

III.13 BLM LANDS AND REALTY—LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS AND LAND TENURE

A Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land use authorization permits an applicant to use a specific piece of public land for a certain project. User-initiated proposals and applications generate the majority of requests for land use authorizations. The BLM receives inquiries and proposals from federal, state, and local governments, as well as from private individuals and companies interested in either acquiring access across or locating facilities on public land. Through Land Use Plans and Resource Management Plans (RMPs), the BLM determines (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1, Appendix C [II.E])):

- Where use, occupancy, and development (such as major leases and land use permits) may be allowed (availability determinations).
- Existing and potential right-of-way (ROW) corridors (potential corridors include existing ROW routes with the potential for at least one additional facility, and thus can be considered a corridor if not already designated) to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate ROWs (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 2806).
- Existing and potential development areas for renewable energy projects (e.g., wind and solar), communication sites, and other uses.
- ROW avoidance or exclusion areas, or areas to be avoided but which may be available for ROWs with special stipulations. The BLM also determines areas that are not available for ROWs under any circumstances.
- Terms and conditions that may apply to ROW corridors or development areas, including best management practices to minimize environmental impacts and limitations on other uses necessary to maintain the corridor and ROW values.

After BLM land use plans are complete, the decisions in that plan are implemented through such actions as specific land use authorizations. Roads, electric transmission and distribution lines, and telephone lines are the most common land use authorizations and usually require a ROW grant. Other types of facilities that require land use authorizations include water and gas pipelines, communication sites, ditches, railroads, and fiber optic lines. In recent years, many ROW grants have been issued for the development of solar and wind renewable energy projects. The BLM is currently considering numerous ROW grant applications for renewable energy projects and their associated transmission lines. Section III.13.1, Regulatory Setting, describes the laws, regulations, and policies that direct BLM as it processes these land use authorization applications.

III.13.1 Regulatory Setting

III.13.1.1 Federal

Federal Land Policy and Management Act

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) establishes public land policy and guidelines for the administration, management, protection, development, and enhancement of public lands. The BLM is responsible for responding to requests to develop energy resources on BLM-administered lands in a manner that balances diverse resource use and the long-term needs of renewable and nonrenewable energy resource development. FLPMA Title V, Section 501, establishes BLM's authority to grant ROWs for electricity generation, transmission, and distribution. Title V also establishes the policies and guidelines for ROW actions, which include the authorization to issue ROWs, general provisions, terms and conditions, and existing ROWs. Title III, sections 302, 303, and 310, of FLPMA provide BLM the authority to issue permits, leases, or easements to occupy or develop public lands. In addition, to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate land use authorizations, the use of common corridors shall be required to the extent practical. Each land use authorization shall reserve the right to grant additional land use authorizations for compatible uses on or adjacent to the existing authorized land use granted by the FLPMA (BLM 2001).

Energy Policy Act of 2005—Section 368 Energy Right-of-Way Corridors

Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act (PL 109-58) authorizes the following actions for the secretaries of the departments of Commerce, Defense, Energy, and the Interior: (1) designate corridors for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines, and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on federal land in the 11 contiguous western states; (2) perform any environmental reviews that may be required to complete the designation of such corridors; and (3) incorporate the designated corridors into the relevant agency land use and resource management (or equivalent) plans.

In November 2008, the Department of Energy (DOE), BLM, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Department of Defense (DOD), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a final West-Wide Energy Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) that evaluated issues associated with the designation of energy corridors on federal lands in 11 western states. Based upon the information and analyses developed in that PEIS, the federal agencies could amend their respective land use plans by designating as an energy corridor one or more of the proposed energy corridors identified in the document (DOE et al. 2008). The West-Wide Energy Corridor PEIS is described in more detail in later in this section.

