

BLM Solar Regional Mitigation Planning – Dry Lake SEZ Pilot Project – Wrap Up Webinar:

May 2, 2013; 1:00-2:00pm Pacific/4pm – 5pm Eastern

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Webinar URL: <http://anl.adobeconnect.com/r52y8ffuxqz/>

Call-In Instructions:

- ***Please mute phone and computer when you are not speaking***
- ***Group discussion and Q&A periods will be included after presentation***
- ***If you have a question, please click on “Raise Hand” under the Set Status icon (on status bar at top of web page)***
- ***You will be called on to state your name, organization, question. When you have finished speaking, please lower your hand and re-mute your phone***

Solar Regional Mitigation Wrap-Up Webinar Agenda

- Duration:
 - 1 Hour: 1:00-2:00pm Pacific
- Objective:
 - Continue *BLM – Stakeholder Discussion: Solar Regional Mitigation Pilot*
- Topics:
 - **BLM WO Message** - Solar Regional Mitigation Strategies
 - *BLM WO - Ray Brady; Gordon Toevs - 15 minutes*
 - **Solar Regional Mitigation Framework Lessons Learned – Overview**
 - *BLM WO - Joe Vieira; BLM NV - Mike Dwyer - 15 minutes*
 - **Next Steps** - *BLM WO - Joe Vieira - 10 minutes*
- Format:
 - *Presentation*
 - *Group Discussion – Q&A*

BLM WO

Dry Lake SEZ Pilot - Solar Regional Mitigation Framework

- BLM WO Pilot Project Involvement:
 - BLM Pilot Project Oversight and Guidance
 - BLM WO Pilot Briefings
 - Numerous Day-Day discussions
 - Topics: Pilot Progress , Stakeholder Input , Unavoidable impacts , Mitigation Fees
- BLM WO Appreciation of Stakeholder Involvement
 - New undertaking for all parties involved
 - Process forces us to think in new ways
 - Appreciated interested parties willingness to partner & compromise

BLM WO

Dry Lake SEZ Pilot - Solar Regional Mitigation Framework

- Original Goals of the Dry Lake SEZ Pilot
 - Solar PEIS (July 2012):
 - Test Framework for Solar Energy Zone Regional Mitigation Planning
 - BLM WO stressed the following pilot guidelines and objectives:
 - Regional mitigation as a *new* concept
 - Solar Energy Zone: *incentivize - maintain/create certainty*
 - Focus on what *impacts warrant offsite mitigation*
 - Use *existing information* and *tools* to the extent practicable
 - Provide the *ability to adapt mitigation priorities* over time
 - Consider the zones in an appropriate regional context
 - *Pool dollars* to make better conservation/restoration investments

BLM WO

Dry Lake SEZ Pilot - Solar Regional Mitigation Framework

- BLM WO Understanding of Framework and Methods Developed
 - Stakeholder Engagement:
 - Seek partner solutions through dialog and involvement
 - Understanding Baseline:
 - Build on what we already have in the PEIS with existing information and local expertise
 - Assessing Unavoidable Impacts:
 - Focus on avoidance and minimization measures first
 - Determine relative importance of zone and resource impacts in a regional context

BLM WO

Dry Lake SEZ Pilot - Solar Regional Mitigation Framework

- BLM WO Understanding of Framework and Methods Developed
 - Regional Mitigation Objectives:
 - Reference LUP objectives, specific, measureable
 - Continuing collaboration will be needed
 - Example: Dry Lake SEZ SRMS Objective for Creosote-Bursage Restoration
 - Mitigation Fee:
 - Key variables in fee calculation method
 - Base fee developed through assessment of real costs
 - Multiplier used to value resources in the zones in a regional context
 - Fee becomes incentive for siting future zones in low resource value areas
 - Avoid duplicative costs
 - Establish a SEZ base fee
 - Revisit fee prior to lease offering (if necessary) - provide upfront siting information and certainty for developers

BLM WO

Dry Lake SEZ Pilot - Solar Regional Mitigation Framework

- BLM WO Understanding of Framework and Methods Developed
 - Screen & Prioritize Locations and Actions Where Mitigation Dollars Will Be Spent:
 - work with stakeholders to identify and evaluate options; remain flexible enough to adjust as needed
 - Create a Structure to Pool & Hold Mitigation Funds:
 - Consider best structure including 3rd Party
 - Include a process to revisit priorities if necessary or appropriate
 - Ensure accountability of how dollars are spent and outcomes
 - Monitoring and adaptive management:
 - Link to Baseline, Objectives
 - Define Mitigation Effectiveness measures to adjust approach over time

Solar Regional Mitigation Framework

Lessons Learned

- ***Mitigation Hierarchy***

- Regional Mitigation Strategy Development

- ***Framework Elements***

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Understanding the Baseline
- Assessing Unavoidable Impacts
- Regional Mitigation Objectives
- Mitigation Location and Action Screening & Selection
- Mitigation Fee Calculation
- Mitigation Fund Management Structures
- Monitoring & Adaptive Management

Considerations / Lessons Learned for Mitigation Hierarchy, Framework Elements, and Stakeholder Engagement

- ***Project elements should be completed prior to stakeholder engagement:***
 - Baseline Compilation
 - Conceptual models
 - Identification of unavoidable impacts and impacts that warrant mitigation
 - Identification of regional mitigation priorities - SEZ-per acre mitigation fee
- ***Stakeholders input most effective with adequate time to review project documents prior to workshops and webinars***
- ***Stakeholder comments should be provided to the entire stakeholder group in a timely manner***

