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***Ask questions to BLM and Borderlands Wind, LLC staff, visit various resource stations, and provide individual input to court reporter.**

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

# Borderlands Wind Project

Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Resource Management Plan Amendment

## Catron County, New Mexico

DOI-BLM-NM-A020-2019-0002-RMP-EIS

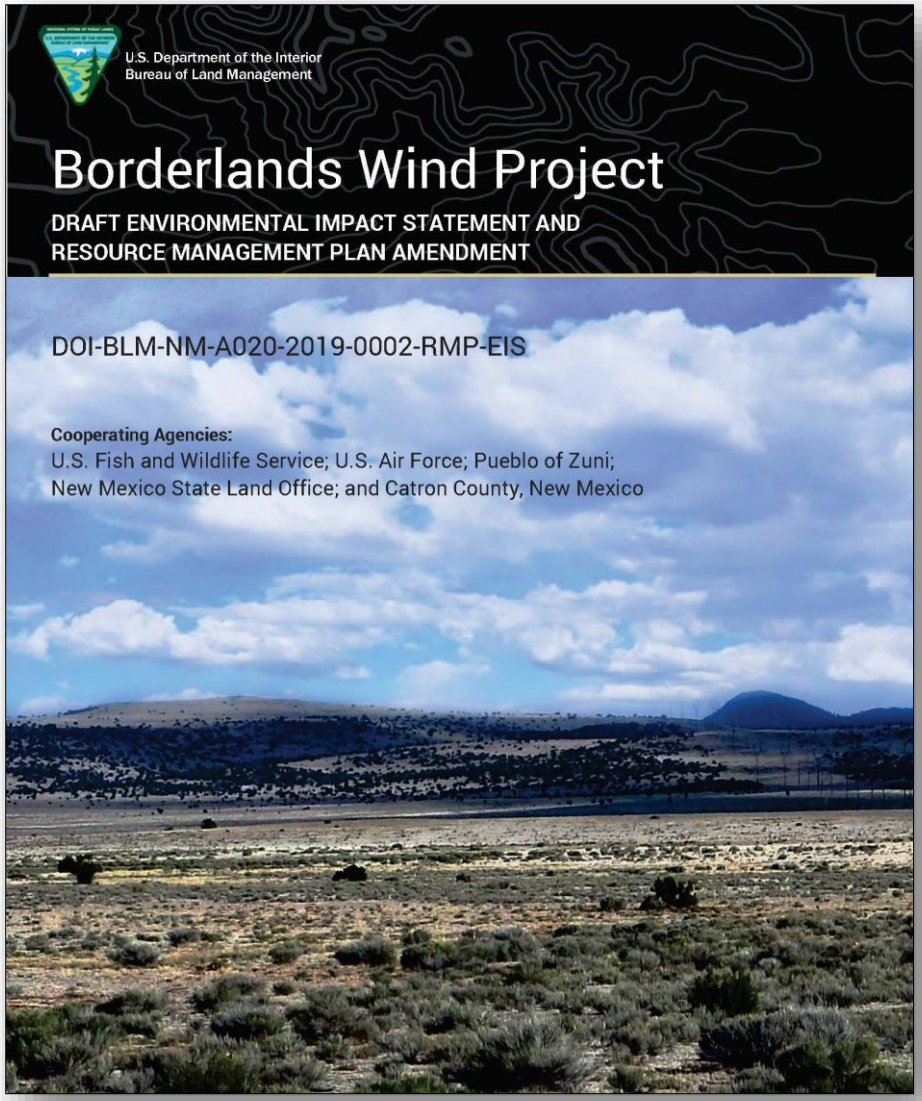
**Secretary of the Department of Interior Priorities:**

**1) Sustainably develop our energy and natural resources.**
**2) Promote energy and mineral production on federal land.**
**3) Support the local economies.**

# Borderlands Wind Project

## NEPA Process

- Right-of-way (ROW) Application Triggers NEPA Review
- Internal Scoping and Planning
- Notice of Intent
- Public Scoping ← 30-day Public Comment Period
- Data Gathering / Resource Investigations
- Alternate Development and Evaluation
- Draft EIS / RMP Amendment
- Public Comment (We Are Here) ← 90-day Public Comment Period
- Final EIS / RMP Amendment
- Record of Decision (ROD) ← 30-day Protest Period; 60-day Governor's Consistency Review



# Cooperating Agencies

**Catron County**

- Local jurisdiction and access required along two County roads

**New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO)**

- NMSLO ROW required for access roads/turbines/transmission lines

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

- Endangered Species Act/Section 7 and Bald and Golden Eagle Act

**Department of Defense – Air Force**

- Military resources and activities associated with Holloman, Kirtland, and Cannon Air Force Bases