Federal Register Volume 78, Number 83, Rules and Regulations – Segregation of Lands – Renewable Energy

The BLM amended its regulations to add provisions allowing BLM to temporarily segregate from the public land laws by publishing a Federal Register notice that includes public lands in a pending wind or solar energy generation ROW application. The BLM can also segregate public lands that BLM identifies for potential future wind or solar energy generation ROW applications. The purpose of segregation is to facilitate the processing of solar and wind energy ROW applications. Lands segregated under this rule will not be subject to appropriation under the public land laws, including location under the Mining Law of 1872, for up to two years from the date of publication of notice under this rule, subject to valid existing rights. Such lands would, however, remain open under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 and the Materials Act of 1947. This rule went into effect in May 2013 (Federal Register 2013).

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-003 (Solar Energy Development Policy)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-003 was issued in October 2010 to update the Solar Energy Development Policy (Instruction Memorandum 2007-097), issued on April 4, 2007. The BLM's policy is to facilitate the environmentally responsible development of solar energy projects on public lands. The BLM processes and authorizes applications for solar energy projects as ROWs under Title V of the FLPMA and Title 43, Part 2800, of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). This instruction memorandum provides policy guidance on early coordination with federal land managers and other stakeholders, the terms of solar energy ROW authorizations, due diligence development requirements, bond coverage, best management practices, and BLM record access. This instruction memorandum ensures effective BLM-wide consistency in the processing of ROW applications and the management of authorizations for solar energy development on public lands. (BLM, 2010[a])

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-059 (National Environmental Policy Act Compliance for Utility-Scale Renewable Energy Right-of-Way Authorizations)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-059 was issued in February 2011 to clarify and provide guidance regarding BLM's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) policy regarding utility-scale renewable energy ROW applications. This instruction memorandum specifically includes direction for the development of the Purpose and Need section, project alternatives, and impacts associated with nationally designated systems or units. Therefore, in addition to standard NEPA regulations, the environmental analysis for all utility-scale renewable energy ROW applications must abide by the guidance set forth in this instruction memorandum. (BLM, 2011[a])

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-060 (Solar and Wind Energy Applications – Due Diligence)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-060 was issued in February 2011 to provide updated guidance on the due diligence requirements of ROW applicants for solar and wind energy development projects on BLM-administered public lands. The BLM's policy is to facilitate environmentally responsible development of solar and wind energy on public lands, consistent with the provisions of Secretarial Order 3285A1 dated March 11, 2009, as amended on February 22, 2010. However, BLM seeks to avoid ROW applications from land speculators, which could hinder other applicants with serious interests in the potential development of solar or wind energy resources. This concern is mitigated through the application of qualification requirements (43 CFR 2804.12[a][5]) and 43 CFR 2804.26[a][5]). These require the timely submittal of a Plan of Development (43 CFR 2804.25), and a project applicant is informed at the time of application that ROW applications are not assignable interests (43 CFR 2807.21). (BLM, 2011[b])

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-061 (Solar and Wind Energy Applications – Pre-Application and Screening)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-061 was issued in February 2011 to provide updated guidance on the review of ROW applications for solar and wind energy development projects on BLM-administered public lands. The BLM's policy is to facilitate environmentally responsible development of solar and wind energy projects in accordance with the provisions of Secretarial Order 3285A1, dated March 11, 2009, as amended on February 22, 2010. This development must also be consistent with protection of areas and resources of national interest, including the BLM National Landscape Conservation System, units of the National Park System and National Forest System, national wildlife refuges, and other specially designated areas that protect wildlife and visual, cultural, historic, or paleontological resources. Early coordination and careful prior review of proposed renewable energy projects with federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies will enable BLM to identify and prioritize ROW applications with the fewest resource conflicts and the greatest likelihood of success in the permitting process. To achieve these goals, BLM will require all prospective applicants to schedule and participate in at least two pre-application meetings before filing an application for solar or wind energy development. (BLM, 2011[c])

