

# Project Introduction for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project

## Project Overview

The proposed SunZia Southwest Transmission Project (Project) is composed of two planned 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines located across approximately 520 miles of Federal, State, and private lands between central New Mexico (NM) and central Arizona (AZ). The purpose of the Project is to transport up to 4,500 megawatts of primarily renewable energy from NM to markets in AZ and California. The route goes from Torrance County, NM to Pinal County, AZ. See the attached Project maps. The route has four segments:

Segment 1: Pinal Central Substation to Willow Substation

Segment 2: Willow Substation to SunZia South Substation (Seg. 2a in AZ, Seg. 2b in NM)

Segment 3: SunZia South Substation to New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech)

Segment 4: NM Tech to SunZia East Substation

Prior environmental documents include a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2013 and a Record of Decision and subsequent Environmental Assessment and Finding of No New Significant Impact in 2015 to accommodate burial of approximately five miles of the transmission line in three locations in the vicinity of White Sands Missile Range (WSMR). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued a right-of-way (ROW) grant to SunZia Transmission, LLC (SunZia) in 2016, authorizing use of a 400-foot-wide corridor across 183 miles of Federal lands administered by the BLM. SunZia states the width of the permanent ROW for the transmission lines typically is a minimum of 400 feet on BLM-administered lands but may be up to 1,000 feet wide in areas with terrain constraints. Construction of the lines has not begun.

SunZia is now proposing to amend the existing grant in four components. The amendments to SunZia's existing ROW are the scope of this Project, not re-siting the entire path for the transmission line. The four proposed components are:

- **Component 1-Localized Route Modifications:** Five route modifications in NM in Segments 2 and 3. These five modifications involve BLM-administered land (an increase in route length of approximately 0.8 miles and an additional approximate 38.8 acres). Proposed modifications on non-BLM-administered land involve an increase in route length of approximately 0.8 miles and an additional approximate 38.9 acres. These modifications are being proposed to address a range of issues, including challenges in obtaining private landowner ROW or easement and topography.
- **Component 2-Access Roads and Temporary Work Areas Outside the Granted ROW:** Adding a ROW for about 761 miles of existing and new access roads, of which approximately 708.8 miles would be permanent, and 52.2 miles would be temporary, and approximately 739.8 acres of temporary work areas that fall outside the permitted 400-foot-wide corridor across both States. About 216.5 miles of access roads are on BLM-administered land (172.3 in NM; 44.2 in AZ). About 157.7 acres of temporary work areas are located on BLM-administered land in NM and 22.6 in AZ.
- **Component 3-Segment 4 Reroute:** A reroute of Segment 4 to accommodate ongoing concerns of WSMR and take advantage of an opportunity to partially parallel the Western Spirit 345 kV Transmission Project and move the eastern substation closer to proposed wind-generation projects. The total length of the currently permitted Segment 4 route is 91.7 miles, of which 20.2 miles are Federal land administered by the BLM. SunZia is considering three alternative routes. Common to all three alternatives are approximately the first 65 miles, from the SunZia East Substation to where the alternative routes diverge. These 65 miles would cross BLM (approximately 0.2 mile), State, and private lands, 33 miles of which are parallel to the proposed Western Spirit 345 kV Transmission Project. The three alternative routes (including the initial 65 miles) are:

- *Alternative Route 1*, options ranging from 151.8 to 153.9 miles, would cross approximately 28.1 to 31.5 miles of BLM-administered land and approximately 4.7 miles of U.S. Forest Service-managed land (Cibola National Forest);
- *Alternative Route 2*, options ranging from 114.9 to 121.5 miles, would cross approximately 5.9 miles of BLM-administered land and 14.2 miles of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)-administered land (Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge); and
- *Alternative Route 3*, options ranging from 118.1 to 125.9 miles, would cross 9 to 9.6 miles of BLM-administered land and approximately 11.6 miles of FWS-administered land (Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge).
- **Component 4-SunZia West Substation:** A substation to convert power from DC to AC. SunZia intends for one of the two proposed SunZia transmission lines to be AC and the other transmission line to be either AC or DC. The DC line would require equipment at each terminus to convert the power from AC to DC (SunZia East HVDC converter) and from DC to AC (SunZia West HVDC converter). The SunZia West Substation is being sited along the permitted SunZia ROW on approximately 80.7 acres (47 acres outside the ROW, 33.7 acres inside the ROW) of AZ State land just east of Red Rock, AZ, where no Federal ROW is needed.

