

# **Appendix A**

## **Public Scoping**

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Plan require that the NPS develop goals to improve program effectiveness and public accountability. This collection will encourage the public to collect data relevant to goal 1b: "The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information". This collection is also consistent with the NPS Management Policies (2006), which emphasize the "use of qualitative and quantitative techniques to monitor key aspects of resources and processes at regular intervals" and furthermore state that "studies, research, and collection activities by non-NPS personnel involving natural and cultural resources will be encouraged and facilitated when they otherwise comport with NPS policies." More specifically, the goal of this collection is to engage the public in documenting the timing of biological events ("phenology") for a variety of species at numerous different locations. The data collected will help the NPS document how climate change is affecting the timing of biological events such as migration, flowering, and autumn foliage.

The proposed Internet- and paper-based surveys will ask the public to participate in the collection of these data on NPS lands. With sufficient participation, NPS will obtain critical information for determining trends in the timing of biological events for many species. In addition to documenting changes in timing of events, the data set will facilitate the identification of species most at risk from climate change and anthropogenic influences. Survey participants will provide their contact information and multiple observations of species at one or more sites. The contact information will be used for quality control and (at the request of the participant) to provide data summaries or reports and information about additional opportunities for assisting with NPS research and monitoring activities. The obligation to respond is voluntary.

**Automated Data Collection:** The information will be collected through an Internet site, as well as through paper forms available at public locations.

**Description of respondents:** Respondents are members of the public with an interest in contributing to climate change research in the National Parks.

**Estimated average number of responses:** 1,000 per year.

**Frequency of Response:** 5 per respondent.

**Estimated average time burden per respondent:** 30 minutes.

**Estimated total annual reporting burden:** 100 hours per year.

**Comments are invited on:** (1) The practical utility of the information being gathered; (2) the accuracy of the burden hour estimate; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information being collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden to respondents, including use of automated information collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

December 23, 2009.

**Cartina A. Miller,**

*Information Collection Clearance Officer,  
National Park Service.*

[FR Doc. 2010-446 Filed 1-12-10; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[F-14909-B, F-14909-B2, F-19148-38;  
LLAK964000-L14100000-KC0000-P]

#### Alaska Native Claims Selection

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of decision approving lands for conveyance.

**SUMMARY:** As required by 43 CFR 2650.7(d), notice is hereby given that an appealable decision approving the surface estate in certain lands for conveyance pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act will be issued to Kuukpik Corporation. The lands are in the vicinity of Nuiqsut, Alaska, and are located in:

#### Umiat Meridian, Alaska

T. 10 N., R. 2 E.,  
Secs. 1, 2, and 3;  
Secs. 5 to 10, inclusive;  
Secs. 16, 17, and 18;  
Secs. 20, 21, and 29.  
Containing approximately 8,751 acres.

T. 11 N., R. 2 E.,  
Secs. 24, 25, and 26;  
Secs. 34, 35, and 36.  
Containing approximately 3,545 acres.

T. 11 N., R. 3 E.,  
Secs. 7, 11, 13, and 18;  
Secs. 19, 24, and 25.

Containing approximately 3,616 acres.

T. 11 N., R. 4 E.,  
Secs. 19, 20, and 30.

Containing approximately 1,376 acres.  
Aggregating approximately 17,288 acres.

The subsurface estate in these lands will be conveyed to Arctic Slope Regional Corporation when the surface estate is conveyed to Kuukpik Corporation. Notice of the decision will also be published four times in the Arctic Sounder.

**DATES:** The time limits for filing an appeal are:

1. Any party claiming a property interest which is adversely affected by the decision shall have until February 12, 2010 to file an appeal.

2. Parties receiving service of the decision by certified mail shall have 30 days from the date of receipt to file an appeal.

Parties who do not file an appeal in accordance with the requirements of 43 CFR part 4, Subpart E, shall be deemed to have waived their rights.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the decision may be obtained from: Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, 222 West Seventh Avenue, #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7504.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The Bureau of Land Management by phone at 907-271-5960, or by e-mail at [ak.blm.conveyance@ak.blm.gov](mailto:ak.blm.conveyance@ak.blm.gov). Persons who use a telecommunication device (TTD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to contact the Bureau of Land Management.