**Pueblo of Zuni**

- Proximity to Zuni Salt Lake, a significant cultural and religious landscape

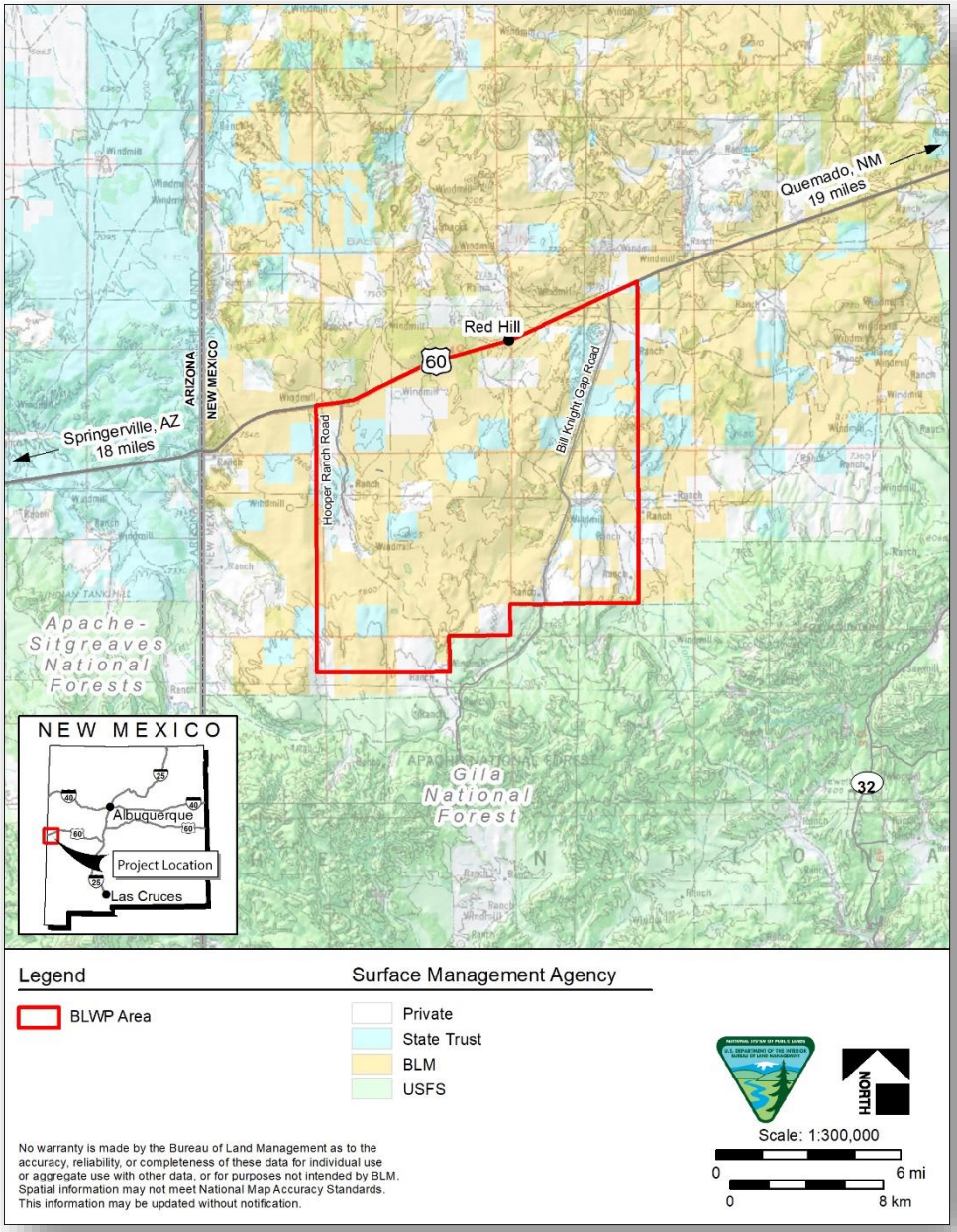
# Borderlands Wind Project

## Project Proponent

- **Borderlands Wind, LLC (NextEra Energy Resources, LLC)**

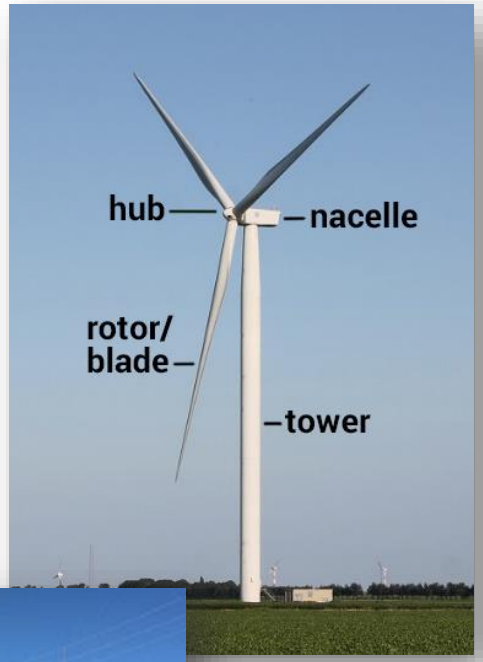
## Project Location

- **South of U.S. 60 in Catron County near Quemado, NM and the AZ–NM border**
- **BLM Socorro Field Office**



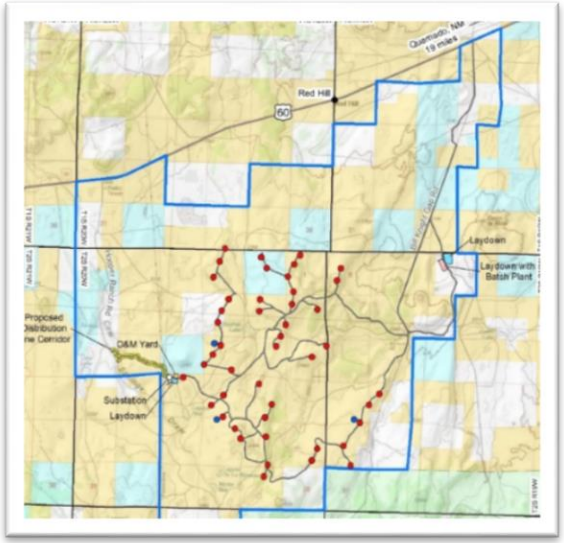
# Project Description

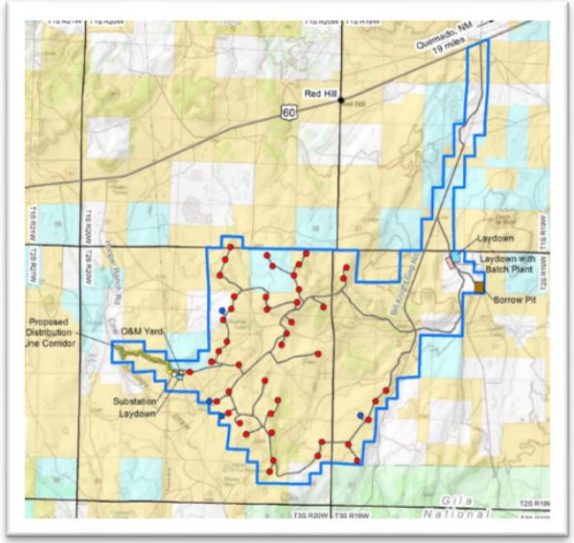
- **Up to 100-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility**
- **Ancillary facilities:**
  - Substation, switchyard, and gen-tie line (connection to Tucson Elect.)
  - Access roads
  - Underground electrical collection lines
  - Distribution lines
  - Operations and maintenance facility
  - Pad-mounted transformers
  - Meteorological (MET) towers
  - Construction laydown/staging area
  - Waterlines



# Comparison of Build Alternatives

| Proposed Action | Alternative 1 | Alternative 2 |
|---|---|---|
