

disturbance activity (March 1 to July 15); manage as wind and solar energy exclusion area; no new recreation facility construction allowed (March 1 to July 15), unless needed for human health and safety; close to non-energy solid mineral leasing and no surface occupancy stipulation without waivers, exceptions, and modifications for fluid mineral leasing.

- West Antelope Creek ACEC (existing, 28,280 acres) to improve the capabilities of the resources in the unit to support wintering elk, deer, and bighorn sheep. Proposed management would remain the same as existing with the following updates: manage as wind and solar energy exclusion area, manage one mile buffer around active and inactive leks as ROW exclusion areas; seasonal habitat restrictions apply to prohibit surface disturbance in Gunnison sage-grouse occupied habitat management areas (March 1 to July 15), at minimum; prohibit surface-disturbing activities during lekking, nesting, or early brood-rearing (March 1 to July 15); no new recreation facility construction allowed (March 1 to July 15), unless needed for human health and safety, subject to valid existing rights; close to fluid mineral exploration, leasing, and/or development; close to non-energy solid mineral leasing; close designated routes to motorized travel from March 15 to May 15 and limit over-snow vehicle travel to designated routes; maintain current, designated route system limiting motorized and mechanized travel.

- South Beaver Creek ACEC (existing, 4,570 acres) for protection and enhancement of existing populations and habitat for skiff milkvetch. Proposed management would remain the same as existing with the following updates: remove the restriction for chemical spraying; manage as wind and solar energy exclusion area; manage one mile buffer around active and inactive leks as ROW exclusion areas; seasonal habitat restrictions apply to prohibit surface disturbance in Gunnison sage-grouse occupied habitat management areas from March 1 to July 15, at minimum; prohibit surface-disturbing activities during lekking, nesting, or early brood-rearing from March 1 to July 15; no new recreation facility construction allowed from March 1 to July 15, unless needed for human health and safety, subject to valid existing rights; close to fluid mineral exploration, leasing, and/or development; close to non-energy solid mineral leasing; close designated routes to motorized travel (March 15 to May 15) and limit over-snow vehicle travel to designated routes; maintain current,

designated route system limiting motorized and mechanized travel.

The preferred alternative would not propose the following potential ACECs for designation: All BLM-administered surface lands within Gunnison sage-grouse Occupied Habitat Management Area and Unoccupied Habitat Management Area ACEC (Colorado and Utah); Gunnison Satellite Populations Habitat ACEC (Colorado and Utah); Northdale ACEC (Colorado); Kezar Basin ACEC (Colorado); North Parlin ACEC (Colorado); South Parlin ACEC (Colorado); Ohio Creek ACEC (Colorado); and Waunita ACEC (Colorado).

Schedule for the Decision-Making Process

The BLM will provide additional opportunities for public participation consistent with the NEPA and land use planning processes, including a 30-day public protest period and a 60-day Governor's consistency review on the proposed RMP. The proposed RMP amendment/final EIS is anticipated to be available for public protest in the summer of 2024 with an approved RMP amendment and record of decision in the fall of 2024.

The BLM will hold three public meetings in the following locations: one meeting virtually hosted and two in-person meetings at Gunnison, CO, and Dove Creek, CO. The specific date(s) and location(s) of these meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through the ePlanning page (see **ADDRESSES**) and applicable local newspapers.

The BLM will continue to consult with Indian Tribal Nations on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175, BLM MS 1780, and other Departmental policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration.

Before including your address, phone number, email 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.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6, 40 CFR 1506.10, 43 CFR 1610.2)

Douglas J. Vilsack,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 2023–24394 Filed 11–8–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4331–16–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[BLM_AZ_FRN_MO4500175810]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Segregation for the Proposed Ranegras Plains Energy Center Project, La Paz County, AZ

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent and segregation.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Yuma Field Office, Yuma, Arizona, intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider the effects of the Ranegras Plains Energy Center Project (Project) and by this notice is announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues. The BLM also announces the segregation of 4,763 acres of public lands from appropriation under the public land laws, including the Mining Law, but not the mineral leasing or materials acts, for a period of 2 years from the date of publication of this notice, subject to valid existing rights. This segregation will facilitate the orderly administration of the public lands while the BLM considers potential solar and battery energy storage development on the described parcels.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the EIS. The BLM requests that the public submit comments concerning the scope of the analysis, potential alternatives, and identification of relevant information and studies by December 11, 2023. To afford the BLM the opportunity to consider issues raised by commenters in the Draft EIS, please ensure your comments are received prior to the close of the 30-day scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. A virtual public scoping meeting will be held 2 to 3 weeks after publication of this notice; the meeting date will be announced on the Project ePlanning website at least 15 days prior to the meeting. The segregation for the

public lands identified in this notice takes effect on November 9, 2023.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues related to the Proposed Ranegras Plains Energy Center Project by any of the following methods:

- **Website:** <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020050/510>.
- **Email:** BLM_AZ_CRD_Solar@blm.gov.
- **Mail:** BLM Yuma Field Office, Attention: Ranegras Plains Energy Center Project, 7341 E 30th Street, Yuma, AZ 85365.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined online at the Project's ePlanning website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020050/510> and at the Yuma Field Office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Derek Eysenbach, Project Manager, at deysenbach@blm.gov, the mailing address above, or by phone at (602) 417-9505. Contact Mr. Eysenbach to have your name added to our mailing list. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services for contacting Mr. Eysenbach. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed Project location is approximately 30 miles east of Quartzsite, Arizona, along the south side of Interstate 10 near the Vicksburg Road exit. The Project would have a generating capacity of up to 700 megawatts alternating current and consist of solar photovoltaic modules, a battery energy storage system, electrical collection lines, a switchyard, operations and maintenance facilities, access roads, and an 11-mile-long, 500-kilovolt generation-tie transmission line (gen-tie line) to connect to the Delaney Colorado River Transmission Ten West Link Series Compensation Station.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose and need for the action is to respond to Ranegras Plains Energy Center, LLC's application for a right-of-way (ROW) to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a solar photovoltaic and battery energy storage project and associated facilities on public land administered by the BLM, consistent with Title V of FLPMA, regulations at 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2800, and other

applicable laws and regulations. In making its decision to issue a ROW grant, the BLM must first consider conformance with existing resource management plans (43 CFR 1610.5-3).

Preliminary Proposed Action and Alternatives

The BLM has identified two preliminary alternatives: the No Action Alternative and the proposed action. The proposed action would authorize a ROW for development of a solar photovoltaic facility, battery energy storage system, and gen-tie line on up to 4,763 acres of BLM-administered public land in La Paz County, Arizona. The entire project, including the proposed solar array and gen-tie line, also includes approximately 1,100 acres of Arizona State Trust lands and 1 acre of private lands. The No Action Alternative would deny the ROW application and the Project. Through comments received in the public scoping period, the BLM may develop action alternatives that would reduce impacts to preliminary resource concerns, including wildlife connectivity, off-highway vehicle recreation and access, and grazing/rangeland uses. The BLM welcomes comments on all preliminary alternatives as well as suggestions for additional alternatives.

Summary of Expected Impacts

Anticipated impacts from the proposed Project include up to 4,763 acres of ground disturbance for the solar facility, a battery energy storage system, transmission facilities, operations and maintenance facilities, access roads, and temporary work areas. Potential impacts may include a reduction in authorized grazing; vegetation removal; recreation, access, and land use changes; wildlife and migratory bird impacts including habitat loss and potential direct mortalities during construction and operations; visual impacts including glint and glare and an increase in nighttime brightness; potential impacts to cultural resources and Native American concerns; and socioeconomic impacts. Known resources to be addressed in the analysis include, but are not limited to, air quality; visual resources; environmental justice; social and economic values; mining and minerals; land uses; Native American religious concerns; recreation; grazing/rangelands; cultural resources; wildlife; migratory birds; threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; soils; water resources; invasive species; and paleontology. Impact analysis will also consider the cumulative impacts to natural and cultural resources from

reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

Anticipated Permits and Authorizations

In addition to the requested ROW grant, other Federal, State, and local authorizations would be required for the Project. These may include authorizations determined through consultation under the Endangered Species Act (16 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1536 *et seq.*), the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et seq.*), and other laws and regulations determined to be applicable to the Project.

Schedule for the Decision-Making Process

The BLM will provide additional opportunities for public participation consistent with NEPA, including a 45-day comment period on the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is anticipated to be available for public review in fall 2024, with a record of decision expected in summer 2025.

Public Scoping Process

This notice of intent initiates the scoping period. The BLM will hold one virtual public scoping meeting (see the **DATES** and **ADDRESSES** sections above). The meeting date, time, and information on how to attend will be announced at least 15 days in advance on the Project ePlanning website at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020050/510> and via news release. Project information and documents will also be posted on that website. Persons needing assistance (assistive technology, translators, or other assistance) should contact Mr. Eysenbach, Project Manager (see contact information above).