Understanding the Regional Baseline

- ***Landscape-scale and Local-scale Considerations from a Number of Sources:***
 - Solar PEIS
 - BLM Rapid Ecoregional Assessments
 - Other Ecoregional Assessments (e.g., TNC)
 - BLM Resource Management Plans
 - Habitat Conservation Plans
 - Rangeland Health Assessments
 - Resource Specialists Expert Knowledge
 - Other Research and Studies
- ***Development of Conceptual Model(s)***
 - Graphically Illustrate current understanding of ecosystem components, interrelationships, processes, and stressors
 - Modify, refine, expand models over time -monitoring and adaptive management
- ***Leverage GIS***
 - Understand SEZ in geographic context
- ***Considerations / Lessons Learned***
 - Best Available Data Principle: Multiple sources of information may be used
 - Geographic region and baseline conditions may vary based on geography and the interaction of resources

Assessing Unavoidable Impacts

- ***Identify unavoidable impacts to important resources that warrant off-site mitigation***
- ***Use Multiple Sources of Information***
 - Types of information sources include those used for understanding regional baseline
 - Solar PEIS – indicates whether impacts are likely to occur for each resource group
- ***Impacts to Important Resources May be Understood from Several Approaches:***
 - Geospatial status/trends evaluations using data from REAs
 - Evaluation of rangeland health indicators/metrics
 - Understanding of local status/trends by BLM resource specialists
- ***Considerations / Lessons Learned***
 - Solar PEIS as “starting point” for this Unavoidable Impact assessment
 - Importance of a resource is dependent on its status and rarity in the region
 - Several different qualitative and/or quantitative evaluations may be performed

Regional Mitigation Objectives

- ***Six Steps to Mitigation Goal and Objective Development***
 - Focus = unavoidable impacts that warrant off-site mitigation
 - Document existing regulatory and land management plan protection goals
 - Articulate overarching regional mitigation goals
 - Identify opportunities of achieving complimentary objectives through fewer actions
 - Define at least one specific, measurable regional mitigation objective
 - Incorporate monitoring and adaptive management principles
 - Dialog & Collaborate with BLM specialists and stakeholders
- ***Considerations / Lessons Learned***
 - Clarify mitigation objectives as early as possible
 - Mitigation objectives and priorities need to be clear, durable, and measurable
 - Should provide strategic direction for mitigation candidate site selection and screening
 - Mitigation objectives will vary based on geography, understanding of the affected ecosystem, landscape condition, and the area's potential for restoration
 - A single mitigation objective could include a number of environmental benefits

Mitigation Fee Calculation

- ***Develop a method to calculate a mitigation fee that provides funding to implement mitigation actions without creating a disincentive for solar energy development***
- ***Mitigation Fee = (Mitigation Base Fee – ESA Section 7 permit mitigation fee) x (Resource Value and Landscape Condition Multiplier) x Acres***
 - One-time investment and long-term management costs incorporated (Mitigation Base Fee)
 - Considers the condition of the SEZ within the eco-regional context (landscape condition index)
 - Consider attributes unique to each SEZ (resource values)

Mitigation Fee Calculation

- ***Considerations / Lessons Learned (cont'd):***
 - Many possible approaches
 - Long-term management to protect mitigation investment of paramount importance
 - BLM Rapid Eco-regional Assessment (REA) appears to be a good resource for scientific data - landscape condition (SEZ & region)
 - Opportunities to refine:
 - Criteria for calculating 'Resource Value'
 - Rangeland Health Indicators
 - Base Fee
 - Cost of unavoidable impacts versus the cost of mitigation site/action
 - Values in the multiplier table

Screening Candidate Mitigation Locations and Actions

- ***Evaluate, rank, and prioritize a list of potential mitigation locations and actions that meet mitigation goals and objectives***
 - Open nomination process
 - Candidate site screening matrix
 - Final decision: BLM Authorized Officer
- ***Considerations / Lessons Learned:***
 - Many legitimate approaches
 - Durability of paramount importance
 - Opportunities to refine prioritization/selection criteria
 - Feasibility (triage?)
 - Opportunities to incorporate into land-use plan revisions

Monitoring & Adaptive Management

- ***Monitoring will be designed and conducted to:***
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation measures
 - Detect unanticipated impacts
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of elements of the BLM's Solar Energy Program (e.g., policies, design features)
- ***Considerations / Lessons Learned:***
 - Rangeland Health Indicators and protocol could be utilized here to:
 - Respond to concerns about subjective vs. objective measures
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation activities in meeting their goals

Next Steps

- ***BLM Regional Mitigation and Implementation Manual (2013)***
 - Formerly BLM Off-Site Mitigation Policy (IM-2008-204)
 - Covers all BLM Resource Programs
- ***Stakeholder Review of Docs Emailed April 29, 2013***
 - Draft Dry Lake SEZ Solar Regional Mitigation Strategy
 - Draft Technical Note – Procedural Guidance and Framework for SEZ's
 - Request review and comments by May 13, 2013
- ***BLM consideration of comments & Document Edits***
 - Document Revisions as Necessary -Target May 25, 2013
 - BLM WO – Department of Interior Solicitor Review

Questions?

