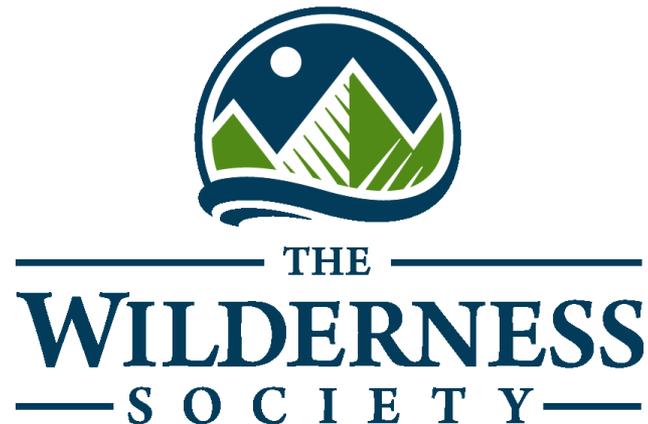




Guiding Renewable Energy Development in the West

Pam Eaton
Deputy Vice President
Public Lands
The Wilderness Society
Sept. 1, 2009



Why Renewable Energy?



"To truly transform our economy, protect our security, and save our planet from the ravages of climate change, we need to ultimately make clean, renewable energy the profitable kind of energy."

President Barack Obama
February 23, 2009



The Wilderness Society

Approach

- Ensure that our nation meets its renewable energy goals in a way that sustains our wild places and ecosystems.

“Get it right from the start.”

- Find the most appropriate places for renewable energy and transmission and then support it.
- Work directly with renewable energy proponents to find solutions.
- Ensure that utility-scale development on public land isn't the only solution—support energy demand reduction, efficiency and distributed generation, brownfields, etc.



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

Principles

- Comply with NEPA and other federal/state environmental laws
- Avoid areas with environmental protections/high conflicts
- Prioritize disturbed lands
- Protect crucial wildlife habitat and corridors
- Minimize land use



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

Why do we think we can do this?

- More than enough resource
- Engaging early to work through issues
- Conflicts can drag out siting for years
- Support for siting instead of opposition possible
- Stakeholders more likely to defend outcome of inclusive processes



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

- Examples of High Conflict Areas
 - Areas with sensitive biological resources such as federally designated and proposed critical habitat; significant sensitive wildlife populations
 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wildlife Habitat Management Areas, proposed HCP and NCCP Conservation Reserves
 - Proposed Wilderness Areas, proposed National Monuments, and Citizens' Wilderness Inventory Areas



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

Examples of areas to prioritize for siting

- Lands that have been mechanically disturbed
- Lands that have been “type-converted” from native vegetation
- Public lands of comparatively low resource value located adjacent to degraded and impacted private lands
- Locations adjacent to urbanized areas
- Locations that minimize the need to build new roads, transmission, or substations.



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

Policy– Brownfields

- Millions of acres of private and public lands tracked by EPA could be reused for renewable energy
 - Solar: ~919,600 MW
 - Wind: ~17,382 MW
- TWS leading policy push for incentives for brownfield development



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

- Western Governors' Association Renewable Energy Zones Process
 - Identified Exclusion Areas, Initial Avoidance Areas, Significant Areas of Consideration.

<http://www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/wrez/enviro/index.htm>

- Identified Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitats/State-approved Wildlife Sensitivity Maps for some states