**Michael Bilancione,**

*Land Transfer Resolution Specialist, Land Transfer Adjudication I Branch.*

[FR Doc. 2010-449 Filed 1-12-10; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-JA-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[CACA 048649, LLCAD06000 L51010000  
FX0000 LVRWB09B2520]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed First Solar Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project, Riverside County, CA and Possible Land Use Plan Amendment

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs South Coast Field Office, Palm Springs, California, intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for First Solar Inc.'s application for a right-of-way authorization to develop a solar photovoltaic generating facility. The EIS may also support an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan (1980), as amended; by this notice the BLM is announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

**DATES:** This notice initiates the public scoping process for the EIS and possible plan amendment. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until February 12, 2010. The date(s) and location(s) of any scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through the local media, and the BLM Web site at: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings.html>. In order to be considered in the Draft EIS, all comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. The BLM will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related to the First Solar Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Draft EIS/Plan Amendment by any of the following methods:

- Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings.html>;

- E-mail: [CAPSSolarFirstSolarDesertSunlight@blm.gov](mailto:CAPSSolarFirstSolarDesertSunlight@blm.gov);

- Fax: (760) 833-7199; or

- Mail: Allison Shaffer, Project Manager, Palm Springs South Coast Field Office, BLM, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, California 92262.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Palm Springs South Coast Field Office.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Allison Shaffer, BLM Project Manager, telephone (760) 833-7100; address Palm Springs South Coast Field Office, BLM, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, California 92262; e-mail [CAPSSolarFirstSolarDesertSunlight@blm.gov](mailto:CAPSSolarFirstSolarDesertSunlight@blm.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The applicant, First Solar Inc., has requested a right-of-way authorization to develop

a solar photovoltaic generating facility with a proposed output of 550 megawatts and a project footprint of approximately 4,410 acres. The proposed project would be located on BLM-administered lands in Riverside County approximately 6 miles north of the rural community of Desert Center, California. The overall site layout and generalized land uses would include a substation, an administration building, operations and maintenance facilities, a transmission line, and temporary construction lay down areas. The project's 230-kilovolt (kV) generation interconnection transmission line also would be located on BLM-administered lands and would utilize a planned 230- to 500-kV substation (referred to as the Red Bluff substation). The Red Bluff substation would connect the project to the Southern California Edison regional transmission grid. Should the project be approved, the interconnection transmission line would be about 9 miles to about 13 miles long, depending on the alternative selected. If approved, construction would begin in late 2010 and would take approximately 41 months to complete.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for developing the EIS. At present, the BLM has identified the following preliminary issues: Air quality, biological resources, recreation, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources, special management areas, land use, noise, paleontological resources, public health, socioeconomic, soils, traffic and transportation, visual resources, and other issues. Authorization of this proposal may require amendment of the CDCA Plan. By this notice, the BLM is complying with requirements in 43 CFR 1610.2(c) to notify the public of potential amendments to land use plans, based on the findings of the EIS. If a land use plan amendment is necessary, the BLM will integrate the land use planning process with the NEPA process for this project.

The BLM will use and coordinate the NEPA commenting process to satisfy the public involvement process for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f) as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). Native American tribal consultations will be conducted and tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets, will be given appropriate consideration. Federal, State, and local agencies—along with other stakeholders who may be interested or affected by the BLM's decision on this project—are invited to

participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate as a cooperating agency.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Thomas Pogacnik,**

*Deputy State Director, California.*

**Authority:** 40 CFR 1501.7 and 43 CFR 1610.2.

[FR Doc. 2010-403 Filed 1-12-10; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-40-P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### Termination of the Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plan, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of termination of the Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plan, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, New Mexico.

**SUMMARY:** The National Park Service (NPS) is terminating the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gila Cliff Dwellings General Management Plan because it has determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) is the more appropriate National Environmental Policy Act compliance document. A Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS for the Gila Cliff Dwellings General Management Plan was published on April 16, 2008 (**Federal Register** Vol. 73, No. 74). Scoping conducted for the plan indicated that there were no significant impacts or controversy identified by the public. A preliminary impact analysis indicated that the alternatives have limited potential to result in significant/major effects on the human environment as they focus on different ways of protecting resources, providing appropriate visitor experiences, and addressing joint NPS/Forest Service operations. For these reasons the NPS determined the proposal would not require an EIS.



## Notice of BLM's Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

Date: January 20, 2010

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies  
Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of BLM's Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the First Solar Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs South Coast Field Office, Palm Springs, California, intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, for First Solar Inc.'s application for a right-of-way authorization to develop a solar photovoltaic generating facility. The EIS may also support an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan (1980), as amended. The BLM published a Notice of Intent for the First Solar Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project in the Federal Register Volume 75, Number 8, on January 13, 2010.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1506.2) direct federal agencies to cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements, including joint planning processes, environmental research and studies, public hearings, and environmental documents. In addition, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Sections 15221 and 15226 encourage similar cooperation by State and local agencies with federal agencies when environmental review is required under both CEQA and NEPA.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) intends to use the EIS prepared by the BLM in making a discretionary decision to determine if Southern California Edison (SCE) can construct a 500/230 kV interconnection substation, in accordance with CEQA. The CPUC will work as a cooperating agency with the BLM to provide information within the CPUC's area of expertise. Following preparation of the EIS by BLM, the CPUC will determine whether the EIS meets the requirements of CEQA and will comply with CEQA prior to making any discretionary decision on the aforementioned substation.

