

Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project



NEPA Process

Where is the BLM in the NEPA process?

The BLM completed the preparation of the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment for visual resources and the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on July 22, 2011 notifying the public; federal, state, tribal and local governments; that the DEIS is available for review and comment.

The DEIS is a disclosure document assisting BLM in its decision-making process. It provides BLM with an analysis of potential environmental impacts resulting from project development based on available data, a review of applicable mitigation measures to minimize those impacts, and an examination of reasonable alternatives.

How can I participate in the NEPA process?

Public participation is a required part of the NEPA process. Public participation for this project focuses on gathering input from the public and dispersing project information. The NEPA process provides opportunities for the public to participate in the decision-making process as shown on the figure to the right.

BLM encourages your participation and comments on the adequacy of the environmental analyses during the 90-day public comment period, from July 22 to October 19, 2011. The BLM will be hosting two open house meetings during the DEIS public comment period.

August 22, 2011

Jeffrey Memorial Community Center
315 East Pine
Rawlins, WY
4 – 7 pm

August 23, 2011

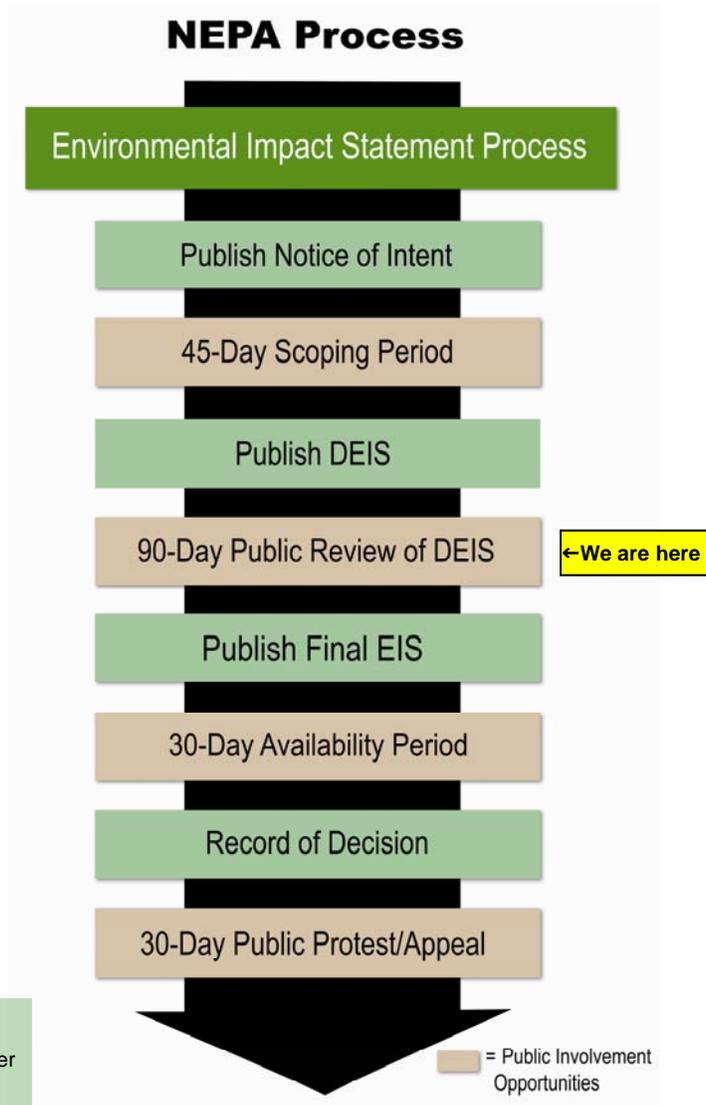
Platte Valley Community Center
210 West Elm Avenue
Saratoga, WY
4 – 7 pm

How do I submit comments on the DEIS?

Your participation and comments on the DEIS are a vital part of the BLM's decision-making process. Comments should focus on whether the DEIS has sufficiently identified and evaluated the proposed project's environmental impacts and whether it adequately addresses ways to mitigate those impacts. The most effective comments cite specific actions or impacts, and offer supporting information. You can submit comments in the following ways:

- At the public meetings
- By facsimile: 307-328-4224
- By email: WYMail_PCW_Windfarm@blm.gov
- By U.S. Mail:

Pam Murdock
Project Manager
Rawlins Field Office
P.O. Box 2407
1300 North Third Street
Rawlins, WY 82301



Plan Amendment

What is a plan amendment and why is it being prepared for this project?