Segregation

Regulations at 43 CFR 2804.25(f) allow the BLM to segregate public lands included in an application for a ROW for solar energy development from the operation of the public land laws, including the Mining Law, by publication of a **Federal Register** notice. The BLM uses this authority to preserve its ability to approve, approve with modifications, or deny a proposed ROW, and to facilitate the orderly administration of the public lands. This segregation is subject to valid existing rights, including existing mining claims located before the date of this segregation notice. Licenses, permits, cooperative agreements, or discretionary land use authorizations of a temporary nature that would not impact lands identified in this notice may be allowed with the approval of a BLM authorized officer during the segregation period. As

provided in the regulations, the segregation of lands in this notice will not exceed 2 years from the date of publication unless extended for up to an additional 2 years through publication of a new notice in the **Federal Register**. The segregation period will terminate and the land will automatically reopen to appropriation under the public land laws, including the Mining Law, at the earliest of the following dates: upon issuance of a decision by the authorized officer granting, granting with modifications, or denying the application for a ROW; without further administrative action at the end of the segregation provided for in the **Federal Register** notice initiating the segregation; or upon publication of a **Federal Register** notice terminating the segregation.

Legal Description for Parcel: The subject lands for the proposed solar facility are legally described as follows:

Solar Array

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

- T. 3 N., R. 14 W.,
Secs. 17 and 18;
Sec. 19, lots 1 and 2, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, and N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 20, N $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
Secs. 21 and 22;
Sec. 23, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 25, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 26, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$, and S $\frac{1}{2}$;
Sec. 27, N $\frac{1}{2}$ and N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 28, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, and N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 35, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.
T. 3 N., R. 15 W.,
Sec. 12, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 13, E $\frac{1}{2}$;
Sec. 24, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described contains 4,674 acres, more or less, derived from GIS data received from the BLM Arizona State Office, on September 11, 2023.

Substation

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

- T. 3 N., R. 15 W.,
Sec. 12, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, those portions northerly of the northern alternative Gen-Tie route.

The area described contains 89 acres, more or less, derived from GIS data received from the BLM Arizona State Office, on September 11, 2023.

Lead and Cooperating Agencies

These Federal agencies have agreed to participate as Cooperating Agencies under a Memorandum of Understanding to Improve Public Land Renewable Energy Project Permit Coordination: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and

Environmental Protection Agency. Other Federal agencies, Tribal Nations, and State and local agencies wishing to be considered as a Cooperating Agency on this effort, either on the basis of their jurisdiction by law or special expertise, are invited to express their interest to Mr. Eysenbach, Project Manager (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Responsible Official

The BLM Arizona State Director is the deciding official for this notice of segregation. The authorized officer and decision maker for the Project is the BLM Yuma Field Office Manager.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The BLM will decide whether to approve, approve with modification(s), or deny issuance of a ROW grant to the applicant for the proposed Project.

Additional Information

The BLM will identify, analyze, and consider mitigation to address the reasonably foreseeable impacts to resources from the proposed action and all analyzed reasonable alternatives and, in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.14(e), include appropriate mitigation measures not already included in the proposed action or alternatives. Mitigation may include avoidance, minimization, rectification, reduction or elimination over time, and compensation; and may be considered at multiple scales, including the landscape scale.

The BLM will utilize and coordinate the NEPA process for this effort to help support compliance with applicable procedural requirements under the Endangered Species Act and section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108) as provided in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3), including public involvement requirements of Section 106. Information about historic and cultural resources and threatened and endangered species within the area potentially affected will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources.

The BLM will consult with Tribal Nations on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175, BLM Manual Sections 1780, and other Departmental policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with Tribal Nations and stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the proposed Project that the BLM is evaluating, are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate in the

development of the environmental analysis as a Cooperating Agency.

Before including your address, telephone number, email 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.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.9)

Gera Ashton,

Acting State Director.

[FR Doc. 2023-24744 Filed 11-8-23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4331-12-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[BLM_UT_FRN_MO4500172964]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Cross-Tie 500-kV Transmission Project in Beaver, Juab, and Millard Counties, Utah, and Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine Counties, Nevada

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cross-Tie 500-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project (Cross-Tie Project or Project).

DATES: To afford the BLM the opportunity to consider comments in the Final EIS, please ensure that the BLM receives your comments within 45 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes its Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The EPA usually publishes its NOAs on Fridays.

ADDRESSES: The Draft EIS is available for review on the BLM's ePlanning Project website at <https://bit.ly/ePlanningCrossTie>.

Written comments related to the Cross-Tie Project may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* blm_ut_fm_cross-tie_project@blm.gov.