If you wish to comment on the scope and content of BLM's Draft EIS, including the portion related to the SCE interconnection substation under CPUC's jurisdiction, please review the BLM's Notice of Intent, available in the Federal Register Volume 75, Number 8 at the website listed below and provide comments to the following address no later than **February 12, 2010**:

Address: Allison Shaffer, Project Manager  
Palm Springs South Coast Field Office  
Bureau of Land Management  
1201 Bird Center Drive  
Palm Springs, California 92262

Telephone: 760-833-7100  
E-mail: CAPSSolarFirstSolarDesertSunlight@blm.gov

Information on the project can be found at: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings.html>  
Federal Register homepage: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>

When and if the CPUC decides to use the EIS prepared by the BLM in making a discretionary decision to determine if Southern California Edison can construct a 500/230 kV interconnection substation, it will provide additional notice and opportunity for public comment in accordance with CEQA.

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION / SCOPING MEETING**

A public information/scoping meeting will be held at the following time and location:

**January 28, 2010 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.**  
University of California Riverside-Palm Desert Campus  
75080 Frank Sinatra Drive  
Palm Desert, CA 92211

The public is invited to learn about the project, and comment on issues of concern, potential impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be considered in the analysis of the proposed action. The BLM and CPUC will use public scoping comments to prepare the draft environmental documents that will be available for public review.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Project Description**

The applicant, First Solar Inc., has requested authorization to develop a solar photovoltaic generating facility with a proposed output of 550 megawatts and a preferred project footprint of 4,410 acres. The proposed project would be located on BLM-administered lands in Riverside County, approximately six miles north of the rural community of Desert Center, California (see location map). The overall site layout and generalized land uses would include a solar farm and on-site substation, a 230 kV interconnection transmission line, a 500/230 kV substation (referred to as the Red Bluff Substation), an administration building, operations and maintenance facilities, and temporary construction staging areas. The interconnection transmission line would be nine to 12 miles long, depending on the alternative selected. The Red Bluff Substation would connect the project to the Southern California Edison regional transmission grid. If approved, construction is estimated to begin in late 2010 and would take approximately 41 months to complete.

### **B. Potential Environmental Effects of the Project**

A project level EIS will be prepared and would address a full range of environmental issues associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project. Key issues are anticipated to be air quality, biological resources, recreation, cultural resources, hydrology/water quality, geology and soils, land use and special management areas, noise, public health, socioeconomic, traffic and transportation, and visual resources. Potential impacts to these issues would be examined in the EIS. In addition, the EIS would include a discussion of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project.

Air Quality. Construction and operation of the proposed project may generate emissions from construction equipment exhaust, earth movement, construction workers' commute, material hauling, and maintenance activities. The EIS would evaluate the effects of construction and operation on air quality.

Biological Resources. The proposed project has the potential to impact sensitive wildlife species such as desert tortoise, Palm Spring round-tailed ground squirrel, burrowing owl, migratory birds, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, and foxtail cactus. The EIS would evaluate any potential impacts to biological resources.

Recreation. The EIS would evaluate any impacts of the proposed project on Off-Highway vehicle facilities and BLM-designated "open" off-highway routes.

Cultural. Grading and construction activities may have the potential to impact known or previously unknown archaeological, paleontological, or historic resources. The EIS would evaluate the proposed project's impact on these resources.

Hydrology/Water Quality. Flood hazards may exist within the boundaries of the proposed project that could impact structural elements of the proposed project. Use of groundwater or trucked water may be used to meet water needs during construction for dust control, soil compaction, sanitary uses, etc. Also, grading activities may have an effect on desert washes or other surface water features. The EIS would evaluate all potential impacts on water resources.

Geology and Soils. The proposed project may be subject to seismic activity including ground shaking and surface rupture. Soils would be disturbed during site construction and along access ways which may result in potential impacts to air quality. The EIS would evaluate geologic hazards and soil disturbance impacts.

Land Use and Special Management Areas. Specially designated areas such as Desert Wildlife Management Areas and the Chuckwalla Critical Habitat Unit exist in the vicinity of the proposed project. The EIS would evaluate impacts to any specially designated areas.

