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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Project Overview

Arizona Public Service Company (APS or Applicant) is proposing the development of approximately 38 miles of transmission line to increase the reliability of the high-voltage transmission system in the northwestern Phoenix metropolitan area. The proposed APS Sun Valley to Morgan 500/230kV Transmission Line Project (Proposed Action or Project) would establish a 500 Kilovolt (kV) and 230kV connection, constructed mainly on single-pole structures between two substations (the Sun Valley Substation [formerly called TS-5] and the existing Morgan Substation [formerly called TS-9]). The approved Sun Valley Substation will be located in the northwest portion of the Town of Buckeye and the existing Morgan Substation is located in the City of Peoria. Generally the transmission line would head north-northeast out of the Sun Valley Substation to north of State Route (SR) 74 and then east to the Morgan Substation. The Project location is shown in **Figure 1.1-1** (found in the Figures section of Volume II).

The Project would require a new right-of-way (ROW) or easement on federal, state, and private lands. The construction ROW would be approximately 200 feet wide, but could be somewhat wider where terrain poses engineering or construction constraints. The permanent and operational ROW width is proposed to be 200 feet wide and would cross approximately seven miles of public lands, north and south of SR 74 in the northeastern part of the Project Area and approximately two miles of public lands in the southwestern portion of the Project Area near the Sun Valley Substation location (**Figure 1.1-1**). Because the ROW over public lands is needed to complete APS' proposed Project, which spans approximately 38 miles on mostly non-public lands, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires analysis of the entire transmission line route, including impacts to non-public lands. However, any decision issued by the Bureau of Land Management Hassayampa Field Office (BLM HFO) would only affect that portion of the Project occurring on BLM-managed public lands. The transmission line may include steel monopole, H-frame, or lattice structures. Typical structure heights would be between 135 and 195 feet tall with spans between structures typically ranging from 800 to 1,400 feet, depending on terrain or other considerations. Until final design and the specific ROW are determined, actual structure types and locations cannot be specifically identified.

The BLM HFO has determined that the Project may also require approval of an amendment to the Bradshaw-Harquahala Resource Management Plan (RMP) in addition to a ROW application approval. In order to comply with its requirements under NEPA, the BLM has determined that this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for the Project because it is a major federal action.

1.1.2 Project History

Population growth and continued expansion of urban development into previously undeveloped areas in Arizona have increased the demand for electric transmission resources. According to the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau (2012a), Arizona's population increased by 24.5 percent between 2000 and 2010. This growth rate is second only to Nevada, which showed a 35 percent increase over that same time period. In response to this trend, APS identified a need for added electric transmission capacity to relieve transmission congestion, improve the reliability of the transmission network, and provide power to expanding urban areas.

In order to proceed with the next steps in trying to fulfill the identified need for added electric transmission capacity, APS initiated the applicable siting processes established by the Arizona State Legislature (Legislature). The Legislature established the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), which has jurisdiction over the quality of service and rates charged by public service utilities. The Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) in Section 40-360 *et seq.* established a siting process requiring, "Every utility planning to construct a...transmission line...in this state shall first file with the commission an application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility" (CEC; Arizona State Legislature 2007a).

The Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee (Siting Committee) was created by the Legislature to, "...provide a single forum for the expeditious resolution of all matters concerning the location of electric generating plants and transmission lines in a single proceeding to which access will be open to interested and affected individuals, groups, county and municipal governments, and other public bodies to participate in these decisions." The Siting Committee is composed of eleven members representing various state agencies and local interests as well as some at large members. During public hearings, the Siting Committee considers the matters contained in the utility's application for the CEC. Following these deliberations, the Siting Committee issues or denies a CEC. The ACC reviews the Siting Committee's decision, and may accept, reject, or modify the CEC (ACC 2010). Upon receipt of a final decision from the ACC, the utility may proceed with construction (Provided all land owner issues are resolved).

The ARS provide a list of factors that are to be considered by the ACC in issuing a CEC:

1. Existing plans of the state, local government and private entities for other developments at or in the vicinity of the proposed site.
2. Fish, wildlife and plant life and associated forms of life on which they are dependent.
3. Noise emission levels and interference with communication signals.
4. The proposed availability of the site to the public for recreational purposes, consistent with safety considerations and regulations.
5. Existing scenic areas, historic sites and structures or archaeological sites at or in the vicinity of the proposed site.
6. The total environment of the area.

7. The technical practicality of achieving a proposed objective and the previous experience with equipment and methods available for achieving a proposed objective.
8. The estimated cost of the facilities and site as proposed by the applicant and the estimated cost of the facilities and site as recommended by the Committee, recognizing that any significant increase in costs represents a potential increase in the cost of electric energy to the customers or the applicant.
9. Any additional factors that require consideration under applicable federal and state laws pertaining to any such site (Arizona State Legislature 2007b).

It should be noted that federal land management plans are not explicitly listed among the factors, but factor 9 does include reference to consideration of applicable federal law and the Siting Committee and the ACC were both aware of the federal jurisdiction over a portion of the approved route. In addition, the ARS does provide the requirement for the ACC to consider “The total environment of the area”, as noted in factor 6.

From early 2007 through 2009, APS conducted siting studies within a study area of approximately 400 square miles, coordinated with appropriate agencies, and completed public involvement activities related to the Project (formerly known as the TS-5 to TS-9 500/230kV Transmission Line Project). The purpose of conducting siting studies was to gather and analyze data to address the above ARS described factors in development of routes to be considered in the APS Application for a CEC. In July 2008, APS submitted an application for a CEC for the Project to the ACC. The application for a CEC contained four alternatives, though each was not mutually exclusive of the other (i.e., there were common segments among the alternatives). The alternatives that APS presented in their CEC application included: the APS preferred route (along the Carefree Highway alignment), an Alternative 1 alignment (Lone Mountain Road and 235th Avenue), an Alternative 2 alignment (Lone Mountain Road and 187th Avenue to the Carefree Highway alignment), and an Alternative 3 alignment (along either side of SR 74). With regard to Alternative 3, the APS CEC application states, “North of SR 74, general plans call for parks/open space with BLM-administered land considered “dedicated” open space (Maricopa County 2000; City of Peoria 2006). The BLM-administered land north and south of SR 74 is managed for multiple uses but a utility corridor is not designated (BLM 1989, 2005)” (APS 2008a).

The Siting Committee held several days of public hearings between August and December 2008 for the purpose of receiving evidence and deliberating on the application of APS for a CEC (ACC 2008). On December 29, 2008, after an extensive public review process, the Siting Committee issued a CEC approving a route. The Siting Committee Chairman also filed a Procedural Order and Notice of Filing explaining certain language changes he made to the CEC approved by the Siting Committee which he concluded were consistent with the intent of the Siting Committee. The CEC approved a transmission line route that incorporated components of the APS preferred route, in conjunction with the Alternative 3 alignment, including BLM-managed lands north of SR 74 not located in a BLM-designated utility corridor.