| • **43,528 acres of land in project area**<br>○ **30,338 acres of BLM lands**<br>○ 7,497 acres of private lands<br>○ 5,693 acres of NMSLO lands<br>• **46 turbines permitted**<br>• **40 turbines constructed**<br>○ **36 GE 2.5 MW turbines (499 feet tall)**<br>○ 4 GE 2.3 MW turbines (453 feet tall)<br>○ 6 alternative turbine locations<br>• **48 miles of access roads**<br>○ 40.2 miles of new access roads | • **18,907 acres of land in project area**<br>○ **15,837 acres of BLM lands**<br>○ 1,902 acres of private lands<br>○ 1,168 acres of NMSLO lands<br>• **45 turbines permitted**<br>• **40 turbines constructed**<br>○ **36 GE 2.5 MW turbines (499 feet tall)**<br>○ 4 GE 2.3 MW turbines (453 feet tall)<br>○ 5 alternative turbine locations<br>• **46.6 miles of access roads**<br>○ 38.8 miles of new access roads | • **18,907 acres of land in project area**<br>○ **15,837 acres of BLM lands**<br>○ 1,902 acres of private lands<br>○ 1,168 acres of NMSLO lands<br>• **45 turbines permitted**<br>• **34 turbines constructed**<br>○ **30 GE 3.0 MW turbines (591 feet tall)**<br>○ 4 GE 2.5 MW turbines (499 feet tall)<br>○ 11 alternative turbine locations<br>• **46.6 miles of access roads**<br>○ 38.8 miles of new access roads |