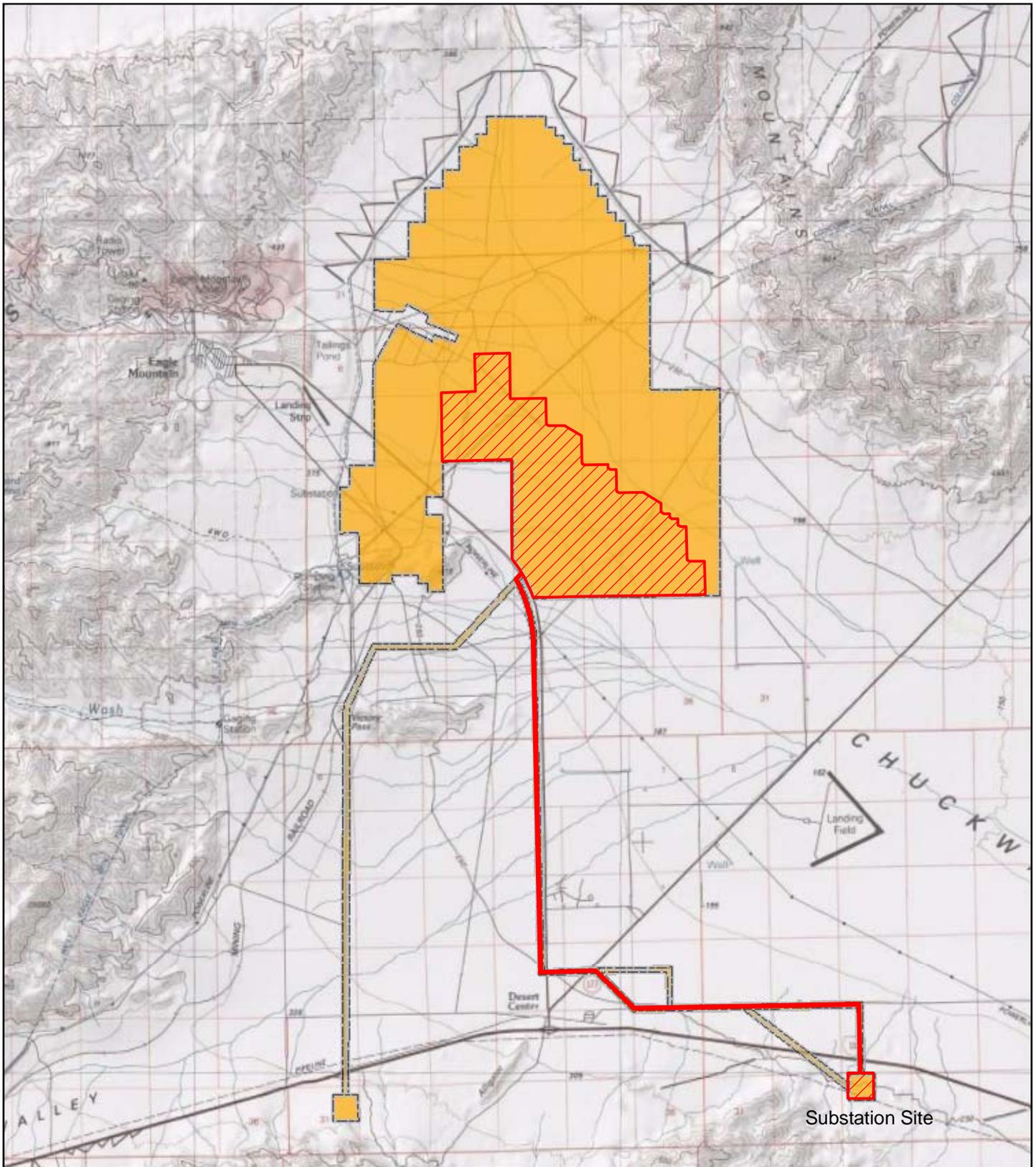
Noise. Scattered residences exist in the vicinity of the proposed project. Construction activities may generate noise that could impact these residences. The EIS will evaluate any noise impacts on sensitive receptors in the area.

Public Health. Hazardous substances may be stored on the project site. The EIS would evaluate the potential for encountering any hazardous materials or waste associated the proposed project.

Socioeconomic. It has been estimated that during construction, the number of on-site employees would average about 255, with a peak on-site workforce of 430 employees. Construction would take place over 41 months. During the operational phase, it has been estimated that 15 workers would be on-site. The EIS would evaluate the impacts to local businesses, employment opportunities, demand for housing, and minority and disadvantaged populations that may be living in the vicinity.

Traffic and Transportation. The proposed project would increase traffic levels to and from the project site. The EIS would discuss potential transportation, circulation and parking impacts.

Visual Resources. The proposed project would require lighting during periods of construction and maintenance operations. In addition, the reflectivity and color of the photovoltaic (PV) panels may have a potential visual impact. The EIS would evaluate the potential impacts from the PV panels and any lighting source.