Along certain portions of the approved route, the Siting Committee incorporated revisions suggested by intervening developers of private land. The Procedural Order and Notice of Filing provides an explanation of portions of the Siting Committee’s decision, and indicates that the Siting Committee attempted “...to avoid the entrance to Quintero properties north of SR 74 and the properties of Diamond Ventures south of SR 74...” and that the language in the CEC “...is similar to language offered by Diamond Ventures and intended to address their concerns.” The Procedural Order and Notice of Filing discussed “...avoiding directly impacting the Diamond Ventures properties generally and it discussed avoiding directly impacting specifically the Diamond Ventures property designated as Village ‘E’” (ACC 2008). The decision by the Siting Committee to approve the CEC as described above was unanimous by that group. The ACC subsequently approved the CEC, with a minor modification on March 17, 2009 (ACC 2009). Through the CEC, the ACC directed APS to follow the “certificated route” for the proposed Sun Valley to Morgan transmission line.

Because the ACC-certificated route included BLM-managed public lands, APS had to seek a ROW from the BLM by submitting a ROW application. In reviewing such an application, the BLM considers the applicable and existing RMP for the BLM-managed public lands for which the ROW is being requested. At the time APS submitted this ROW application, the Phoenix RMP (BLM 1988) was in effect, but the BLM was in the process of developing the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP. The development of the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP included an 8-year planning period that resulted in publication of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS in August 2008. The development of the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP included multiple public meetings with comment opportunities. APS participated and provided comments during the development of the RMP. In a letter submitted to the BLM on March 28, 2003, APS indicated that it had plans for new 500kV and 230kV transmission lines and substations in the RMP area, some of which would involve BLM-managed public lands. The letter stated that APS wanted to, “...propose several potential routes for the BLM to consider for utility corridors across these federal lands” (Herndon 2003). This letter was submitted several years before APS completed the detailed siting studies mentioned above and was APS’ best estimate at the time of potential routes subject to further analysis.

In this 2003 letter, APS provided the BLM with a map of potential future corridor areas, and indicated priorities for those potential future corridors. The area along SR 74 was a third priority for a potential future utility corridor (Herndon 2003). Comparing Map 9 from the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP with the map submitted by APS with their letter finds that a number of areas suggested by APS as first and second priorities for utility corridors were designated as multiuse corridors in the RMP.

The Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP provides management direction for public lands including the APS study area, and also establishes designated corridors for major utilities. Neither the Phoenix RMP nor the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP contained a utility corridor along SR 74. Following the issuance of the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP, the City of Peoria protested the plan for failing to establish a utility or multiuse corridor along SR 74 where the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP was designating a transportation corridor in the same area. The Director of the BLM dismissed that protest because establishing a utility or multiuse corridor had not been raised during the planning process and thus, this issue was not considered during the

development of the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP. Similarly, the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Programmatic EIS for Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in 11 Western States (BLM 2009a) did not identify a utility corridor along SR 74.

The BLM-managed public lands that were included in the ACC-certificated route (the “certificated corridor” or route for which the ACC approved a CEC) are located in two separate areas: 1) approximately two linear miles near the Sun Valley Substation within a multiuse corridor designated by the BLM in the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP, north of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal in Buckeye, and 2) a block of public land north of and parallel to SR 74 in the City of Peoria and unincorporated Maricopa County, which is not within a BLM-designated utility corridor, and having BLM-designated Class III visual resource values; but are within an existing transportation corridor to allow for future expansion of SR 74. In addition to crossing BLM-managed public lands, the ACC-certificated route crosses other lands, the majority of which are Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) lands, as well as some U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) lands, and privately owned lands.

In summary, the route certificated by the ACC was not APS’ original preferred route in its entirety, but was a blend of their preferred route and portions of their proposed alternative routes. The ACC-certificated route was not in conformance with the Phoenix RMP, nor is it in conformance with the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP. In its explanation of the recommended route, the Siting Committee indicated that certain portions of the route were designed to avoid private development property (ACC 2008). Nevertheless, this was the route that the ACC directed APS to follow for the Sun Valley to Morgan transmission line project. As a result, APS has proceeded with efforts to acquire federal approval for the proposed transmission line on subject BLM-managed public lands.

After receiving the CEC from the ACC, on April 29, 2009, APS filed a ROW Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands (SF-299) with the BLM to construct a 500/230kV transmission line within the ACC-certificated route. At that time, the final EIS was completed but ROD for the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP had not been signed. The APS application was not in conformance with the existing Phoenix RMP (BLM 1988) that the HFO was working under until the ROD for the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP could be signed and implemented. The application was, therefore, considered not in conformance with what was at that time the Phoenix RMP or the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP, and could not be processed without amending the plan.

In April 2010, the ROD for the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP was signed. However, because the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP had not established a utility corridor in the area where the ACC certificated the route, the BLM needed to reject APS’ ROW application based on the proposal not being in conformance with the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP. In May 2010, APS appealed BLM’s rejection of the ROW application to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) and in October 2010, IBLA remanded the decision back to BLM indicating that the decision rationale required more detail. In December 2010, BLM agreed to consider an RMP amendment (RMPA) and process the ROW application, and subsequently determined that an EIS is warranted for this Project. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the Project and RMPA was published in the *Federal Register* on April 11, 2011 (76 FR 20006-20007).

1.2 APPLICANT'S OBJECTIVE

The transmission line would establish a 500kV and 230kV connection between two substations (the approved Sun Valley Substation [formerly called TS-5] and the existing Morgan Substation [formerly called TS-9]). The 500kV transmission line was identified in APS' 2003 Ten-Year Transmission System Plan filed with the ACC in January of that year. Additionally, in APS' Renewable Transmission Action Plan submitted to ACC in 2009, the Sun Valley to Morgan 500kV transmission line was identified as a project that could be beneficial to renewable resource development in Arizona because the transmission line would connect renewable resource generation projects to the Phoenix metropolitan area load center (APS 2009a). According to APS, the connection between the Sun Valley and Morgan Substations would be the final segment in completing a continuous 500kV supply from the Palo Verde hub area (this hub creates a common location for commercial energy trading) to the northeast Phoenix metropolitan area (Pinnacle Peak Substation). The 500kV connection would increase the import capability (i.e., the transfer of electric energy) to the Phoenix metropolitan area and increase the export capability from the Palo Verde hub by approximately 600 megawatts (MW). This capability would increase to approximately 1,200 MW when combined with APS' Delaney to Sun Valley 500kV Transmission Line, which is scheduled to be in service by 2014. Because existing or other planned 500kV transmission lines in the system are almost fully committed to other generation sources, this 500kV line would facilitate the delivery of electricity from projected renewable energy resources. With over 1,500 MW of solar generation interconnection requests at the Delaney Substation (located between the Palo Verde hub and Sun Valley Substation), additional export and scheduling capability is necessary to facilitate delivery of electricity from proposed solar energy projects to electric load centers.