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-181 (Involvement of Grazing Permittee/Lessee with Solar and Wind Energy Right-of-Way Application Process)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2011-181 was issued in September 2011 to clarify the date when BLM Field Offices are required to notify a grazing permittee/lessee that a solar or

wind energy development application may affect a livestock grazing operation. Regulation (43 CFR 2005 4110.4-2[b]) requires that, when public lands are disposed of or devoted to a public purpose that precludes livestock grazing, the permittee/lessee shall be given two years' notice (except in cases of emergency) before the grazing permit/lease and grazing preference can be canceled. This instruction memorandum also addresses potential mitigation and compensation strategies and the relationship of energy application steps/decisions with grazing administrative steps/decisions. (BLM 2011[d])

Instruction Memorandum No. 2010-156 (Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act – Golden Eagle National Environmental Policy Act and Avian Protection Plan Guidance for Renewable Energy)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2010-156 was issued in December 2008 to provide direction for compliance with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, including its implementing regulations (e.g., September 11, 2009, Eagle Rule 50 CFR parts 13 and 22) for golden eagles, and to identify necessary steps within their habitat that ensure environmentally responsible authorization and development of renewable energy resources. This instruction memorandum primarily addresses golden eagles since a process to acquire take permits for bald eagles already exists. This instruction memorandum is applicable until the USFWS establishes criteria for programmatic golden eagle permits. (BLM 2010[b])

Instruction Memorandum No. 2009-020 (Interim Policy on Management of Donated Lands and Lands Acquired With Land and Water Conservation Funds)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2009-020 was issued in December 2008 to ensure that lands acquired by BLM under donation agreements, for mitigation/compensation purposes, or with Land and Water Conservation Funds will be managed as avoidance/exclusion areas for land-use authorizations that could result in surface disturbances. In addition, this memorandum was established to ensure statewide consistency for BLM managers considering land-use authorization applications and pre-applications in California. (BLM, 2009[a])

Instruction Memorandum No. 2009-043 (Wind Energy Development Policy)

Instruction Memorandum No. 2009-043 was issued in December 2008 to provide updated guidance on processing ROW applications for wind energy projects on BLM-administered public lands. This instruction memorandum further clarifies BLM wind energy development policies and best management practices in the Wind Energy Development PEIS of June 2005. Issuance of this instruction memorandum ensures BLM-wide consistency in the processing of ROW applications and the management of authorizations for wind energy site testing and development. The initiation of any new planning effort to create, revise, or

amend a BLM land use plan will comply with policy provided in this instruction memorandum. Land use planning efforts already underway will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine any necessary modifications or amendments. (BLM, 2009[b])

Solar Energy Development PEIS

The Final PEIS for Solar Energy Development in Six Southwestern States was prepared by BLM and DOE to assess the environmental impacts of developing and implementing agency-specific programs that encourage environmentally responsible utility-scale solar energy development in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. The BLM's selected alternative is the solar energy development program alternative, which identifies specific locations that are well suited for utility-scale production of solar energy, commonly referred to as Solar Energy Zones (SEZs). A SEZ is defined by BLM as an area with few impediments to utility-scale solar production and where BLM prioritizes solar energy and its associated transmission infrastructure. The program alternative also allows for responsible utility-scale solar development in variance areas outside of SEZs, in accordance with the proposed variance process. (BLM and DOE 2010)

In October 2012, BLM released the Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments/ Record of Decision (ROD), which includes the decision to implement a comprehensive solar energy program and administer development of utility-scale solar energy resources on BLM-administered public lands. The decision incorporates land use allocations and programmatic and SEZ-specific design features into 89 BLM land use plans in the six-state study area (BLM, 2012[a]).

The ROD includes two SEZs in California, both of which are within the boundaries of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (Plan) Area. The Imperial East SEZ consists of 5,717 acres in southeastern Imperial County near the U.S. border with Mexico. The Riverside East SEZ consists of 147,910 acres in southeastern Riverside County. A third SEZ, the West Chocolate Mountains in Imperial County, was created by the West Chocolate Mountains Renewable Energy Evaluation Area ROD in August 2013. The West Chocolate Mountains SEZ includes 10,759 acres of BLM land (BLM 2012[a]).