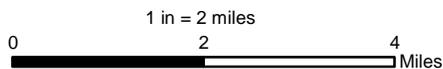


**Map Location**



**Legend**

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Preferred Project Site



**Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project  
LOCATION MAP**

Date: November 2009

Source: Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Plan of Development,  
November 2009





United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office

**Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project**  
**BLM Land Use Application**  
**File # CACA-48649**

**SCOPING REPORT**

**RESULTS OF SCOPING**

**February 2010**

Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office  
1201 Bird Center Drive  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
John R. Kalish  
Field Manager

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

# **Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project**

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Brief Description of the Project**

First Solar Development, Inc. proposes the Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Project (DSSF), an alternating current solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating facility of approximately 550 megawatts (MW). If approved, the DSSF would be located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered land approximately 6 miles north of the rural community of Desert Center, in eastern Riverside County (See Project Location Map below). The project would include a new 230 kV transmission line that would interconnect with Southern California Edison's regional transmission at the planned Red Bluff substation. The project would include approximately 8.4 million PV solar modules; direct conversion of sunlight to electricity; and low-profile, uniform PV arrays approximately five feet tall.

### **B. Potential Land Use Plan Amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan**

The project would be located on land that is subject to the BLM's California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan. All of the public lands in the CDCA under BLM management, except for a few small and scattered parcels, have been designated geographically as a Multiple Use Class (MUC) as follows: Controlled Use (C), Limited Use (L), Moderate Use (M), and Intensive Use (I). The Project is mostly located in BLM designated M lands. For M lands, wind and solar electric generation facilities may be allowed after National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements are met. The transmission corridor is located within (L) lands, which are lands managed to provide lower-intensity, carefully controlled multiple use of resources while ensuring that sensitive values are not significantly diminished. The CDCA also states that sites associated with power generation or transmission not identified in the CDCA will be considered through the Plan Amendment process. The project site is currently not identified in the CDCA. Therefore, prior to right-of-way (ROW) grant issuance, the project would require a Land Use Plan Amendment to the CDCA.