The 500kV transmission line would increase the reliability of the electrical infrastructure in Arizona by providing another 500kV source to the Pinnacle Peak Substation. This would be in addition to the sources from the northern Navajo and Four Corners generating stations that can be subject to system outages or wildfires along transmission lines. Additionally, in conjunction with the transmission system operated by Salt River Project, the 500kV circuit would increase the reliability of the extra-high voltage (EHV) transmission system. This would be accomplished by completing a 500kV loop that connects the Palo Verde Transmission system, the Southern Navajo Transmission system, and the Southern Four Corners system, thereby increasing reliability in the transmission grid to support the greater metropolitan Phoenix area.

The co-located 230kV transmission line would serve future load that is expected to develop in currently undeveloped areas in the Town of Buckeye, City of Surprise, City of Peoria, and unincorporated Maricopa County, as identified in APS' Renewable Transmission Action Plan. It would tie together the existing and planned 230kV and 69kV systems in the northwest Phoenix metropolitan area, thus providing additional reliability along with increased load serving capability. APS currently has no 230kV facilities in the majority of this portion of the Phoenix metropolitan area.

According to APS, the co-location of the 500kV and 230kV lines on the same structures would provide savings in ROW and easement costs to ratepayers, in contrast to the

inefficiencies of building two separate transmission lines and ROWs. It also eliminates future 230kV line siting efforts, which would become more difficult as the area is developed.

1.3 BLM'S PURPOSE AND NEED

1.3.1 Purpose of the BLM Action

The purpose of the BLM action is to respond to the APS request for access across public lands in order to construct, maintain, and decommission a co-located 500/230kV transmission line between the Sun Valley and Morgan Substations. The BLM would only be issuing decisions on those portions of the APS request that involve a ROW on public lands.

1.3.2 Need for the BLM Action

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (43 USC § 1761) as amended, establishes the BLM's multiple-use mandate to serve present and future generations (BLM 2001). The mission of the BLM is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM's multiple-use mission, set forth in the FLPMA, mandates that the BLM manage public land resources for a variety of uses, such as energy development, livestock grazing, recreation, and timber harvesting, while protecting a wide array of natural, cultural, and historical resources (43 USC §1712).

Consequently, the need for the BLM action is established by the BLM's responsibility under the FLPMA to respond to a request for a ROW grant while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values and to locate the uses in conformance with land-use plans. FLPMA also requires that the BLM "develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land-use plans" (43 USC §1712). The BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM 2005) states that RMP amendments are prompted by consideration of a proposal or action that does not conform to the RMP. An amendment to the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP would be necessary because a utility corridor on public land in the location of the certificated route approved by the ACC along SR 74 was not established and high-voltage transmission lines crossing public land are required to be within designated utility corridors under the current RMP. RMP Decision LR-30 states that no new utility corridors were designated within the Castle Hot Springs Management Unit. In addition, the existing Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class designation would need to be amended and downgraded from VRM Class III to VRM Class IV for those public lands where views would be dominated by the transmission line, and thus would not meet the current VRM objectives. The VRM Class designation would also be changed for those public lands north and south of SR 74 surrounding the proposed transmission line ROW (i.e. existing transportation corridor north of SR 74 and the key-shaped public land piece south of SR 74) in order to avoid creating narrow linear strips designated as different VRM Classes. Approximately 3,375 acres would be changed from VRM Class III to VRM Class IV.

1.4 LEAD AND COOPERATING AGENCIES

The BLM is the lead federal agency responsible for preparing this EIS and associated analyses. The HFO is the lead office, responsible for consultations required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended.

Cooperating agencies include those federal, state, or local agencies that have jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 1508.5). Those with jurisdiction by law will make their own decisions to approve or deny all or part of the Project. Those with special expertise or information have and will continue to assist in development of the analysis. In March 2011, the BLM sent letters to numerous agencies at the federal, state, and local level inviting participation as a cooperating agency in preparation of the EIS. A total of 33 agencies were sent a letter inviting them to participate as a cooperating agency. Six agencies have accepted: U.S. Air Force - Luke Air Force Base (LAFB), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the ASLD, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the City of Peoria, and the City of Surprise. **Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination** contains a list of those invited to participate as cooperating agencies.

1.5 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

1.5.1 NEPA and Plan Amendment Process

This EIS was prepared in accordance with NEPA and in compliance with the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500–1508), Department of Interior (DOI) requirements (43 CFR Part 1600; Department Manual 516, [DOI 2009a]), guidelines listed in the BLM NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1 (BLM 2008b); and in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 (BLM 2005). Under NEPA, federal agencies must consider the environmental effects of their actions. NEPA directs federal agencies to “utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach...in planning and decision-making, which may have an impact on man’s environment, to ensure that environmental amenities and values...be given appropriate consideration in decision-making along with economic and technical considerations,” and to “study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action.” This mandate applies to all “major federal actions” (43 CFR, Part 1500).

The preparation of an EIS follows a formal process consisting of nine major steps. The steps listed below include the BLM’s ROW and RMPA process.

1. Issue an NOI to prepare an EIS and RMPA;
2. Conduct public and agency scoping;
3. Conduct an interdisciplinary analysis of the issues and alternatives;
4. Issue the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS and Draft RMPA;
5. Provide for public review and a 90-day comment period;

6. Review public input, prepare responses, and make necessary changes to the Draft EIS and Draft RMPA;
7. Issue a NOA for the Final EIS and RMPA;
8. Provide for a 30-day review/protest period on the Final EIS and RMPA and a concurrent 60-day Governor’s consistency review of the RMPA; and,
9. Issue a ROD regarding the ROW grant and RMPA.

The EIS Decision Framework

This EIS analyzes and discloses the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative, and other Action Alternatives (all alternatives are described in detail in **Chapter 2**) and is intended to encourage public participation in the BLM’s decision-making process. It provides an analysis of impacts that would result from the implementation of the Proposed Action and other alternatives, describes mitigation measures that have been identified to address environmental consequences, and describes the Agency Preferred Alternative.

The RMPA and EIS processes will inform two decisions to be made by the BLM. First, BLM will decide whether or not to amend the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP, as necessary, for the proposed route on public land north and south of SR 74 to: a) include a single-use, utility corridor on public lands that would support a 500/230kV transmission line between the Sun Valley and Morgan Substations, or b) include a multiuse utility corridor that would contain the requested 200-foot wide ROW; and c) change the VRM Class from VRM Class III to VRM Class IV, as necessary, of the area affected by the corridor. Second, BLM will decide whether or not to approve, deny, or approve the APS ROW application with modifications, or select another alternative. These decisions are summarized in **Table 1.5-1**.