The BLM's Solar Energy Plan (also known as the Western Solar Plan) was approved through the ROD, and amended the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan and the Bishop and Caliente Resource Management Plans. This program allows permitting for future solar energy development projects to proceed in a more efficient, standardized, and environmentally responsible manner (BLM 2013[a]).

West-Wide Energy Corridor PEIS

The secretaries of the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, and the Interior prepared the West-Wide Energy Corridor PEIS to comply with Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Two alternatives are analyzed in detail in the West-Wide Energy Corridor PEIS. Under the No Action Alternative, no Section 368 energy corridors would be designated on federal lands. Under the Proposed Action Alternative, designation of Section 368 energy corridors on federal land would include slightly more than 6,000 miles in the 11 western states. (BLM 2008).

In January 2009, BLM released the Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments/ Record of Decision, which designated corridors on BLM lands by amending 92 land use plans, including the CDCA Plan and the Bishop Resource Management Plan (BLM, 2009[c]).

In July 2012 the BLM, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and DOE entered into a settlement agreement with various nongovernmental organizations to resolve a lawsuit brought by the nongovernmental organizations after the agencies approved the Section 368 corridors. One of the requirements of the agreement was that BLM and USFS make future recommendations for revisions, deletions, and additions to the Section 368 corridor network consistent with applicable law, regulations, and agency policy and guidance and that they would consider the following general principles in future siting recommendations:

- Corridors are thoughtfully sited to provide maximum utility and minimum impact to the environment.
- Corridors promote efficient use of the landscape for necessary development.
- Appropriate and acceptable uses are defined for specific corridors.
- Corridors provide connectivity to renewable energy generation to the maximum extent possible while also considering other sources of generation, in order to balance the renewable sources and to ensure the safety and reliability of electricity transmission.

III.13.2 Affected Environment

This section provides a setting for existing and pending land use authorizations within the Plan Area, which includes both wind and solar renewable energy projects and utility corridors for transmission lines. Geothermal leasing is discussed in Section III.15, Mineral Resources. This section also describes the lands that either could be excluded or avoided areas for land use authorizations.

III.13.2.1 Rights-of-Way for Wind and Solar Energy Development

Table III.13-1 lists authorized wind and solar project site data for developments within the Plan Area (BLM 2013b). According to this data, there are 310,000 acres of authorized renewable energy development and testing ROWs. The majority of this development is in Kern County (156,000 acres) and consists of both wind energy development and wind testing sites. Wind energy development is also dominant in San Bernardino and Imperial counties. Solar energy developments are more prominent in Riverside County.

**Table III.13-1
 BLM Authorized Renewable Energy Rights-of-Way Within the Plan Area (by county)¹**

Project Name	CACA Number	Project Type	BLM Acres
<i>Imperial County</i>			
Ocotillo Express, LLC – Ocotillo Renewables	48004	Wind testing	3,000
John Deere Renewables – Milpitas	51062	Wind testing	6,000
Pattern Energy Group – Ocotillo Express	51552	Wind development	12,000
L.H. Renewables – Gold Basin	51947	Wind testing	8,000
Centinela Solar Energy Project	52092	Photovoltaic – private project with BLM transmission	20
Imperial Solar Energy Project	51642	Photovoltaic – private project with BLM transmission	20
Imperial Solar Energy Center West	51644	Photovoltaic – private project with BLM transmission	60
Campo Verde Solar Project	53151	Photovoltaic – private project with BLM transmission	20
<i>Total BLM Authorized Renewable Energy Acres in Imperial County</i>			<i>68,000</i>
<i>Inyo County</i>			
Little Lake South Renewables	49581	Wind testing	4,000
<i>Kern County</i>			
Cameron Ridge LLC	9501	Wind turbines	500
Oak Creek Energy – Tehachapi	13528	Wind turbines	200
Cameron Ridge LLC	13768	Wind turbines	200
Pacific Crest Power LLC	40435	Wind turbines	20
Boulevard Associates – North Sky River	47847	Wind testing	10,000
Oak Creek/Sun Creek	44611	Wind testing	2,000
Tylerhorse Canyon	45553	Wind testing	2,000
Bent Tree Wind	46978	Wind testing	500