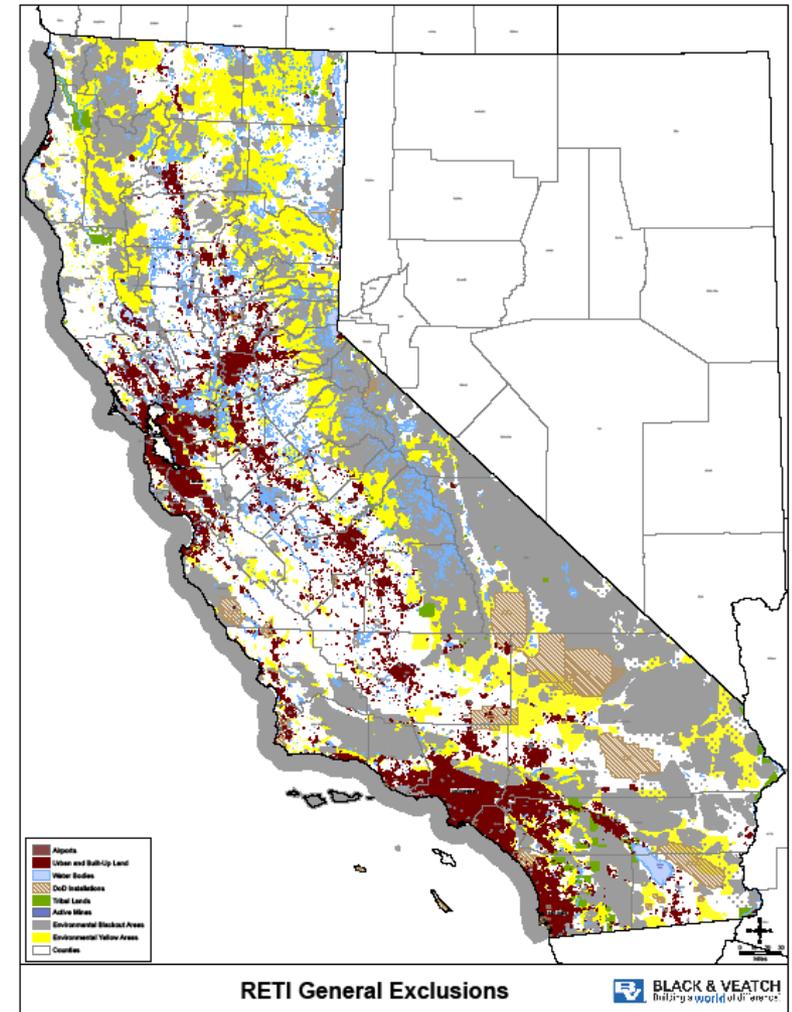
[Colorado](#), [Idaho](#), [Montana](#), [New Mexico](#), [Oregon](#), [Utah](#),
[Washington](#), [Wyoming](#)



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

Processes

- California Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative
- Other State Processes



BLM's Efforts to Date

- Significant amounts of renewable energy resources are found on federal public lands.



Wind PEIS

BLM PEIS identified 20.6 million acres of “wind potential lands”

- Identified specific areas where wind energy development is excluded.
- Imposed mandatory “Best Management Practices” to protect birds, bats, and other wildlife that apply to all 5 stages of development.
- Required that to “plan for efficient use of the land, necessary infrastructure requirements shall be consolidated wherever possible, and current transmission and market access shall be evaluated carefully.”



Geothermal Program

Identified 143 million acres of BLM and 104 million acres of National Forests with geothermal potential

- Gave special consideration to leasing adjacent to National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges
- BLM vowed to lease geothermal resources “just like oil and gas.”



Solar Energy Programmatic EIS (1)

- Identify areas with sufficient solar resource
- Identify BLM-administered lands suitable for utility-scale solar development and those that are not (where development is prohibited by law or policy)
- Identify areas with sufficient land for projects (250 MW project requires 1250 acres or 5 acres/MW)



Solar Energy Programmatic EIS (2)

- Layout BMPs, mitigation requirements, revenue structure
- Consider the need for additional transmission corridors crossing BLM-administered lands
- Amend BLM land use plans in the six-state area to address solar energy development
- Identify DOE technological requirements



Solar Energy Study Areas

- Lands with excellent solar resources, suitable slope
- Proximity to roads and transmission lines or designated corridors
- Containing at least 2,000 acres of BLM-administered public lands.
- Sensitive lands, wilderness and other high-conservation-value lands as well as lands with conflicting uses were excluded.
- They won't all make it, but there will be agreement on many.