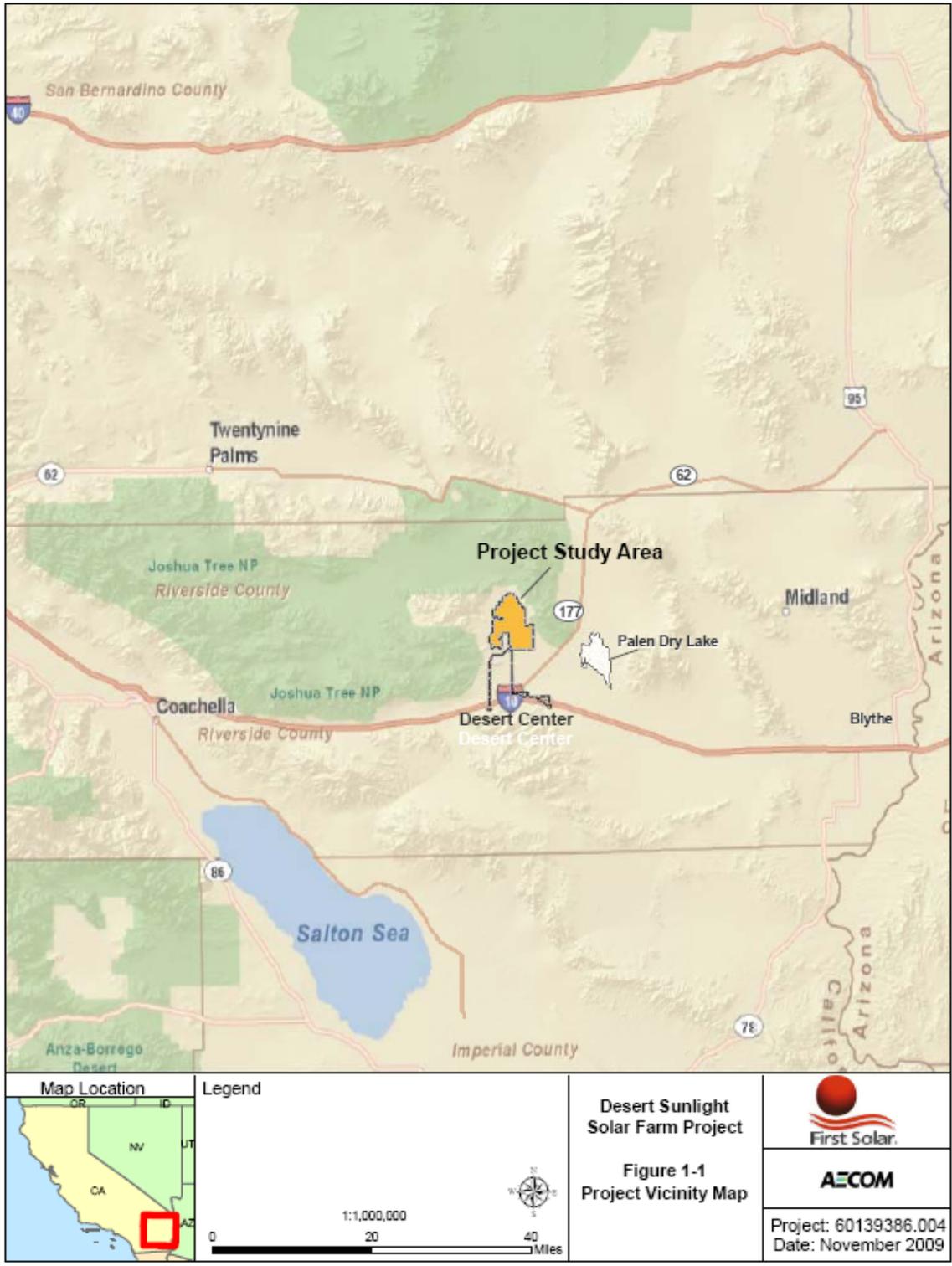


Figure 1: Project Location

## C. Purpose and Need for the Project

The proponent proposes to assist the State of California in meeting the State of California Renewable Portfolio Standard Program goals and reduce greenhouse gases by developing an alternating current solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating facility of approximately 550 MW and related facilities in Riverside County, California on BLM administered lands.

BLM's purpose and need for the solar project is to respond to the proponent's application under Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 USC 1761) for a ROW grant to construct, operate and decommission a solar PV facility on BLM lands. BLM will consider alternatives to the proponent's proposed action and will include terms and conditions, as deemed necessary. If BLM decides to approve issuance of a ROW grant to the proponent, BLM's actions would include amending the CDCA, concurrently. BLM will take into consideration the provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 in responding to the proponent's application.

## D. Agency Coordination

### D.1 Lead Agency

The BLM, acting as federal lead agency, intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with NEPA and the Federal Land Policy and management Act of 1976.

### D.2 Cooperating Agency

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1506.2) direct federal agencies to cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements, including joint planning processes, environmental research and studies, public hearings, and environmental documents. In addition, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Sections 15221 and 15226 encourage similar cooperation by State and local agencies with federal agencies when environmental review is required under both CEQA and NEPA.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), intends to use the EIS prepared by the BLM in making a discretionary decision to determine if Southern California Edison (SCE) can construct a 500/230 kV interconnection substation, in accordance with CEQA. The CPUC will work as a cooperating agency with the BLM to provide information within the CPUC's area of expertise. Following preparation of the EIS by BLM, the CPUC will determine whether the EIS meets the requirements of CEQA and will comply with CEQA prior to making any discretionary decision on the aforementioned substation. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the BLM and the CPUC to this outlining this cooperation.

## II. Scoping Process Summary

### A. Notice of Intent

The BLM published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on January 13, 2010 in the Federal Register Volume 75, Number 8. Publication of the NOI began a 30-day comment period which ended on February 12, 2010. BLM provided a website with Project information that also described the various methods of providing public comment on the Project including an e-mail address where comments could be sent electronically.

### B. Public Notification

Notification for a public Scoping Meeting held on January 28, 2010 was posted on BLM's website and sent via email to the local newspaper, the Desert Sun, on January 13, 2010. In addition, notices were sent certified mail to Responsible and Trustee Agencies under CEQA, all landowners within 300 feet of the project boundary, and other interested parties.

### C. Public Scoping Meeting

A public Scoping Meeting was held on January 28, 2010 at the University of Riverside Palm Desert Graduate Center located at 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive in Palm Desert, California. A presentation describing the project was made by First Solar Development, Inc. with presentations describing the environmental review process presented by members of the BLM. Twenty-two attendees were documented by signing in on a voluntary sign-in sheet.

### D. Written Comments

Fourteen comment letters were received within the comment period ending on February 12, 2010.

## III. Comment Summary and Analysis

Issues were identified by reviewing the comment documents received. Many of the comments identified similar issues. The following section provides a summary of the issues, concerns, and/or questions raised. For this report, the issues have been grouped into one of the three following categories:

- Issues or concerns that could be addressed by effects analysis;
- Issues or concerns that could develop an alternative and/or a better description or qualification of the alternatives;
- Issues or concerns outside the scope of the EIS.

The comments discussed below are paraphrased from the original comment letters. To a minor degree, some level of interpretation was needed to identify the specific concern to be addressed. Many of the comments identified similar issues; to avoid duplication and redundancy similar comments were grouped together and then summarized. Original comment letters may be reviewed up on request at the BLM Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office at 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, California, 92262, during normal business hours, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

## A. Effects Analysis

Comments in this category will be described in detail in the affected environment section of the EIS or addressed in the effects analysis for each alternative.