**Table III.13-1
BLM Authorized Renewable Energy Rights-of-Way Within the Plan Area (by county)¹**

Project Name	CACA Number	Project Type	BLM Acres
Southwest	47848	Wind testing	7,000
Soledad Mountain Wind	48536	Wind testing	1,000
El Paso Peaks	48948	Wind testing	8,000
Competitive Power Ventures	49547	Wind testing	44,000
Barren Ridge	51016	Wind testing	11,000
Golden Square	51335	Wind testing	600
Freeman Junction	51386	Wind testing	26,000
Pacific Wind Red Mountain	52848	Wind testing	25,000
El Paso Mountain	52477	Wind testing	18,000
Alta East	52537	Wind development	2,000
<i>Total BLM Authorized Renewable Energy Acres in Kern County</i>			<i>156,000</i>
<i>Riverside County</i>			
Desert Sunlight	48649	Solar photovoltaic	4,000
Blythe	48811	Solar parabolic trough	7,000
NextEra-McCoy	48728	Solar photovoltaic	4,000
Genesis Solar	48880	Solar parabolic trough	2,000
Desert Harvest	49491	Solar photovoltaic	1,000
Rice Solar Energy	51022	Solar power tower – private project with BLM transmission	200
<i>Total BLM Authorized Renewable Energy Acres in Riverside County</i>			<i>19,000</i>
<i>San Bernardino County</i>			
Ivanpah 2	48668	Solar power tower	3,000
Stateline Solar Farm	48669	Solar photovoltaic	2,000
North Peak	49255	Wind testing	15,000
Juniper Flats	51767	Wind testing	3,000
Lucerne II	51772	Wind testing	22,000
Abengoa Mojave Solar Project	52096	Solar parabolic trough – private project with BLM transmission	200
Silver Mountain Wind Energy Project	53214	Wind testing	17,000
Pacific Wind Development – Silurian Valley Wind	54021	Wind testing	Not provided
<i>Total BLM Authorized Renewable Energy Acres in San Bernardino County</i>			<i>63,000</i>
Total BLM Authorized Renewable Energy Acres Within the Plan Area			310,000

Source: BLM 2013b

Note: The following general rounding rules were applied to calculated values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the

subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore, the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Updated information on applications and authorizations is available on the BLM website at: <http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/content/ca/en/prog/energy/pendingapps.html>.

III.13.2.2 Land Use Authorizations – Corridors

There are over 1,320,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the Plan Area.

As discussed in Section III.13.1.1., Section 368 corridors have been designated by the West-Wide Energy Corridor PEIS. Section 368 energy corridors are within existing utility and/or transportation land use authorizations. There are 236,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within the boundaries of the Plan Area.

III.13.2.3 Land Use Authorizations – Exclusion Areas

The following land use plan designations or uses may exclude land use authorizations: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Desert Wildlife Management Areas, National Landscape Conservation System units, wilderness and wilderness study areas, grazing allotments, mineral lease areas, withdrawal areas, and recreation lands. Thousands of acres of lands in the Plan Area are withdrawn under secretary/executive orders, acts of Congress, and Public Land Orders. These can be for a wide variety of uses including military, jurisdictional transfers to other agencies, and resource protection. Locations of these withdrawals are typically identified on Master Title plats and evaluated for compatibility with proposed land use authorizations (including renewable energy ROWs) on a case-by-case basis.

Exclusion areas vary by land use plan. Adjustments to exclusion areas will be made through land use planning and/or implementation action review. Additional exclusion areas could include lands cooperatively managed with partner agencies. The BLM determines if an area is excluded by one of these uses or designations on a case-by-case basis when an application is received.

III.13.2.4 Land Use Authorizations for Nonrenewable Energy Uses

A wide variety of land use authorizations exist in the Plan Area that do not relate to renewable energy or transmission lines. These major land use authorizations include roads and highways, telephone lines, leases for recreation and public purposes, oil and gas facilities, water and gas pipelines, water facilities, communication sites, ditches, railroads, and fiber optic lines. Other than these major land uses, land use authorizations include miscellaneous permits and leases such as temporary use permits, special use permits, and mineral leases. A land use authorization allows rights and privileges for these uses for a

specific period. These operations are considered valid existing rights and will continue to operate under the terms of their current authorizations.