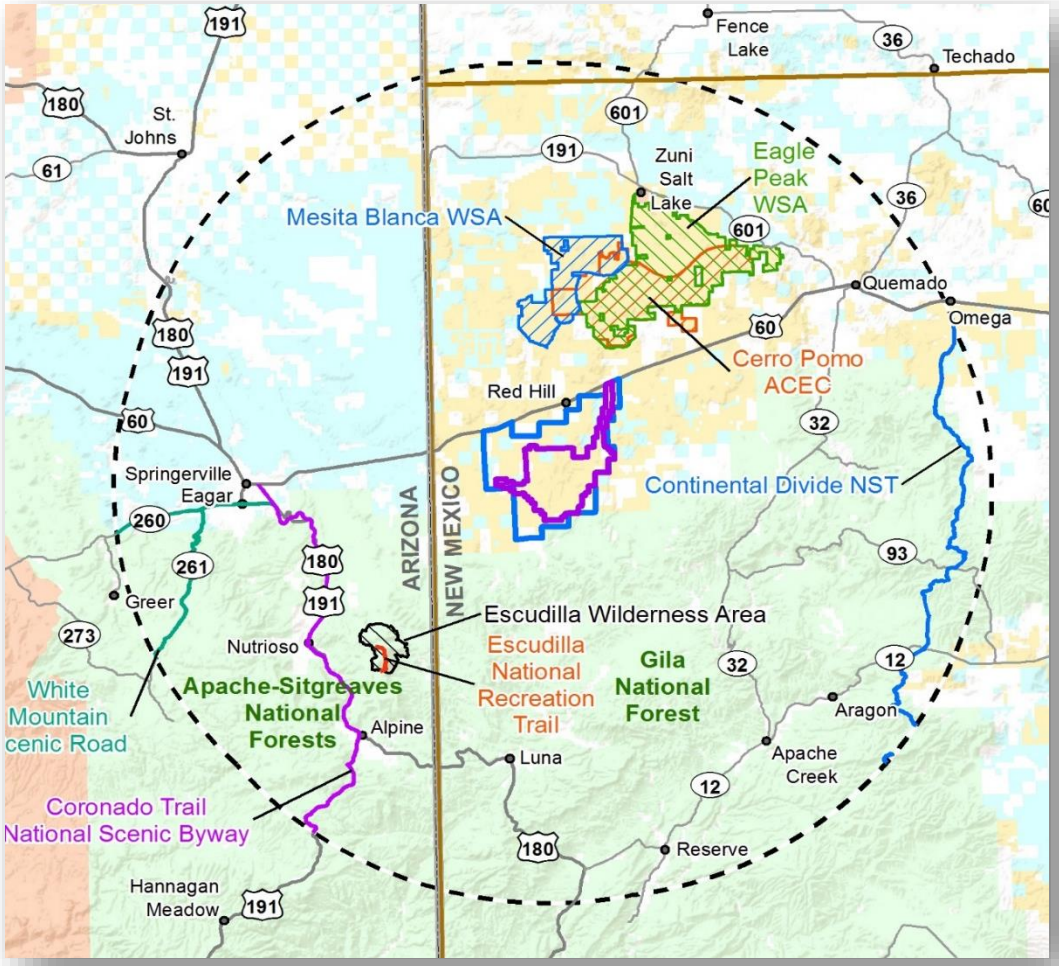



# Issues & Concerns

- Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Social and Economic Conditions
- Transportation and Travel Management
- Visual Resources
- Wildlife and Vegetation Resources