Table 1.5-1 Decisions to be Made

| LAND USE PLANNING DECISION OPTIONS | SITE-SPECIFIC DECISION OPTIONS |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP to add a single-use, utility corridor corresponding to the requested 200-foot wide ROW on public land north and south of SR 74 <u>and eliminate Decision LR-30</u>. • Amend the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP to add a multiuse utility corridor that would contain the requested 200-foot wide ROW on public land north and south of SR 74 <u>and eliminate Decision LR-30</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant the ROW request on public lands as submitted, including ROWs for potential access roads and associated gates. • Grant a modified ROW on public lands for a selected Action Alternative, including ROWs for potential access roads and associated gates. • Deny the ROW request by selecting the No Action Alternative or an Action Alternative that does not require the use of public land. |

Table 1.5-1 Decisions to be Made (Continued)

| LAND USE PLANNING DECISION OPTIONS | SITE-SPECIFIC DECISION OPTIONS |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not amend the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP to add a utility corridor. Existing corridors would remain intact. • Amend the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP to change the existing VRM Class of the affected area from VRM Class III to VRM Class IV. • Do not amend the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP to change the existing VRM Class of the affected area from VRM Class III to VRM Class IV. | |

1.5.2 Relationship to Policies, Plans, and Programs

BLM

The FLPMA mandates that the BLM manage public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield (43 USC § 1701[a] [7]). The BLM administers approximately 262 million acres of public land in the United States. This administrative responsibility consists of stewardship, conservation, and resource use, including the development of energy resources, in an environmentally sound manner. In addition, in 2012, the President directed the DOI, which includes the BLM, to permit 10,000MW of renewable energy on public lands; a goal that was met (Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, FACT SHEET: President Obama’s Blueprint for a Clean and Secure Energy Future, March 15, 2013). The DOI is continuing to take steps to enable responsible development of energy on public lands, including supporting States that make investments to modernize and improve the reliability, security, and resilience of the grid. The DOI has been directed to make energy project permitting more robust. The President has challenged Americans to double renewable electricity generation from wind, solar, and geothermal sources by 2020; the value of renewable energy projects will be strengthened by a more robust transmission system that enables more opportunities for renewable energy delivery.

The BLM HFO prepared the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP to provide comprehensive current and future management direction for the public lands administered by the HFO (BLM 2010a). The Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP directs management of the federal surface and mineral estate managed by the HFO, primarily within Maricopa and Yavapai counties in central and western Arizona with the westernmost lands extending into La Paz County. The HFO planning boundaries encompass more than 3 million acres, and the Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Area encompasses 896,100 surface acres of BLM-administered lands north and west of Phoenix in central western Arizona. The area includes remote and undeveloped desert and mountain ranges, as well as wildland-urban interface zones near the

cities of Phoenix and Prescott, towns of Buckeye and Wickenburg, and other communities. These lands provide a wide range of recreational activities and natural and cultural resources to the public.

The Proposed Action and certain Action Alternatives would take place in the BLM-designated Castle Hot Springs Management Unit, which is managed under the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP (BLM 2010a). The Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP allows for multiple uses of public lands and does not prohibit the development of transmission lines on public lands, although amendments to the RMP may be necessary.

The BLM Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan, June 1981 was also reviewed.

Federal Agency Management Plans

Although the Project would not use lands under the direct jurisdiction of LAFB, a portion of the Proposed Action does lie within the extended Accident Protection Zone (APZ) of Luke Auxiliary Field #1. Because compatible land uses within the extended APZ include communication facilities and utilities with height restrictions determined by local jurisdictions, the Proposed Action and all Action Alternatives presented in this EIS avoid the APZ and are thus compatible with the LAFB Clear Zone and APZs.

Local Jurisdictional Plans

Each of the jurisdictional plans reviewed for this EIS are listed below. Other planning documents were reviewed for additional context or information related to the future uses that were identified in the general plans.

The Proposed Action would traverse land under the planning jurisdictions of Maricopa County, Town of Buckeye, City of Peoria, and City of Surprise. It should be noted that the Proposed Action centerline in most instances follows section lines, which in some locations also represent boundaries between the planning jurisdictions. Therefore, actual planning jurisdiction crossed by the Proposed Action or Action Alternative routes may vary based on where actual ROWs are acquired.

- Maricopa County 2020, Eye to the Future, Comprehensive Plan, October 1997, revised August 2002 (Maricopa County 2002). The Proposed Action and Action Alternatives presented in this EIS are compatible with the Maricopa County 2020 Comprehensive Plan because the Plan does not specifically limit or restrict the location of transmission lines.
- Maricopa County 2020, Eye to the Future, White Tank/Grand Avenue Area Plan, December 2000 (Maricopa County 2000). The Proposed Action and Action Alternatives presented in this EIS are compatible with the Maricopa County 2020 White Tank/Grand Avenue Area Plan because the Plan does not specifically limit or restrict the location of transmission lines.
- Town of Buckeye General Plan Update, adopted January 2008 (Town of Buckeye 2008). The Proposed Action and Action Alternatives presented in this EIS are compatible with the Town of Buckeye 2008 General Plan Update because the Plan does not specifically limit or restrict the location of transmission lines. The

Plan recognized the need for future transmission line improvements and stated: “The Town would begin working with all the energy utilities within its jurisdiction and Planning Area to develop a comprehensive and coordinated Plan for the siting of additional infrastructure that will be necessary to meet the energy demands of the Town (at full build-out), the region and the Western Grid.”

- City of Peoria General Plan, voter ratified in May 2001 and re-ratified in August 2010 (City of Peoria 2010). The Proposed Action and Action Alternatives presented in this EIS are compatible with the City of Peoria General Plan because the Plan does not specifically limit or restrict the location of transmission lines. The Plan recognized the need for future transmission line improvements and included the Proposed Action corridor on a revised Land Use map dated September 2008, printed June 2009.
- City of Surprise General Plan 2030, adopted July 2008 (City of Surprise 2008a). The Proposed Action and Action Alternatives presented in this EIS are compatible with the City of Surprise General Plan because the Plan does not specifically limit or restrict the location of transmission lines. The Plan recognized the need for future transmission line improvements and included a common sense approach that includes goals and policies such as: encourage utilities to maximize the use of existing utility corridors; locate near roadways; minimize corridor widths; select locations that reduce visual impacts; and other recommendations to consider when locating transmission lines.
- Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Transportation Plan (MAG 2010); MAG Interstate 10-Hassayampa Valley Transportation Framework Study (MAG 2007); and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) SR-74 Final Feasibility Right-of-way Preservation Report (ADOT 2011). The Project alternatives transverse SR 74 and cross six future Arizona parkways planned in the Study Area. The interaction of these transportation facilities could have potential impacts on the proposed alternatives.

State of Arizona

The ACC’s Renewable Energy Standard and Tariff Rules (ACC R14-2-1801–1815), along with other renewable energy mandates, call on the State’s electric utilities to produce 15 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025. Additional export and scheduling capability is necessary to facilitate delivery of proposed solar energy to load centers in Arizona; therefore, the Proposed Action and Action Alternatives would assist the State’s electric utilities in meeting this goal and would be consistent with the State of Arizona objectives related to renewable energy development. **This transmission line could carry energy from renewable energy projects listed in Appendix 4B, facilitating renewable energy development and assisting with meeting the State’s renewable energy goals.**

APS is required to adhere to the ACC-certificated route (Section 1.2.2) for the proposed transmission line. In the event that a route or route segment were permitted by the BLM or ASLD that is outside the ACC-certificated route, implementation could only occur if the ACC amended the CEC that has been issued for the project. The ACC’s consideration of

amending the CEC would open the entire route decision up for public review and consideration, and would not be limited only to discrete portions.