III.13.3 Land Tenure

The BLM provides for land use, purchase, exchange, donation, and sale; determines the boundaries of federal land; and maintains historic records for these ownership transactions. Land ownership transfers through purchase, exchange, donation, and sale are an important component of BLM's land management strategy. The BLM completes ownership transactions involving land and interests in land when such transactions are in the public interest and consistent with publicly approved land use plans. The BLM's Land Tenure program is designed to:

- Improve management of natural resources through consolidation of federal, tribal, state, and private lands.
- Increase recreational opportunities and secure public access to public lands.
- Preserve open space and traditional landscapes.
- Secure key property necessary to protect endangered species, promote biological diversity, and preserve wildlife habitat and migration corridors.
- Preserve archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources.
- Implement specific acquisitions authorized by acts of Congress.
- Allow for expansion of communities and consolidation of nonfederal land ownership.

Each of the applicable BLM land use plans includes discussions regarding land tenure. As stated in the CDCA Plan's Land Tenure Adjustment Element, intermingled land ownership patterns make management difficult for BLM and other agencies. Therefore, selected land exchanges and boundary adjustments are required to improve opportunities to use or protect lands. In particular, this element is designed to direct the acquisition and disposal of public lands to maximize the efficiency and consistency of public land management.

The CDCA Plan further establishes a classification system that places BLM-administered public lands within CDCA boundaries into one of four Multiple-Use Classes (C, L, M, and I), based on the sensitivity of the resource and types of uses for each geographic area. Under the CDCA's Multiple-Use Class Guidelines, land disposals are not allowed on lands within Multiple-Use Classes C, L, or I; however, land disposals are allowed within Class M and within unclassified lands, subject to FLPMA and other applicable federal laws and regulations. Lands in Classes C, L, and I can only be sold after first changing their classification through the plan amendment process.

Within the Plan Area, under applicable land management plans (including the Bishop and Bakersfield RMPs) and CDCA amendments (including the West Mojave, Northern and Eastern Mojave, Northern and Eastern Colorado plan amendments), there are goals and objectives for the disposal and acquisition of specific lands within each plan's boundaries. For instance, the Bakersfield RMP identifies some parcels for potential acquisition and disposal to advance the goals and objectives of the RMP, including providing for community expansion (BLM 2012[b]).

III.13.4 Bureau of Land Management Renewable Energy Land Use Authorizations by Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.1 Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.1.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The majority of the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains ecoregion subarea is within eastern Riverside County. The northern portion of this ecoregion subarea is within San Bernardino County, and the southern portion is within eastern Imperial County.

Of the BLM-authorized renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1, the following are entirely within this ecoregion subarea:

- John Deere Renewables – Milpitas
- Genesis Solar LLC – Genesis Solar
- NextEra-McCoy
- Desert Sunlight Holdings LLC – Desert Sunlight
- Palo Verde Solar I LLC – Blythe
- EDF Renewable Energy – Desert Harvest Solar

III.13.4.1.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are 270,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of this ecoregion subarea, and 22,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.2 Imperial Borrego Valley Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.2.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The majority of the Imperial Borrego Valley ecoregion subarea is within Imperial County, and a small portion of the western boundary of this ecoregion subarea is within San Diego County.