# Cultural Resources

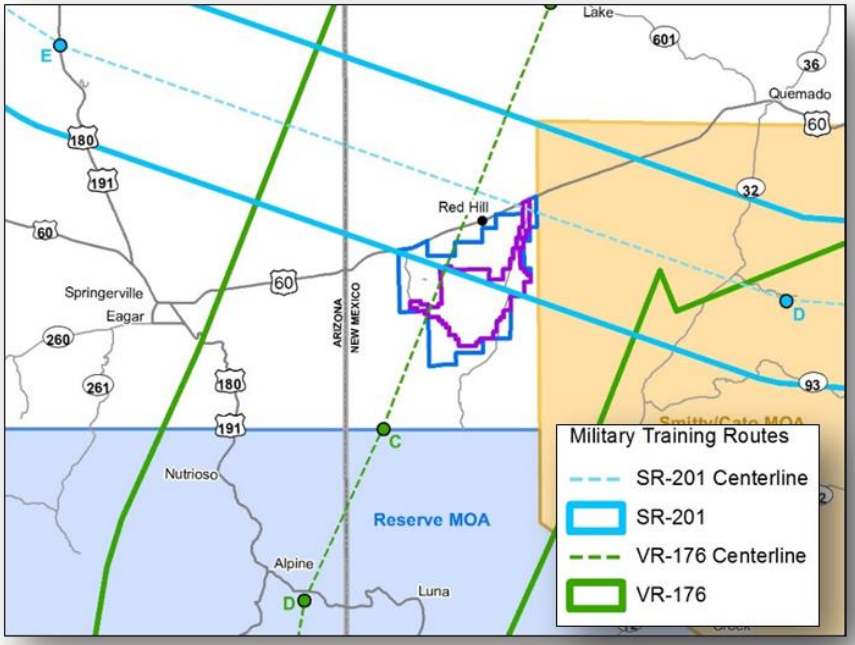
- Adverse impacts on cultural resources may occur from the build alternatives.
- Programmatic Agreement and Historical Properties Treatment Plan are being prepared to address the potential adverse effect to cultural sites.




Special Management Designations in the Region

# Land Use

- Alternatives 1 and 2 would reduce by 56.6 percent the total project boundary acreage as compared to the Proposed Action.
- Livestock grazing would be disrupted during construction and decommissioning activities.
- Negligible loss of permanent livestock foraging acres (< 1 percent) for grazing under the build alternatives.
- Two military low-level training routes could continue by flying around or over the turbines.



# Social and Economic Conditions

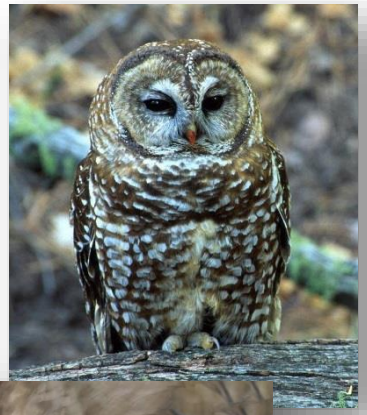
- Short-term increases in local income and employment, and long-term increase in tax revenue for Catron County.
- Short-term noise, traffic delays, and air quality impacts as well as interruption of access to recreation and hunting opportunities.
- Adjacent property values may be impacted. Magnitude and duration of impacts on property values would be specific to the individual property at the time of the sale.

# Transportation & Travel Management

- Existing roads would experience some restrictions due to localized project activity in order to protect public safety during construction and decommissioning.
- There would be no discernible increase in daily traffic during O&M (up to five vehicles anticipated).
- Approximately 40.3 miles of permanent new roads would be developed in the Proposed Action
- Approximately 38.8 miles of permanent new roads would be built in Alternatives 1 and 2.
- New roads on BLM-managed lands would be open to the public.

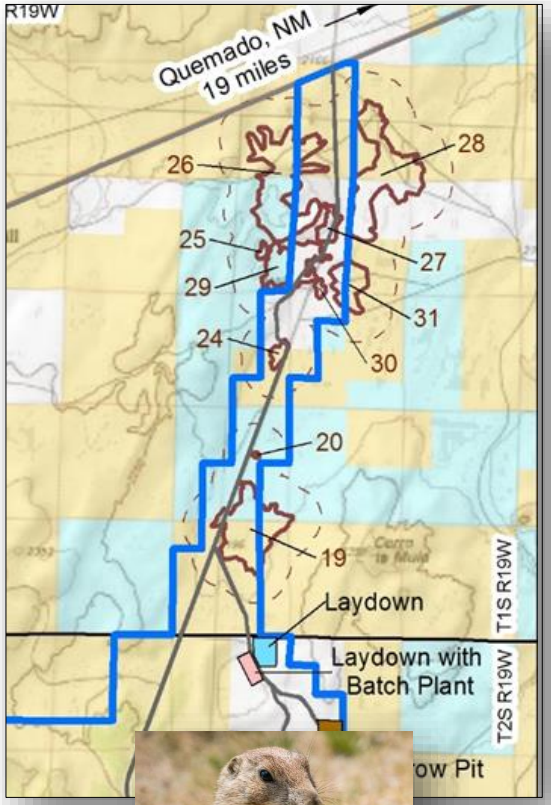
# Federally Listed Species

- Mexican spotted owl and Mexican wolf could potentially occur.
- No designated critical habitats for these species exist in the BLWP area.
- Mexican spotted owls:
  - Lack of preferred foraging, roosting, and nesting habitat
  - Wintering/migrating or dispersing owls could potentially occur.
- Mexican wolves:
  - May occasionally travel through
  - Are not known to concentrate their activities in this area.
- Localized negligible impacts on Mexican spotted owls and Mexican wolf but would not have regional impacts on these species' populations.