1.5.3 Applicable Laws and Regulations

The Proposed Action and Action Alternatives must comply with numerous federal laws, statutes, regulations, and executive orders (EO) as outlined in **Table 1.5-2**.

Table 1.5-2 Federal Laws, Statutes, Regulations, and Executive Orders with which the Proposed Action and All Action Alternatives Must Conform

| LAWS AND REGULATIONS | STATUTORY REFERENCE |
|--|---|
| Federal Laws and Statutes | |
| American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 | Public Law [PL] 95-341; 42 USC § 1996 |
| Antiquities Act of 1906 | 16 USC 431 <i>et seq.</i> |
| Archaeological and Historic Data Preservation Act of 1974 | PL 86-253, as amended by PL 93291; 16 USC § 469 |
| Archeological Resources Protection Act, as amended | 16 USC 470aa <i>et seq.</i> |
| Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 | 16 USC §§ 668–668d, 54 Stat. 250, as amended; and PL 95-616 (92 Stat. 3114) |
| Clean Air Act of 1990 | PL 92-574; 42 USC 7401 <i>et seq.</i> |
| Clean Water Act | 33 USC 1251 <i>et seq.</i> |
| Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 | PL 93-320 |
| Department of Transportation Act of 1966 | PL 95-341; 42 USC § 1996 |
| Endangered Species Act of 1973 | PL 85-624; 16 USC §§ 661, 664, 1008 |
| Energy Policy Act of 2005 | PL 109-59 |
| Farmland Protection Policy Act | PL 97-98 and 7 CFR § 658 |
| Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 | PL 94-579; 43 USC § 1701 <i>et seq.</i> |
| Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 | USC 2801 <i>et seq.</i> |
| Federal Plant Pest Act | 7 USC 150aa <i>et seq.</i> |
| Historic Sites Act of 1935 | PL 292-74; 16 USC §§ 461–467 |
| Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 | PL 88-578 |

Table 1.5-2 Federal Laws, Statutes, Regulations, and Executive Orders with which the Proposed Action and All Action Alternatives Must Conform (Continued)

| LAWS AND REGULATIONS | STATUTORY REFERENCE |
|---|---|
| Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 | 16 USC §§ 703–712, as amended |
| National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended | PL 91-190, as amended by PL 94-52, PL 94-83, and PL 97-258; 42 USC § 4321 |
| National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 | PL 89-665; 16 USC § 407(f) |
| Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 | 25 USC 3001-30013 <i>et seq.</i> |
| Noise Control Act of 1972, as amended | 42 USC 4901 <i>et seq.</i> |
| Noxious Weed Control and Eradication Act | PL 108-412 |
| Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 as amended | 16 USC 4701 <i>et. seq.</i> |
| Occupational Safety and Health Act | 29 USC 651 <i>et seq.</i> (1970) |
| Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 | 42 USC 13101 <i>et seq.</i> |
| <u>Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993</u> | <u>PL 103-141</u> |
| Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 | 42 USC s/s 300f <i>et seq.</i> |
| Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act | PL 109-59 |
| Executive Orders | |
| Actions to Expedite Energy-related Projects | EO 13212 |
| Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments | EO 13084 EO 13175 |
| Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations | EO 12898 |
| Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards | EO 12088 |
| Flood Hazard Evaluation Guidelines | EO 11296 |
| Floodplain Management | EO 11988 |
| Indian Sacred Sites | EO 13007 |
| Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs | EO 13272 |
| Invasive Species | EO 13112 |

Table 1.5-2 Federal Laws, Statutes, Regulations, and Executive Orders with which the Proposed Action and All Action Alternatives Must Conform (Continued)

| LAWS AND REGULATIONS | STATUTORY REFERENCE |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Preserve America | EO 13287 |
| Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality | EO 11514 |
| Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment | EO 11593 |
| Protection of Wetlands | EO 11990 |
| Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds | EO 13186 |
| Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands | EO 11644 |
| Federal Regulations and Guidance | |
| BLM Land Use Planning Handbook | H-1601-1 |
| BLM Land Use Permits and Leases | 43 CFR 2920 |
| BLM NEPA Handbook | H-1790-1 |
| DOI Implementing NEPA Regulations | 43 CFR Part 46 |
| BLM Rights-of-Way Principles and Procedures | 43 CFR 2800, as amended |
| Council on Environmental Quality General Regulations Implementing NEPA | 40 CFR §§ 1500–1508 |
| Floodplain Management | 43 CFR § 6030 |
| Prime and Unique Farmlands | 7 CFR § 658 |
| Protection of Historic Properties | 36 CFR § 800 |
| Responsibilities, and the Endangered Species Act (June 5, 1997) | Secretarial Order 3206 |
| Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Its Implementing Regulations | 33 CFR §§ 320–331 and 40 CFR § 230 |

1.5.4 Permits Required or Potentially Required

To implement any of the Action Alternatives analyzed in this EIS, APS must acquire applicable federal, state, county, and local permits and other approvals, as necessary. Applicable or potentially applicable approvals (permits, licenses, compliance, or reviews) are listed in **Table 1.5-3**.

Table 1.5-3 Summary of Potentially Required Local, State, or Federal Permits, Licenses, or Authorizations

| APPROVAL AGENCY | PERMIT POTENTIALLY REQUIRED | REGULATORY REQUIREMENT | PROJECT TRIGGER |
|---|---|--|--|
| Federal | | | |
| Bureau of Land Management | ROW Grant Land Use Plan Amendment | 43 USC § 1761-1771 | Request for ROW across BLM land |
| Bureau of Reclamation | Permit to cross the Central Arizona Project Canal | 43 USC § 1761-1771 | Request for ROW across USBR land |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | Section 404 permit | Clean Water Act 33 USC 1251 <i>et seq.</i> 2 | Impacts to jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Biological Opinion | Endangered Species Act 16 USC § 1531-1544 | Potential to impact threatened or endangered species |
| Federal Aviation Administration | Permits | 49 USC Sec 44718 and Title 14 CFR Pt 77 | Obstruction standards, Hazards to air navigation |
| State | | | |
| <u>State Historic Preservation Act</u> | <u>Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)</u> | <u>A.R.S 41-861 to 41-864</u> | <u>Projects occurring on State Land</u> |
| Arizona Department of Environmental Quality | Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System stormwater permit for construction | Clean Water Act - Arizona Revised Statutes Title 49, Section 49-202 | Required for construction activities impacting one acre or more |
| Arizona Department of Environmental Quality | Hazardous waste generator registration | Hazardous Waste Control Act of 1972 Arizona Administrative Code: Title 18, Chapter 8 | Generation, storage and tracking of hazardous waste disposal during project construction and operation |
| Arizona Department of Agriculture | Application for Arizona Protected Native Plants and Wood Removal | Arizona Revised Statutes – Native Plant Law ARS Article 11 (§ R3-3-110- through R3-3-1111, Appendix A) | Displacement or removal of any native plant species |