Of the BLM-authorized renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1, the L.H. Renewables LLC – Gold Basin, Ocotillo Express LLC – Ocotillo Renewables, and Pattern Energy Group – Ocotillo Express are entirely within this ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.2.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are 92,861 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and 22,968 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.3 Kingston and Funeral Mountains Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.3.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The northern portion of the Kingston and Funeral Mountains ecoregion subarea is within Inyo County, and the southern portion of this ecoregion subarea is within San Bernardino County. Of the BLM-authorized renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1, the Solar Partners I – Ivanpah 2 and Stateline Solar facilities are entirely within this ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.3.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are 119,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and 19,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.4 Mojave and Silurian Valley Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.4.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The Mojave and Silurian Valley ecoregion subarea is almost entirely within San Bernardino County, except for a small portion of the western boundary that is within Kern County. Of the BLM-authorized renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1, the Pacific Wind Development – Silurian Valley Wind is entirely within this ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.4.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are over 191,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and over 29,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.5 Owens River Valley Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.5.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The Owens River Valley ecoregion subarea is entirely within the western side of Inyo County. Of the verified BLM renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1, the Little Lake South Renewables LLC – Little Lake N facility is entirely within the ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.5.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are over 27,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea, and almost 22,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.6 Panamint Death Valley Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.6.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The northern portion of the Panamint Death Valley ecoregion subarea is within Inyo County; and the southern portion is within San Bernardino County, with a small portion of the southwestern boundary within Kern County.

Of the BLM-authorized renewable energy ROWs in Table III.13-1, the Renewergy LLC – El Paso Peaks facility is entirely within this ecoregion subarea. The Wind Energy Inc. – El Paso Mountain facility is partially within both this ecoregion subarea and the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.6.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are over 13,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and almost 1,300 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.7 Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.7.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The majority of the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea is within San Bernardino County, and a portion of the south end is within Riverside County.

Of the verified BLM renewable energy ROWs shown in Table III.13-1, the following are entirely within this ecoregion subarea:

- North Peak Wind Testing
- Del Sur Wind Energy LLC – Juniper Flats

Of the BLM-authorized renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1, the Del Sur Wind Energy LLC – Lucerne II facility is partially within this ecoregion subarea, as well as the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea. The Silver Mountain Wind Energy Project LLC facility is partially within this ecoregion subarea, as well as the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.7.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are over 113,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and approximately 11,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.8 Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.8.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains ecoregion subarea is entirely within the southeastern area of San Bernardino County. There are no authorized renewable energy ROWs in this ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.8.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are over 111,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and approximately 14,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.9 Providence and Bullion Mountains Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.9.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The Providence and Bullion Mountains ecoregion subarea is entirely within San Bernardino County. None of the authorized BLM renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1 are within this ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.9.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are almost 230,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and approximately 46,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.4.10 West Mojave and Eastern Slopes Ecoregion Subarea

III.13.4.10.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

The West Mojave and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea is within Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties, with a small portion within Inyo County.

Of the verified BLM renewable energy ROWs presented in Table III.13-1, the following are entirely within this ecoregion subarea:

- Alta Windpower Development LLC – Alta East
- Competitive Power Ventures LLC – Saltdale
- Rising Tree Wind Farm LLC
- Sierra Renewables, Pearsonville
- Alta Windpower Dev. LLC – Oak Creek/Sun Creek
- Oak Creek Energy – Southwest
- Oak Creek Energy – Tehachapi
- Renewergy LLC – El Paso Peaks
- Oak Creek Energy – Soledad Mountain
- Boulevard Associates – North Sky River
- Pacific Crest Power LLC
- Cameron Ridge LLC
- Cameron Ridge LLC
- Tylerhorse Canyon
- Barren Ridge
- L.H. Renewables – Freeman Junction
- Alta Wind 1 – Golden Square
- Wind Energy Inc. – El Paso Mountain
- Pacific Wind Red Mountain
- Bent Tree Wind
- Silver Mountain Wind Energy Project LLC

In addition, the Silver Mountain Wind Energy Project LLC facility is partially within this ecoregion subarea, as well as the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea.

III.13.4.10.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

There are almost 154,000 acres of BLM-designated utility corridors within the boundaries of the ecoregion subarea and over 50,000 acres of Section 368 corridors within its boundaries.

III.13.5 Affected Environment for the Natural Community Conservation Plan

The affected environment for the Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) is the same as that described for the entire Plan Area. While there are both DOD and tribal lands within the Plan boundaries, the Plan does not analyze the effects on these lands; so they are not included in the description of the affected environment.