# Special Status Plant & Wildlife Species

- Eight special status plant species that are known to occur or could potentially occur
- Impacts on wildlife may include:
  - injury or mortality
  - loss of nests
  - habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation
  - disturbance/displacement.
- Increased public access opportunities could also lead to an increase in impacts to Gunnison's prairie dog populations.



# Migratory Birds

- Habitats that would concentrate migrating birds, such as large bodies of water, are not present in the BLWP area.
- Potential impacts on birds and bats during construction, O&M, and decommissioning activities:
  - injury or mortality
  - loss of nests and habitat
  - habitat degradation and fragmentation
  - disturbance/displacement.
- A Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy would be implemented along with Best Management Practices and other design features.
- Minimize potential impacts on migratory birds and provide for adaptive management during O&M.

# Bald and Golden Eagles

- The potential threat to eagles from collisions with wind turbines would exist throughout the anticipated 35-year life of the project.
- USFWS's analysis indicate a cumulative "take" of two golden eagles over a 5-year period.
- "Take" of bald eagles is considered less likely to occur than take of golden eagles.
- Borderlands Wind, LLC would provide voluntary mitigation to offset the anticipated impacts on eagles.

# Visual Resources

- Landscape character would be altered because of the scale, form, color, and contrast created by the turbines as well as motion of the blades.
- Short duration synchronized flashing of the Aircraft Detection Lighting Systems would have substantially less night sky impacts than the standard continuous, red strobe light aircraft warning systems.