Table 1.5-3 Summary of Potentially Required Local, State, or Federal Permits, Licenses, or Authorizations (Continued)

| APPROVAL AGENCY | PERMIT POTENTIALLY REQUIRED | REGULATORY REQUIREMENT | PROJECT TRIGGER |
|--|--|--|--|
| Arizona Corporation Commission | Certificate of Environmental Compatibility | Title 40, Chapter 2, Article 6.2 (sections 40-360 through 40-360.13), ARS | Transmission lines with more than two poles and greater than 115kV, or power generation facilities of 100 MW or larger |
| Arizona State Land Department | ROW Application | Title 37, Chapter 2, Article 10 (Section 37-461A), ARS | Required for utility and access road construction on State Trust land |
| State Historic Preservation Office (part of Arizona State Parks) | Consultations on National Register eligibility of cultural resources and effects of the proposed project | National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, 36 CFR 800 A.R.S. 41- 861 to 41-864 | Project activities (i.e., grading, trenching or other construction) may have potential to impact historic/cultural resources |
| <u>Arizona State Museum</u> | <u>Arizona Antiquities Act permit</u> | <u>A.R.S. 41-841 to 41-847</u> | <u>Required for investigation of archaeological, historical, and paleontological sites and objects on state land</u> |
| Arizona Game and Fish Department | None, coordination required | Arizona Revised Statutes - Title 17 - Game and Fish Department | Part of site assessment activities for Arizona Corporation Commission process |
| Arizona Department of Transportation | Heavy haul permit | Arizona Administrative Code Title 17, Chapter 6 - Overdimensional Permits | Transport of oversized loads on roads under ADOT jurisdiction |
| Arizona Department of Transportation | Encroachment permit | ROW laws (Uniform Act) | Encroachment by facilities (e.g., transmission lines, pipes, new roads, etc.) May also be required for temporary construction access along SR 74 and US 60 |
| Central Arizona Project | Permit or notification to cross the Central Arizona Project Canal | Land Use License | Permanent easement across the Central Arizona Project Canal |

Table 1.5-3 Summary of Potentially Required Local, State, or Federal Permits, Licenses, or Authorizations (Continued)

| APPROVAL AGENCY | PERMIT POTENTIALLY REQUIRED | REGULATORY REQUIREMENT | PROJECT TRIGGER |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Local | | | |
| Maricopa County | Dust control plan Earth-moving permit Grading permit | Planning and Development Department, County Code | Construction |
| County and Local Jurisdictions Flood Plain Management | Notice to local jurisdictions, letter of requirements to fulfill | ARS 48-3609 | Construction |
| City of Peoria | Grading permit and Desert Lands Conservation Ordinance waivers | | Construction; work within city limits |

1.6 TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

In April 2011, the BLM contacted the following eight American Indian tribes to notify them of the Proposed Action and initiate formal consultation in preparation of the EIS: Gila River Indian Community, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Ak-Chin Indian Community, Tohono O’odham Nation, Yavapai Prescott Tribe, Yavapai Apache Nation, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, and the Hopi Tribe. These tribes incorporated this area as part of their traditional territories and express cultural affiliation with prehistoric people who inhabited or migrated through the area. In response to requests for additional information, on July 30, 2012 the BLM provided the cultural resource inventory results to the tribes and the efforts made to avoid impacts to prehistoric sites through project design. In recognition of the special relationship with the United States government, the BLM will continue to consult with the appropriate tribal governments at an official, executive level (government-to-government) in accordance with the NHPA and other relevant legal authorities. Relating to the NHPA, the goal is to identify and assess potential effects on National Register-eligible places of traditional cultural importance and to consult with tribes on appropriate treatment to avoid, minimize, and resolve adverse effects. The BLM has provided and will continue to provide opportunities for government officials of federally recognized American Indian tribes to comment on and participate in the preparation of the EIS through review of the cultural resource inventory reports prepared for this Project and will consider comments, notify consulted tribes of final decisions, and inform them of how their comments were addressed in those decisions.

On November 14, 2012, a letter was sent to the eight tribes regarding the availability of the Draft EIS and summarizing previous consultation and coordination with the Tribes. This letter was also an invitation for the tribes to attend the public hearings to be held regarding the Draft EIS.

In addition to addressing the effects of the transmission line, consultations will address: (1) consistency with tribal plans, as appropriate; and (2) observance of specific planning coordination authorities, including Section 101(d)(6) of the NHPA, American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), EO 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites), EO 12898 (Environmental Justice), Secretarial Order 3206 (American Indian Tribal Rights, Federal-Tribal Trust Responsibilities, Secretarial Order No. 3317 (Department of the Interior Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes), and the ESA). Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA, will be coordinated with tribal consultation, as appropriate. Detailed information on tribal consultations is provided in **Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination**.

1.7 SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public scoping is an integral part of the NEPA planning process. It provides “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues and alternatives to the Proposed Action to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a Proposed Action” (40 CFR 1501.7). Public and agency input is solicited in order to identify the range or scope of issues to be addressed during the environmental analysis and in the EIS. Initiation of the EIS process and the public scoping meetings for the EIS were announced through the *Federal Register*, BLM news releases, paid announcements in the media, and postings on the BLM’s project websites. These activities are described below and in more detail in **Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination**.

1.7.1 Federal Register Notice of Intent

The public was notified of the Proposed Action and upcoming EIS scoping meetings through the NOI posted on the *Federal Register* website on April 8, 2011, and published in the *Federal Register* on April 11, 2011 (76 FR 20006-20007). The notice announced the intent to prepare an EIS and provided the website address that listed specific dates, locations, and times of the public scoping meetings. In addition, the notice provided information such as a description of Project facilities and location, information on how to submit comments and why they are important, and contact information for the BLM. The comment period for the EIS scoping closed on May 26, 2011.

1.7.2 Mailings, Posters, and Email Notifications

Invitation letters were sent to a mailing list consisting of 538 individuals that included those who commented during the ACC process, mining claimants, and other interested parties. Postcard mailers announcing the time, date, and location of the public scoping meetings were sent to the recipients of the scoping invitation letters, and an additional 12,002 interested parties and members of the public whose addresses were identified based on mail carrier routes within the communities identified by the BLM and within the Project Study Area.

Four hundred community/neighborhood outreach flyers were distributed and/or posted at 24 locations in potentially affected communities on April 14 and April 18, 2011. Some of these included distributions or postings at multiple sites within one area, including four sites

across Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Twelve 18- by 24-inch signs were also posted at some locations.