## Project Status and Participants

The BLM is the lead Federal agency for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. After careful consideration and analysis conducted in an Environmental Impact Statement, the BLM will decide whether to issue a ROW grant amendment for the proposed Project, and if so, under what terms and conditions. In compliance with 40 CFR 1506.5, the BLM selected two third-party contractors to assist with the NEPA process; SWCA will assist with preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement and Galileo Project, LLC will provide project administrative support.

The BLM invited 41 Federal, State, and local agencies to participate as Cooperating Agencies, 18 of which have accepted (see Table 1 below). Cooperating Agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise to offer in the analysis process.

**Table 1. Current Cooperating Agencies**

Cooperating Agencies		
<b>Federal</b>		
U.S. National Park Service	U.S. Forest Service	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Army, Fort Huachuca	White Sands Missile Range	
<b>State</b>		
NM Office of Military Base Planning and Support	AZ State Land Department	AZ Game and Fish Department
NM Department of Game and Fish	NM State Land Office	
<b>Local</b>		
Lincoln County, NM	Grant County, NM	Valencia County, NM
Luna County, NM	Belen, NM	Socorro County, NM
Pinal County, AZ	Graham County, AZ	

The BLM initiated government-to-government consultation to Native American Tribes pursuant to Executive Order 13175 and other policies. The BLM will continue to consult with appropriate agencies as required by Executive Order 13807 (One Federal Decision), Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and other entities as required by law and regulation.

The BLM will initiate scoping in the near future.

## Jurisdictions Crossed

Table 2 below shows the Federal and State jurisdictions each of the four proposed components crosses.

**Table 2. Jurisdictions Crossed**

Amendment Element	BLM Office	State Lands and Counties	Other Federal
Component 1-Localized Route Modifications	Las Cruces District Office (DO) Socorro Field Office (FO)	NM; Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro counties.	n/a
Component 2-Access Roads and Temporary Work Areas Outside the Granted ROW	Las Cruces DO Socorro FO Safford FO Tucson FO	NM; Hidalgo, Grant, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro counties. AZ; Greenlee, Graham, Cochise, Pima, and Pinal counties.	n/a
Component 3-Segment 4 Reroute	Socorro FO	NM; Socorro, Torrance, and Valencia counties.	Cibola National Forest (Alt 1), Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (Alts 2, 3)
Component 4-SunZia West Substation	n/a	AZ; Pinal County	n/a

Regarding Component 3, the Segment 4 Reroute: The proposed new route would no longer include burying the line near WSMR. The WSMR conducts very-low-altitude test-flight profiles for drones, missiles, and other unmanned vehicles launched from the WSMR or received from launches in other states. Aside from missile testing in this area, airspace over the Northern Call Up Area (NCUA) also is designated as and used for low-level flight operations and training by nearby Holloman and Kirtland Air Force Bases. Under the current proposal, part of the line would be re-routed to completely avoid the NCUA of the WSMR (see the *SunZia Southwest Transmission Project Segment 4 Map* attached below).

Avoiding the WSMR led to the necessity for an alternative that includes a crossing of a portion of the Cibola National Forest. This alternative route was designed to mitigate conflicts and interference with existing and future military training activities already authorized on the Cibola National Forest.

Two alternative routes being proposed to cross the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) would co-locate with the existing transmission lines that pass north-south through the NWR. Due to the limited width of the existing easements, only one new SunZia transmission line could be routed within each existing easement. SunZia would replace the existing transmission-line infrastructure with new transmission-line infrastructure that could accommodate the existing transmission line and a proposed SunZia 500 kV transmission line vertically on one set of structures in each existing ROW. SunZia would request access to refuge lands outside of existing easements for construction.