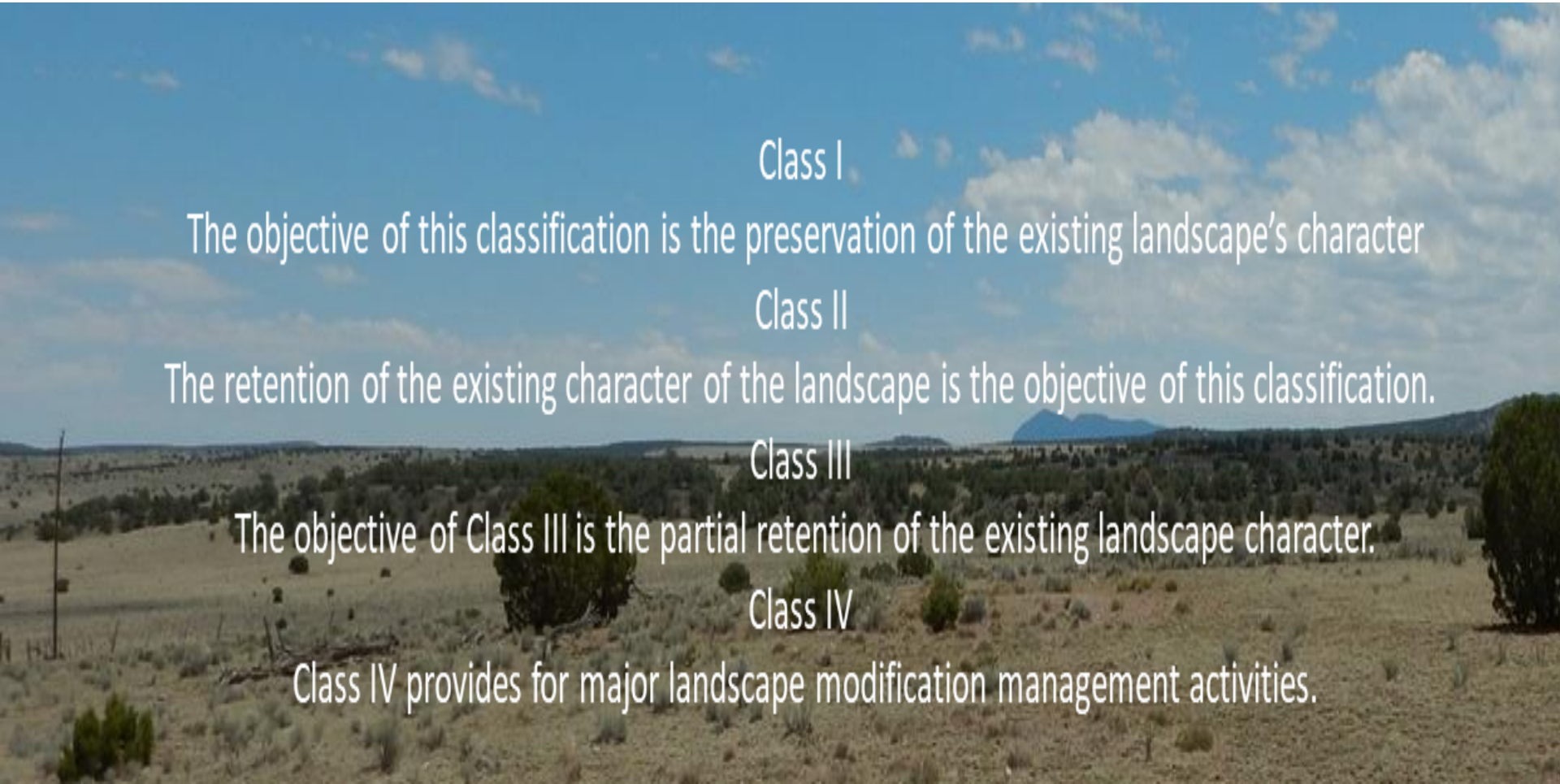
# Visual Resources

Proposed Action and Alternative 1: U.S. 60 Eastbound Simulation

Alternative 2: U.S. 60 Eastbound Simulation

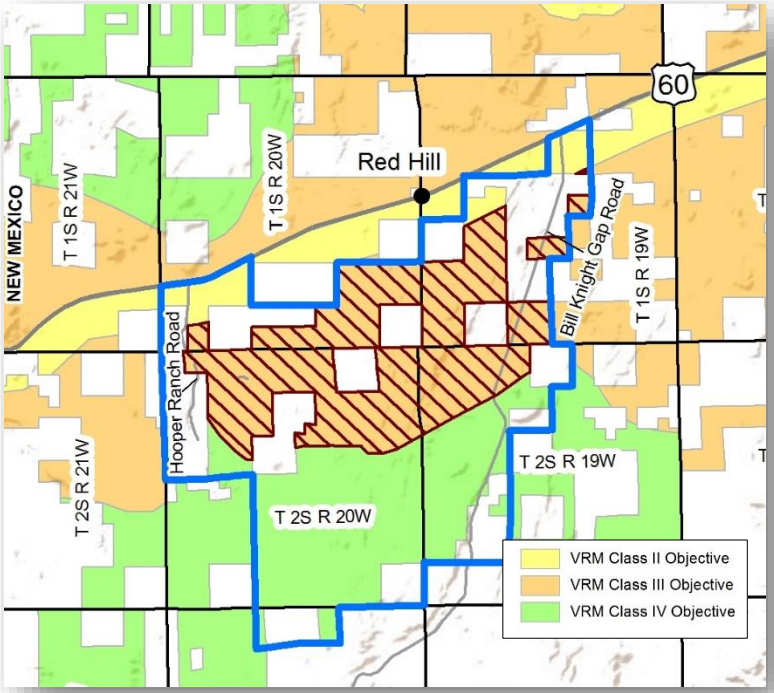
# Land Use Plan Amendment

## VRM Class Designation Definitions

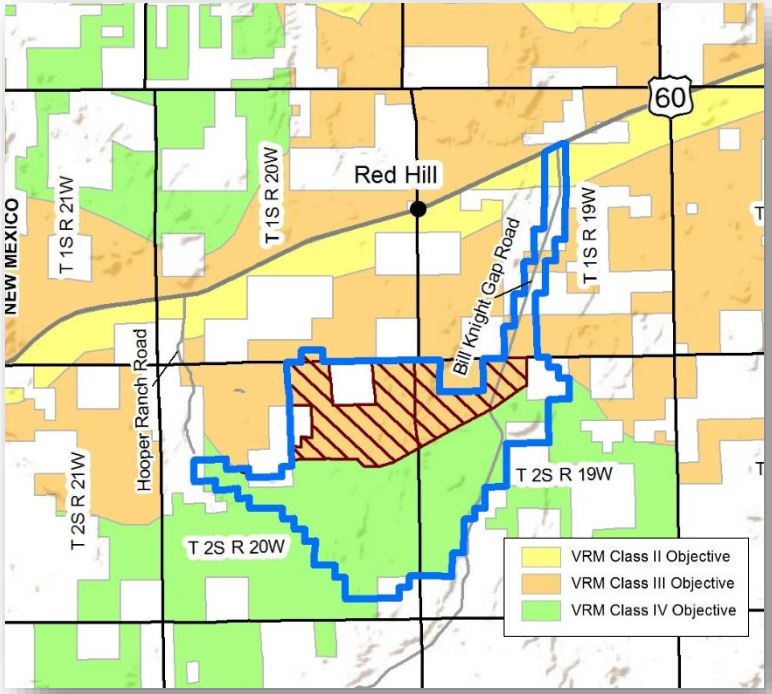


# Land Use Plan Amendment

- **VRM Class III to Class IV**
  - Build alternatives would not meet VRM Class III objectives.
  - RMP amendment would change the current designation from VRM Class III to Class IV.