On April 14, 2011, the first email notifications were sent to agencies, government officials, special interest groups, and other interested parties. This reminder contained the dates, times, and locations for the agency scoping meeting and each public scoping meeting. Each email included a link to the Project website and BLM contact information. Another reminder went out to these groups on April 25, 2011, one day prior to the first scoping meeting in Phoenix. Prior to the official May 27, 2011, end date for the scoping comment period, two emails were sent to these groups on May 24 and 26, 2011 with the goal of maximizing public involvement.

1.7.3 Media Contacts

Beginning on April 12, 2011, and ending one day before the last public scoping meeting, APS placed 39 paid display announcements in local newspapers throughout the Project Study Area and the Phoenix metropolitan area announcing the time, date, and location of the public scoping meetings, as requested by the BLM. Announcements were placed in the following newspapers: *The Arizona Republic* (statewide coverage, NW Valley zones 1 and 20, Peoria zone 2, Glendale zone 9 and North Phoenix zone 21), *Peoria Times*, *Sonoran News*, *Surprise Today*, *West Valley View*, and *The Wickenburg Sun*.

1.7.4 Public Scoping Meetings

During the EIS scoping period, the BLM held three public scoping meetings and one cooperating agency scoping meeting to identify issues and concerns regarding the Project. These scoping meetings provided an opportunity for the general public as well as the agencies to learn about the Project and to provide comments to the BLM. Meeting locations, dates, times, and number of attendees is provided in **Table 1.7-1**.

In addition to the public scoping, on June 8, 2011, an Economic Strategies Workshop was also conducted for this Project to comply with the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook during the EIS and Land Use Plan Amendment process. The purpose of the workshop was to identify to BLM, potential management opportunities that further the social and economic goals of area communities. A complete summary of this process and the information presented at the Workshop is included in the Project Record.

Table 1.7-1 Formal Scoping Meeting Dates, Times, Locations, and Attendees

| LOCATION | DATE | TIME | ATTENDANCE* |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Public Scoping Meetings | | | |
| Ramada Plaza Phoenix Metrocenter, Phoenix, Arizona | April 26, 2011 | 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. | 29 |
| Nadaburg Elementary School, Wittmann, Arizona | April 27, 2011 | 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. | 66 |
| Peoria Community Center, Peoria, Arizona | April 28, 2011 | 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. | 249 |
| <u>Economic Strategies Workshop</u> | | | |
| <u>BLM National Training Center, Phoenix, AZ</u> | <u>June 8, 2011</u> | <u>5:00 – 9:00 p.m.</u> | <u>55</u> |
| Agency Scoping Meeting | | | |
| Ramada Plaza Phoenix Metrocenter, Phoenix, Arizona | April 26, 2011 | 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. | 23 |
| Total | | | <u>422</u> |

*These counts reflect only those attendees who elected to sign in at the door. It was likely that there were others who did not sign in.

1.8 ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING SCOPING

Pursuant to CEQ NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1501.8), it is through the scoping process that the lead agency (a) determines the scope and significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the EIS and (b) identifies and eliminates from detailed study the issues that are not significant, narrowing the discussion of such issues to a brief presentation in the EIS as to why they will not have a significant effect on the human environment. In brief, the scoping comments must be reviewed to determine the significant issues in the context of NEPA and conducting an EIS.

During the EIS scoping period, a total of 289 comments were received. Within the 289 comments, 935 issues were identified and categorized into the 11 main issue categories shown in **Table 1.8-1**. In addition to the comments received from the external (public) scoping process, internal scoping (derived from the BLM) identified either similar issues listed in **Table 1.8-1** or additional issues covered in this Final EIS and Proposed RMPA. These issues were identified and addressed in data collection methodologies and baseline reports that are included in the Project Record and are incorporated into the appropriate sections of this Final EIS and Proposed RMPA.

Table 1.8-1 Number of Scoping Comments Received by Issue

| <u>ISSUE</u> CATEGORY | <u>NUMBER OF ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY CATEGORY</u> |
|---|---|
| Air and Climate | 1 |
| Biology | 93 |
| Health and Safety | 103 |
| Need and Reliability | 6 |
| NEPA Process and Resource Management Plan Amendment | 61 |
| <u>Project Design Features, Mitigation Measures, and Alternatives</u> | <u>27</u> |
| Recreation | 11 |
| Socioeconomic Values | As follows: |
| Property values | 101 |
| Environmental justice | 1 |
| Quality of life | 5 |
| General community | 28 |
| Scenic/Visual | 103 |
| Transportation and Traffic | 52 |
| Unclassifiable (general comments – non-substantive) | 343 |
| TOTAL | 935 |

Issues raised and identified during scoping are summarized in **Table 1.8-2**. The table also identifies in what section of the EIS the issue is addressed. A complete summary of issues identified during scoping, including those issues that are not addressed in this EIS, is provided in the Project Scoping Report, which is available on the BLM Project website (see <http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/energy/aps-sunvalley.html>).

Table 1.8-2 Summary of Issues from Scoping

| ISSUES | WHERE ADDRESSED IN EIS |
|--|--|
| <p>Air and Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project would involve ground disturbance that may affect air quality in a designated nonattainment area. | <p>Sections 3.2 and 4.2</p> |
| <p>Biology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The construction and operation of Project components could have an impact on wildlife and their habitats. North of SR 74, the Project could be within sensitive habitat or habitat for special status species. The area is already designated for approved off-road vehicles and grazing. Additional access to this area could lead to further habitat degradation. The construction and operation of Project components could impact bird and bat habitat. (Electric transmission facilities cause bird and bat fatalities due to collision and electrocution.) Implementation of the latest guidelines for avian and bat protection will be critical to protection of these species. The construction of Project components in proximity to the Agua Fria River and associated riparian vegetation could impact these resources. | <p>Sections 3.13 and 4.13 (Vegetation Resources), Sections 3.16 and 4.16 (Wildlife Resources)</p> |
| <p>Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electromagnetic fields (EMFs) are thought to contribute to human health concerns. Existing and planned residences would be in proximity to the Proposed Action transmission line route on the south of SR 74, and thus potentially exposed to EMFs. Lightning strikes to electric transmission facilities and other weather events can cause fires. | <p>Sections 3.8 and 4.8 (Public Health and Safety);</p> |
| <p>Need and Reliability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis should evaluate the need for increased capacity and reliability of power infrastructure in the metropolitan Phoenix area. Project area lands were a significant part of the Lake Pleasant Resource Conservation Area. The value of the lands for conservation versus the need for the project needs to be analyzed. | <p>Sections 1.1.2 and 1.2</p> <p>Sections 1.1.2, 1.2, 3.10, and 4.10 (Socioeconomics)</p> |