## For More Information

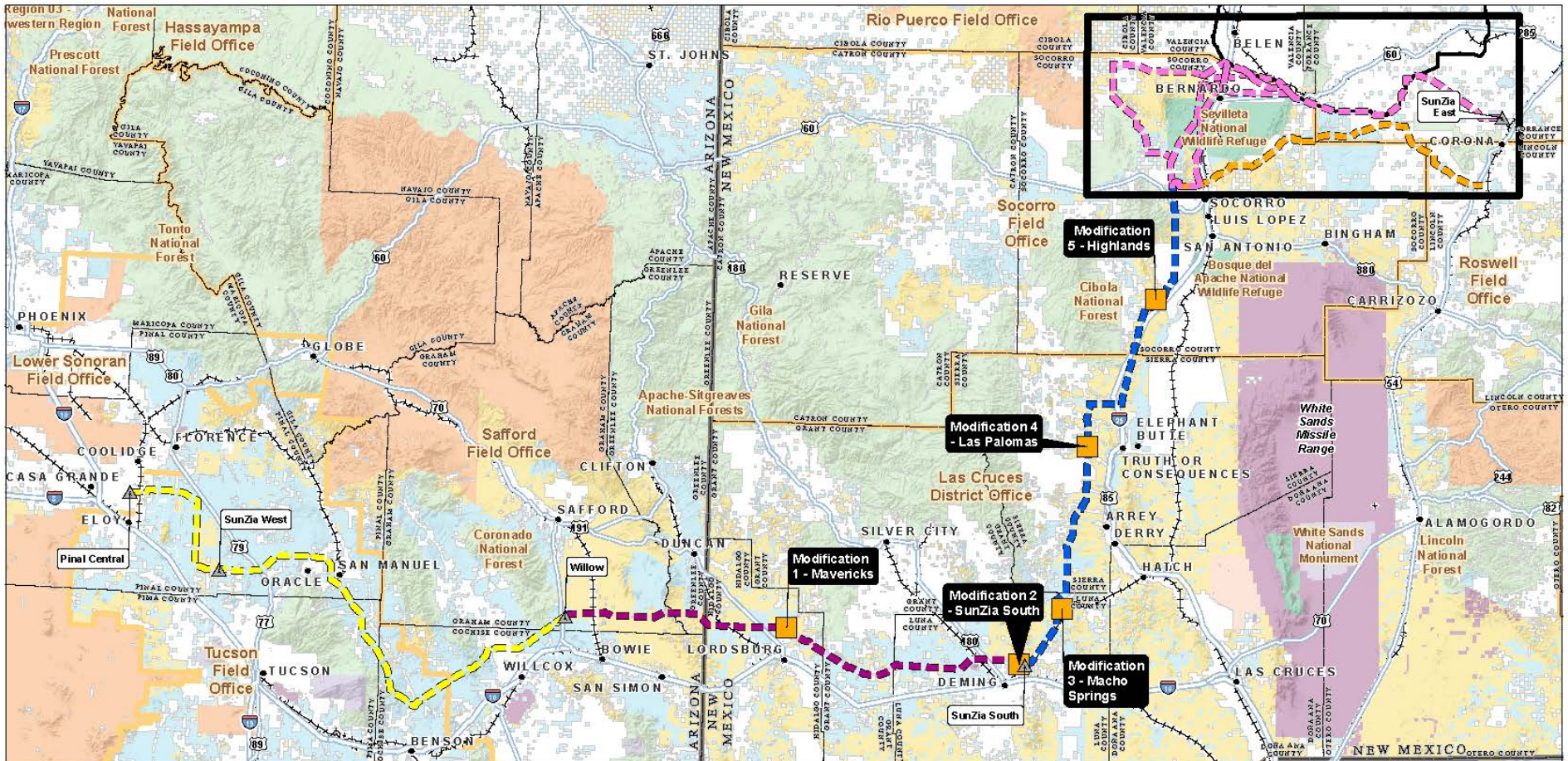
Adrian Garcia, Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, [agarcia@blm.gov](mailto:agarcia@blm.gov), 505-954-2199