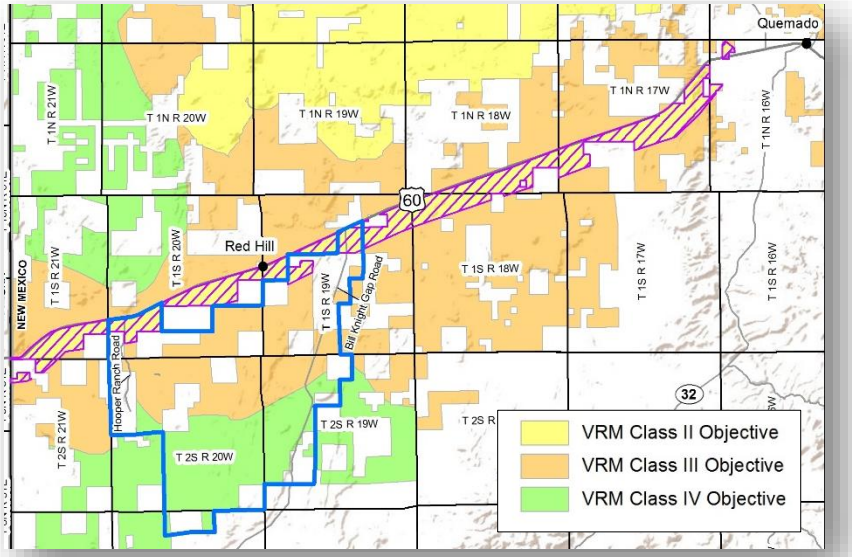

Proposed Action



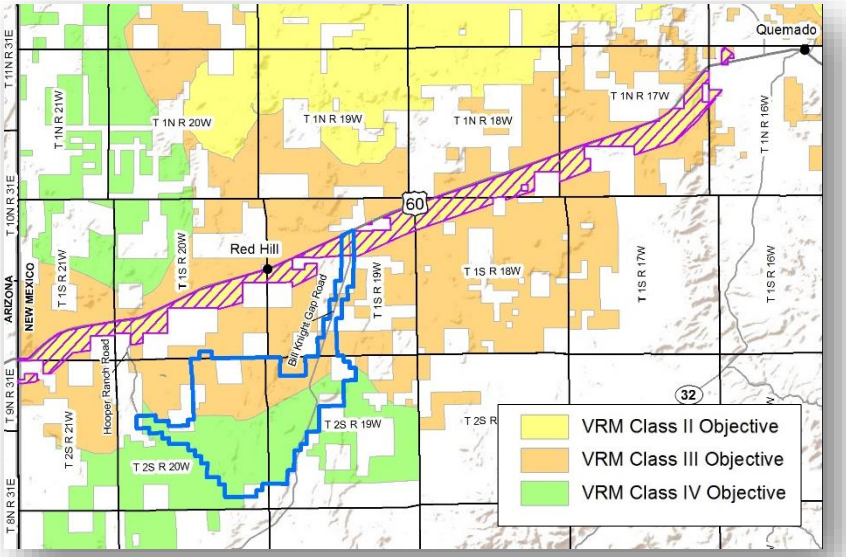

Alternatives 1 and 2

# Land Use Plan Amendment

- **VRM Class II/ROW Avoidance**
  - Currently a 37-mile long by 0.5-mile wide segment south of U.S. 60 from west of Quemado to the Arizona state line is designated as VRM II/ROW Avoidance.
  - RMP amendment would change the current designation of VRM Class II/ROW Avoidance to VRM Class III and eliminate the ROW Avoidance area.




Proposed Action




Alternatives 1 and 2

# Open House

Please ask questions and review information presented.

Staff are available to assist and direct you to the topics that are of interest to you.

Court reporter is here to record your input.

# Ways to Provide Input

- Submit input by mail, email, fax, or in person with provided input forms.
- Your input is due by November 07, 2019.
- Submit via:
  - ✓ Email: kmlong@blm.gov
  - ✓ Mail: Kristen Long
    BLM Socorro Field Office
    901 S. Hwy 85
    Socorro, NM 87801
  - ✓ ePlanning: https://go.usa.gov/xyFmh

# Borderlands Wind Project

## BLM Contacts:

- **Jim Stobaugh**
  **National Project Manager**
  **(775) 861-6478**
  jstobaug@blm.gov
- **Kristen Long**
  **BLM Socorro Field Office**
  **(575) 838-1263**
  kmlong@blm.gov

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