EIS/RMPA
- Project newsletters
- Project schedule
- Federal Register notices
- CEQ's *A Citizen's Guide to NEPA*