The BLM evaluated the proposed project in accordance with all major authorizing laws, regulations, and policies. The proposed wind energy project is in conformance with management goals and actions defined in the Rawlins RMP with the exception of visual resource management (VRM). A majority of the CCSM wind site testing and monitoring application area (see map) is designated as VRM Class III, but a portion of the Sierra Madre site is designated VRM Class II. Therefore, the proposed CCSM project is not in conformance with the VRM decisions in the Rawlins RMP. As such, a VRM-targeted plan amendment was prepared concurrently with the development of the CCSM Wind Energy Project DEIS.

The VRM plan amendment will determine the appropriate management actions for visual resources on public lands in the decision area (see map) and amend the associated decisions made in the Rawlins RMP. Preparation of a plan amendment is part of the NEPA process. Alternatives are identified, the existing environment is described, and environmental impacts are disclosed. Public disclosure is also part of the plan amendment process. BLM's decision to amend the Rawlins RMP is a prerequisite for approval of the project.

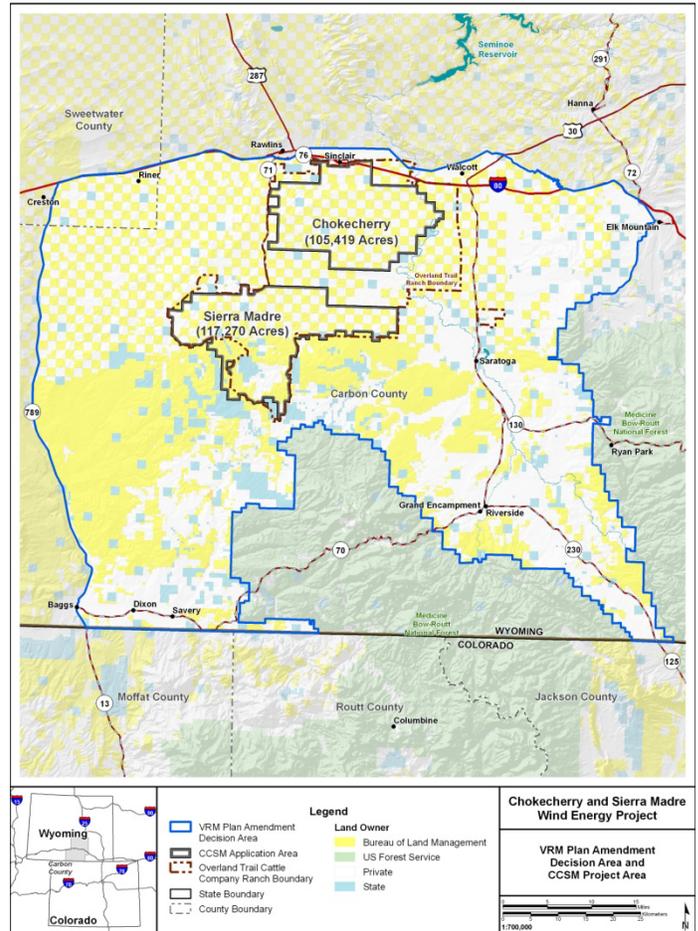
The Draft VRM plan amendment DEIS is included as Volume I of the document and the CCSM DEIS is provided in Volume II.

Who is participating in the preparation of the VRM Plan Amendment and the DEIS?

The BLM Rawlins Field Office is responsible for the scope and content of the CCSM Wind Energy Project DEIS and the VRM plan amendment using AECOM as a third-party contractor. Third-party contractors are routinely selected by federal agencies to avoid any conflict of interest in preparing the DEIS (40 CFR 1506.5[c]). The third-party contractor is directed by the BLM, but paid by the applicant (Forty Questions No. 16).

The following tables identify the various project participants, their role in the CCSM Wind Energy Project, and cooperating agencies.

Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project Map



Cooperating Agencies

The following agencies with jurisdiction, special expertise, or interest in the CCSM Wind Energy Project have agreed to participate in the DEIS process as cooperating agencies:

- U.S. Forest Service (USFS) (Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grasslands)
- State of Wyoming
- Carbon County
- Little Snake River Conservation District
- Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District
- Medicine Bow Conservation District, and
- City of Rawlins.

Participant	Project Role
Bureau of Land Management	Lead agency – oversight of the NEPA process and preparation of the DEIS.
AECOM	Third-party contractor – under the direction of BLM for preparation of the DEIS; paid by the project applicant.
Power Company of Wyoming, LLC	Project applicant – owner and operator of the proposed project.