### **Purpose and Need**

- Project description should not be narrowly defined to rule out feasible alternatives
- Project should be discussed in the context of the larger energy market; identify potential purchasers of the power produced; discuss how project will assist in meeting its renewable energy portfolio standards and goals

### **Air Resources (Air sheds)**

- Impacts during construction and operation
- Quantify PM2.5 emissions
- Calculate localized air quality impacts in addition to regional impacts, incorporating dispersion modeling if necessary
- Perform a mobile source health risk assessment if diesel-fueled vehicles are used
- Refer to South Coast Air Quality Management District's CEQA Air Quality Handbook for sample air quality mitigation measures
- Impacts to fine particulate soils below desert pavements and fugitive dust
- Impacts related to ozone concentration near high voltage power lines
- Designated Utility Corridor identified on BLM maps within Joshua Tree National Park boundaries—NPS requests this area continue to be excluded from consideration as a transmission corridor
- Greenhouse gas emissions/climate change impacts on plants, wildlife, and habitat
- Evaluate impact of GHG SF6 used in electricity transmission lines
- Planning for species adaptation due to climate change
- Discussion of how projected impacts could be exacerbated by climate change
- Quantify and disclose anticipated climate change benefits of solar energy
- Discussion of trenching/grading/filling and effects on carbon sequestration of the natural desert

### **Soils Resources**

- Impacts to desert soils
- Increased siltation during flooding and dust
- Impacts to crypto-biotic crust
- Impacts resulting from disturbance of naturally-occurring arsenic in desert soils
- Preparation of a drainage, erosion, and sediment control plan

### **Water Resources (Surface and Groundwater)**

- Identify impacts to jurisdictional waters of the US and California
- Effects of additional groundwater pumping in conjunction with other groundwater issues
- Groundwater and surface water impacts
- Identify water use quantities and sources
- Grading impacts on normal fluvial processes
- Concentrated sheetflow from graded areas may unevenly redistribute water causing erosion, sediment transport and deposition in unintended areas
- Identify potentially-affected groundwater basin and potential for subsidence
- Impacts to down-gradient groundwater, surface water, and wetlands
- Describe basin recharge rates
- Describe water right permitting process and status of water rights within the basin
- Feasibility of using other sources of water, including potable water, wastewater, or deep-aquifer water
- Impacts of project discharges on surface and groundwater quality
- Impacts resulting from septic systems
- Effects of diversion of water from ephemeral streams
- Description of water conservation measures to reduce water demands
- Effects of climate change on water supply
- Determination if project requires a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act
- Include a jurisdictional delineation for all Waters of the US, including ephemeral drainages
- Description of natural drainage patterns, project operations, identify whether any component of project is within 50 or 100-year floodplain
- Provide information on CWA Section 303(d) impaired waters, if any, and efforts to develop and revise TMDLs

### **Biological Resources**

- Impacts to plants and animals in Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP)
- If there are threatened or endangered species present, recommend BLM consult with USFWS and prepare a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of the ESA
- Impacts to all known species, not just special status, should be analyzed to assure ecosystem level protection

- Maximize options to protect habitat and minimize habitat loss and fragmentation
- Impacts associated with construction, installation, and maintenance activities (deep trenching, grading, filling, fencing)
- Impacts due to increase of shade from PV panels in the desert environment
- Seasonal surveys should be performed for sensitive plant and animal species
- Impacts to all known species, not just special status, should be analyzed to assure ecosystem level protection
- Acquisition of lands for conservation should be part of mitigation strategy
- Impacts to Desert Dry Wash Woodland and Blue Palo Verde-Ironwood-Smoke Tree habitat

**Vegetation Resources (Vegetative communities, priority and special status species)**

- Seasonal surveys should be performed for sensitive plant species
- Vegetation maps should be at scale that is useful for evaluating impacts
- Impacts due to non-native invasive species
- Inclusion of an invasive plant management plan
- Avoidance of rare plants preferable due to transplanting issues
- Impacts to the following (but not limited to) species:
  - Las Animas colubrine
  - Harwood’s milkvetch
  - Coves’ cassia
  - Coachella Valley milkvetch
  - California ayenia
  - Alverson’s foxtail cactus
  - California ditaxis
  - California barrel cactus

**Wildlife Resources (Priority species, special status species)**

- Desert tortoise; especially impacts to existing movement corridor connection from the Chuckwalla DWMA to Joshua Tree National Park; translocation results in high mortality; include an aggressive raven prevention plan
- Impacts to the following (but not limited to) species:
  - Burrowing owl
  - Desert bighorn sheep
  - Mojave fringe-toed lizard
  - LeConte’s thrasher
  - Bendire’s thrasher
  - Loggerhead shrike
  - Prairie falcon
  - Migratory birds
- Impacts to wildlife movement corridors

**Cultural Resources**

- Recommends a Class III inventory for cultural resources
- Determinations of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places should be conducted prior to project design and implementation