BLM Website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2011785/510>

Project Map: See the next three pages



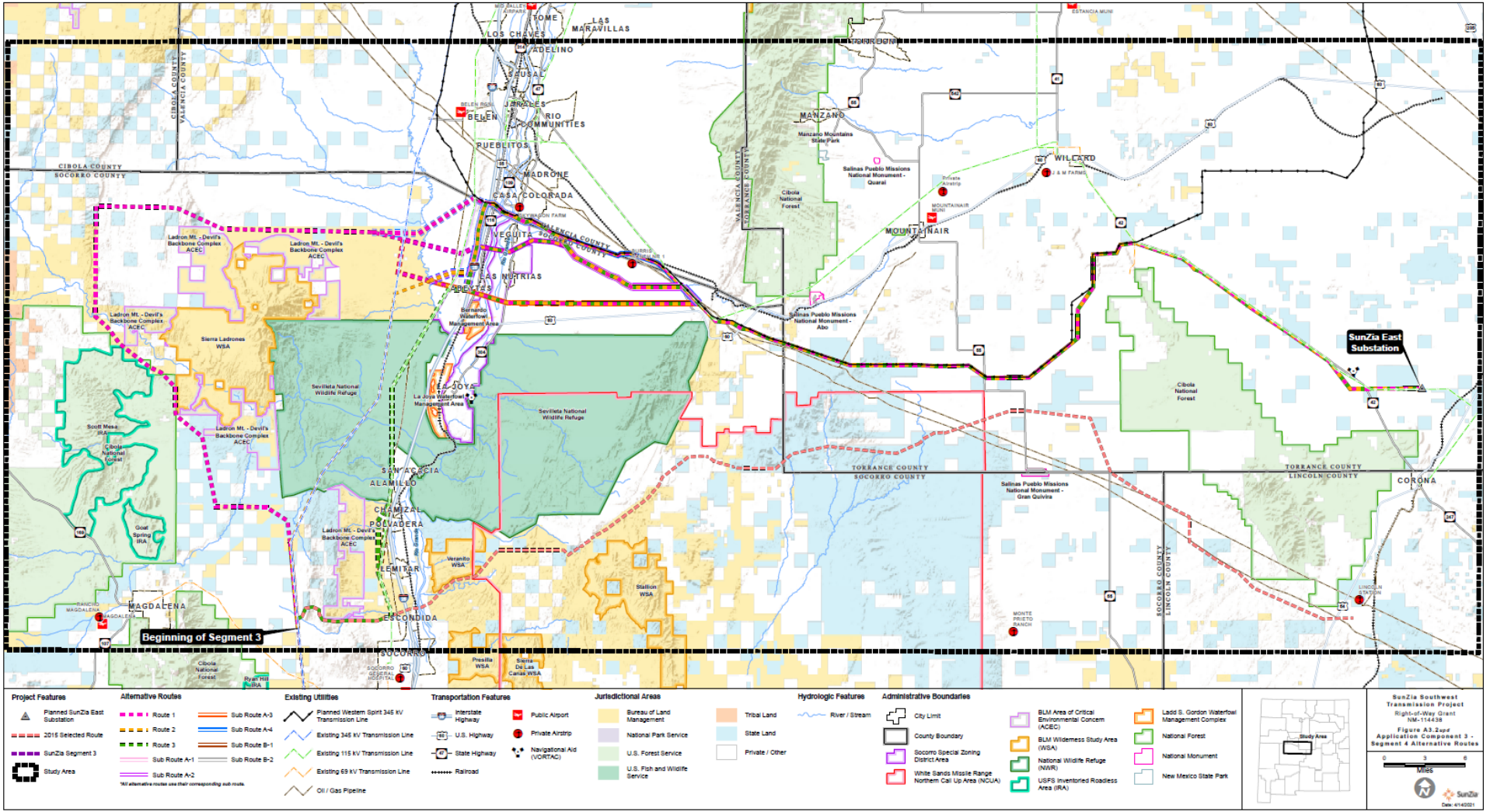
# SunZia Southwest Transmission Project Overview Map



<p><b>Project Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Segment 4 Reroute Study Area</li> <li>Planned SunZia 500 kV Substation Site</li> <li>Route Modification Involving BLM Land</li> <li>Route Modification Involving State/Private Land</li> </ul> <p>The network of access roads is provided in Attachment A2.1 upd maps at a scale of 1 = 24,000. Locations of temporary work areas outside of the 400-foot-wide granted right-of-way are shown in the electronic file Attachment A2.1 upd.zip provided with this right-of-way application.</p>	<p><b>Transportation Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interstate Highway</li> <li>U.S. Highway</li> <li>Railroad</li> </ul> <p><b>Administrative Boundaries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City</li> <li>State Boundary</li> <li>County Boundary</li> <li>BLM Field Office Boundary</li> </ul>	<p><b>Land Ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private / Other</li> <li>Bureau of Land Management</li> <li>U.S. Department of Defense</li> <li>National Park Service</li> <li>U.S. Forest Service</li> </ul>	<p><b>Land Ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</li> <li>Bureau of Reclamation</li> <li>Federal (Other)</li> <li>Tribal Land</li> <li>State Land</li> </ul>		<p><b>SunZia Southwest Transmission Project</b> Right-of-Way Grant NM-114438</p> <p><b>Figure A.1 upd Project Overview</b></p> <p>0 20 40 Miles</p> <p>Page A.1 SunZia Date: 12/17/2021</p>
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# SunZia Southwest Transmission Project Segment 4 Map



SunZia Southwest Transmission Project  
 Right-of-Way Grant  
 NM-114429  
 Figure A3.2a-1  
 Application Component 3 -  
 Segment 4 Alternative Routes

0 1 2 3 4 Miles

SunZia  
 Date: 6/14/2011

# SunZia Southwest Transmission Project SunZia West Substation Map