Transmission

Lack of transmission is considered by the industry and allies to be a critical barrier.

—West-wide Energy Corridors Programmatic EIS could help guide development, but missed opportunity

“One of the biggest constraints on wind energy's growth in the U.S. is the capacity of the transmission grid to deliver wind energy to customers.”

American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)



Policy Issues

- Short-term projects vs. long term policy and practice
 - Fast Track Projects
 - Acceptance of new applications
 - Revenue structure
 - Mitigation
 - Ecological Assessments and conservation (landscape) planning with ARRA funding
 - Using authorities to minimize need for new transmission



Conclusions

BLM is moving in the right direction

- Identifying places unsuitable for development
- Identifying solar energy study areas
- Identifying already disturbed lands
- Conducting ecological assessments
- Communicating with stakeholders early and often



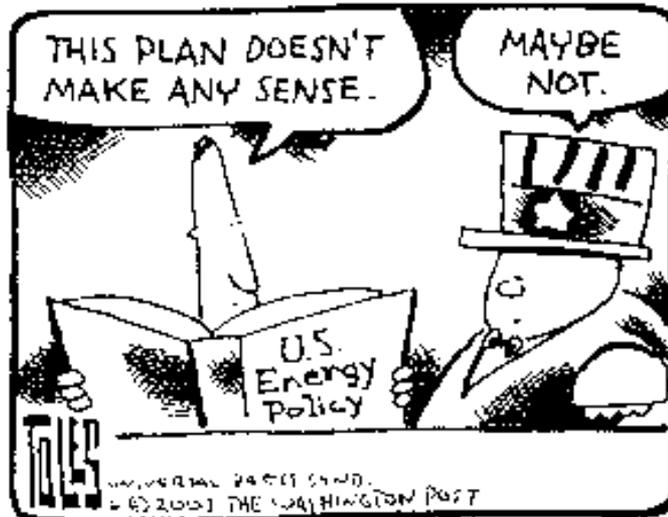
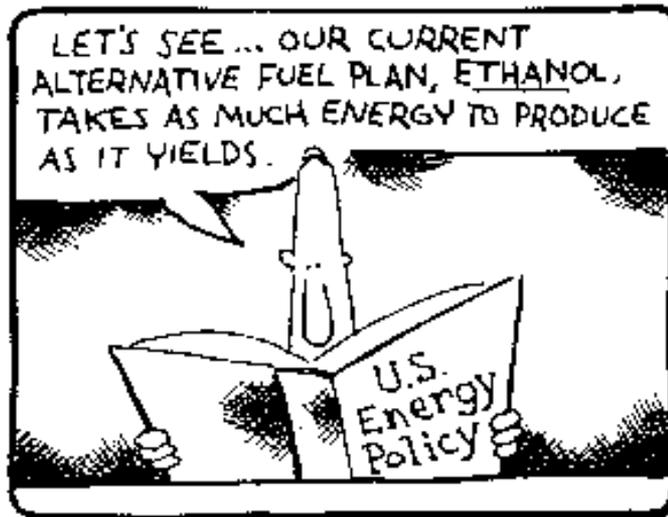
Conclusions

More should be done

- Apply “guided development” approach to wind and geothermal
- Look at water and other resources
- Identify appropriate transmission corridors with incentives for efficiency, conservation, and renewables on lines
- Develop mitigation/conservation strategies
- Be creative
- Keep eye on both short and long term



Questions?



Guiding RE Development to Appropriate Places

The Wilderness Society
BLM Action Center

Alex Daue

Renewable Energy Coordinator

1660 Wynkoop Street, Suite 850

Denver, CO 80202

303-650-5818, ext. 108

Alex_daue@tws.org



THE
WILDERNESS
— S O C I E T Y —