Table 1.8-2 Summary of Issues from Scoping (Continued)

| ISSUES | WHERE ADDRESSED IN EIS |
|---|---|
| <p><u>NEPA Process and Resource Management Plan Amendment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Action was approved by the ACC whereas any alternative routes have not. Should they be selected, would need ACC approval. • The analysis should consider potential delay of the transmission line construction process due to any additional ACC approval requirements once the NEPA process is completed. • The Project components north of SR 74 would require a RMPA. This <u>amendment</u> process should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The resource impacts of a RMPA. ○ The appropriateness of amending the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP in such a way that would benefit developers. ○ The flexibility of the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP to address present and future planning needs. • Correcting omissions and inconsistencies in the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP. The analysis should evaluate applicability of the BLM policy of co-locating transportation and utility corridors to the Project. • The analysis should discuss applicability of federal and state policies regarding joint use corridors. | <p align="center">Chapters 1, 2, and 4</p> |
| <p>Project Design Features, Mitigation Measures, and Alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing to protect tortoises should be installed and access roads should be designed to minimize impacts to habitat. • Consider distances between the power line and surface in relation to water quality; for example, the impacts to public drinking water supplies if power lines or other components fall into the river or CAP canal. • The alternative of constructing the transmission line underground needs to be evaluated, specifically routing under the LAFB auxiliary field. • The alternative of aligning the transmission line route along the CAP canal needs to be evaluated. • The placement of the Project in or near subdivisions should be avoided. | <p align="center">Chapter 2</p> |

Table 1.8-2 Summary of Issues from Scoping (Continued)

| ISSUES | WHERE ADDRESSED IN EIS |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The alternative of placing the transmission line in the West Wing Corridor needs to be evaluated. • The analysis needs to include compatibility of routes crossing non-BLM lands with approved land plans south of SR 74. | <p>Chapter 2</p> |
| <p>Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project may impact visual and recreation resources in the Hieroglyphic Mountains Recreation Area, Castle Hot Springs Special Recreation Area and The Boulders Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area. • The construction disturbance may impact OHV trails. • The analysis should evaluate the cost and effectiveness of rehabilitating construction disturbance in OHV areas (de facto creation of new roads/routes that could not be prevented or rehabilitated). • The Project would create access to currently undisturbed lands with potential proliferation of additional utilities in the area. • The analysis should evaluate protection of recreational resources identified in the Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP. • The analysis should evaluate the cumulative impacts of this Project on OHV multiuse trails state-wide in conjunction with renewable energy projects. | <p>Sections 3.10 and 4.10 (Recreation)</p> |
| <p><u>Socioeconomic Values</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The analysis should evaluate the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project on area property values, considering the already weakened housing market. • The analysis should address the potential cumulative impacts from the increased capacity on future projects including renewable energy. • The analysis should assess the impact of the Project on area property values resulting in reduced tax revenues, and this impact on state/local budgets and school funding, preventing economic growth and recovery. • The analysis should evaluate compensation for homes taken as a result of the Project. • The analysis should evaluate the environmental justice aspects of the Project. | <p>Sections 3.9 and 4.9 (Socioeconomics)</p> |

Table 1.8-2 Summary of Issues from Scoping (Continued)

| ISSUES | WHERE ADDRESSED IN EIS |
|---|--|
| <p><u>Socioeconomic Values (Continued)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The analysis should evaluate potential adverse impacts to socioeconomics of the recreation industry in Arizona. The land north of SR 74 (which includes BLM-managed lands) is used by a variety of recreational users, including OHV riders and hikers. Assess the potential for closure of existing trails and access points and the impacts to recreation in the area. The analysis should include potential impacts on the social and non-monetary values associated with recreation, such as community cohesion. This might also include the value of ecosystem services, which are goods and services provided by nature that bring value to human life, but generally lack market prices. • The analysis should evaluate the potential beneficial impacts to socioeconomics through local job creation, income generation, and development of renewable energy generation sites. | <p>Sections 3.9 and 4.9 (Socioeconomics)</p> |
| <p><u>Scenic/Visual</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project will impact scenic views along the SR 74 corridor. • The analysis should evaluate the short-term visual impact to travelers on SR 74 versus long-term visual impact to area residents who would view the Project all the time and consider this affecting their quality of life in terms of social considerations. • The analysis should consider precedence for co-locating power lines and roads. • The analysis should revisit the major Bradshaw-Harquahala RMP issue of visual vistas associated with the Hieroglyphic Mountains and southern Bradshaws. • The analysis should consider the quality of the lands north of SR 74 for conservation management by the BLM as opposed to expanded development into BLM lands. | <p>Sections 3.14 and 4.14 (Visual Resources)</p> |
| <p><u>Transportation and Traffic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Project components that would be in proximity to the Thunder Ridge Airpark could impact that facility.</u> | <p><u>Sections 3.12 and 4.12 (Transportation)</u></p> |

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIS

This EIS complies with the CEQ recommended organization in 40 CFR 1502.10-1502.18. **Table 1.9-1** describes the organization of the Final EIS and Proposed RMPA.

Table 1.9-1 Organization of the Final EIS and Proposed RMPA

| CHAPTER | CONTENTS |
|--|---|
| Chapter 1 – Introduction, Purpose and Need | This chapter provides a description of the Project, the role of the BLM in the EIS and RMPA process, and the required regulatory actions for the Project. Chapter 1 also includes a summary of the scoping process and issues identified. |
| Chapter 2 – Description of the Applicant’s Proposed Project and Alternatives | This chapter describes the Project and Action Alternatives analyzed in the EIS, including the No Action Alternative. Alternatives that were considered, but eliminated from further analysis are described with a discussion of why they were not considered further. Environmental Protection Measures included in the Project are described along with mitigation measures identified during preparation of the EIS that would further reduce environmental effects. A comparison table of the environmental effects of the various alternatives is included along with the identification of the Agency Preferred Alternative. |
| Chapter 3 – Affected Environment | This chapter describes the existing environment that could be affected by the Proposed Action and Action Alternatives. The existing environment includes the social and natural environment. |
| Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences | This chapter describes possible environmental consequences of construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project and alternatives analyzed in the EIS. Direct and indirect impacts of the Project and alternatives are assessed and described in order to allow for comparative impact evaluation. Impacts are compared to the social and natural environment that would be expected to exist if no action were taken (No Action Alternative). This chapter also describes the cumulative impacts: possible environmental consequences of construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project and alternatives analyzed in this EIS when added to all past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions in the Cumulative Effects Area for each environmental resource evaluated in the EIS. |
| Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination | This chapter describes public participation and Tribal consultation undertaken to date; and when additional public participation opportunities would occur throughout the EIS process. It also describes the recipients that will receive copies of the EIS for review, as well as the preparers of the document. |

Table 1.9-1 Organization of the Final EIS and Proposed RMPA (Continued)

| CHAPTER | CONTENTS |
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| <u>Chapter 6 – Comments and Response</u> | <u>This chapter provides a summary of all the comments received on the Draft EIS and the response to these comments.</u> |
| <u>Chapter 7 – References, Acronyms, Abbreviations, Glossary, and Index</u> | <u>This chapter lists references cited in developing the EIS, as well as providing acronyms, abbreviations, a glossary of terms used in the EIS, and an Index.</u> |