- Discussion of prehistoric and historic transportation corridors that might lead into Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP); information on prehistoric lithic quarries; information on rock art; habitation sites with midden deposits; early Holocene Pinto sites; Patton WWII training sites; California Aqueduct related sites
- Archaeological monitoring in high sensitivity areas during ground disturbing activities
- Impact on paleontological deposits in JTNP
- Describe Native American consultation
- Address existence of sacred sites and Executive Order 13007, distinguished from Section 106 of the NHPA

### **Visual Resources**

- Visibility issues related to fugitive dust
- Impacts to wilderness area of JTNP by adding human activity within landscape view
- Cumulative impacts due to other projects in the vicinity
- Affect of artificial lighting due to security, maintenance on night sky viewing
- Impact on wildlife due to new light sources
- Nighttime lighting views from JTNP and Chuckwalla Wilderness Area
- Impacts resulting from building/facility color
- Undergrounding of transmission lines recommended

### **Land Use/Special Designations (ACECs, WAs, WSAs, etc.)**

- Discuss how project would support or conflict with objectives of federal, state, tribal, or local land use plans, policies, and controls
- Project site located within Eastern Colorado Desert Tortoise Recovery Unit and classified as BLM Category III desert tortoise habitat
- Discuss whether land is classified as disturbed
- Utilize the Renewable Energy Interactive Mapping Tool to locate disturbed sites in proximity to the project that might also be utilized
- Preferred Transmission Corridor follows Kaiser Road and affects 192 acres of the Chuckwalla DWMA

### **Public Health and Safety**

- Identify projected hazardous waste types and volumes, and expected storage, disposal, and management plans
- Address full product life cycle of PV components
- Identify fire prevention BMP
- Evaluate potential risk from cadmium telluride resulting from degradation/breakage of PV panels
- Hazards related to landing strip near project site

- Electromagnetic field impacts

### **Noise/Vibration**

- Impacts of heavy grading equipment and machinery on the natural soundscape environment
- Consider wildlife as sensitive receptors and identify impacts
- Impacts from operation of project buildings

### **Recreation**

- Impacts to local tourism economies
- Will the project have public access corridors to other public lands?

### **Socioeconomic**

- Consider proximity to residences, state parks and federal parks
- Impacts to nearby farming operations

### **Environmental Justice (minority and low-income communities)**

- Evaluate potential for disproportionate adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations and approaches used to foster public participation by these populations

### **Cumulative Impacts**

- Identify impacts from other projects occurring in the vicinity, including solar, wind, geothermal, Eagle Crest Hydro-Pumped Electric Facility, Eagle Mountain Landfill, Eagle Mountain Mine, Shaver's Valley new town, roads, transit, housing, and other development
- Scope of cumulative analysis should encompass Sonoran/transition desert areas
- Groundwater cumulative impacts related to Eagle Crest Hydro-Pumped Electric facility
- Viewshed alterations and subsequent changes to the view from wilderness
- Describe reasonably foreseeable future land use and impacts resulting from additional power supply

## **B. Alternative Development and/or Alternative Design Criteria**

Comments in this category will be considered in the development of alternatives or can be addressed through design criteria in the alternative descriptions.

- Project description should not be narrowly defined to rule out feasible alternatives

- Reasonable alternatives should include, but not necessarily limited to, alternative sites, capacities, and technologies as well as avoidance of environmentally sensitive areas or areas with potential use conflicts
- Identify alternative sites outside of desert tortoise occupied habitat or in disturbed lands; avoid impacts to northwest portion of the site where many desert tortoises were surveyed
- Alternative configurations should avoid Pinto Wash; microphyll washes; and other movement corridors
- Identify alternative located on adjacent fallow farmland
- Identify alternative that would designate environmentally sensitive land outside the Preferred Project Site, but within original ROW, unavailable to other solar projects
- Alternatives should include: sites not under BLM jurisdiction; project extent and electrical power generation that differ from proposal; use of different technology; benefits associated with the proposed technology; power generation sited adjacent to power consumption
- Alternatives should describe rationale used to determine whether impacts of an alternative are significant or not
- Discuss feasibility of using residential and wholesale distributed generation, in conjunction with increased energy efficiency, as an alternative

### C. Issues or Concerns Outside the Scope of the EIS

Comments in this category are outside the scope of analysis and will not be addressed in the EIS.

- Agencies must require adequate end of project life planning, including reuse of abandoned sites for future renewable energy projects in lieu of allowing development on other undisturbed lands; and/or returning to public use in original condition
- Include thorough analysis of anticipated costs of decommissioning and restoration of project site
- Identify how siting of large energy projects would impact private property values and quality of life
- Does First Solar have plans to expand their project?
- “Fast tracking” viewed as unwise