III.13.6 Affected Environment for the General Conservation Plan

The affected environment for the General Conservation Plan (GCP) includes a subset of lands covered by plan-wide analysis and the NCCP. In addition to DOD and tribal lands, the GCP also excludes all other federal lands (e.g., BLM-administered public lands and national parks). Because the GCP excludes all federal lands, it is not addressed in BLM Lands and Realty.

III.13.7 Bureau of Land Management Lands and Realty – Outside the Plan Area

III.13.7.1 Transmission

The transmission corridors outside of the Plan Area include four geographic areas: San Diego, Los Angeles, North Palm Springs–Riverside, and the Central Valley.

III.13.7.1.1 Right-of-Way Grants for Wind and Solar Energy Development

As stated in Section III.13.2, the renewable energy ROW grants include sites for both wind and solar development and utility corridors. Based on data provided by BLM, Table III.13-1 shows the authorized wind and solar project sites within the Plan Area (BLM 2013[b]).

There are BLM-authorized renewable energy ROWs near the boundaries of the Plan Area. No BLM ROWs are located near transmission corridors in the Central Valley area. The locations of authorized ROWs within the San Diego, Los Angeles, and North Palm Springs–Riverside areas are described in the following sections.

III.13.7.1.1.1 San Diego Area

Five ROW sites designated for wind energy development are in the vicinity of transmission corridors in the San Diego area. Two sites would be traversed by the transmission line corridor, and one site would be approximately 3.5 miles south of a transmission line corridor. Two other sites are in the center of San Diego County, approximately 13 to 17 miles north of the closest transmission line corridor.

III.13.7.1.1.2 Los Angeles Area

One BLM ROW site designated for wind energy development would be traversed by the transmission line corridor under one alternative in the Los Angeles area. This ROW site is west of Vincent Substation, approximately 4 miles west of the Plan Area boundary. Three major transmission lines are in the immediate vicinity.

III.13.7.1.1.3 North Palm Springs–Riverside Area

Ten ROW sites are within the North Palm Springs–Riverside area. Two ROW sites would be traversed by transmission corridors, and the other eight sites would be within 2 miles of transmission line corridors. Of these sites, nine are designated for wind energy development and one site is designated for solar energy development. This cluster of ROW sites is in the north central part of Riverside County along the western edge of the Plan Area boundary; the distance from the Plan Area varies from 5 to 11 miles west of the boundary.

III.13.7.1.2 Land Use Authorizations for Utility Corridors

The land use authorizations consist of BLM utility corridors and Section 368 corridors extending outside of the Plan Area, as described in the following sections.

III.13.7.1.2.1 BLM Utility Corridors

In the North Palm Springs–Riverside area, a utility corridor extends approximately 70 miles west from the western boundary of the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains ecoregion subarea. At the northern border of Riverside County, a small portion of a utility corridor extends approximately 2 miles south of the southern boundary of the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea. At the southern border of Riverside County, a small portion of a utility corridor extends approximately 10 miles northwest from a corridor in the Imperial Borrego Valley ecoregion subarea. These BLM utility corridors would all align with proposed transmission line corridors.

III.13.7.1.2.2 Section 368 Corridors

San Diego Area

A Section 368 corridor extends approximately 9 miles from the southwestern boundary of the Imperial Borrego Valley ecoregion subarea through both Imperial and San Diego counties. A corridor is also located to the west along Highway 8 and is approximately 30 miles long. These Section 368 corridors would align with proposed transmission line corridor.

Los Angeles Area

Two Section 368 corridors extend from the southern boundary of the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea:

- An approximately 15-mile corridor extends in a southwest direction from the southwest boundary of this ecoregion subarea near the Antelope Substation. This Section 368 corridor would not align with any of the proposed transmission corridor alternatives.
- An approximately 20-mile corridor extends in a southwest direction from the southern boundary of this ecoregion subarea near the Vincent Substation. This Section 368 corridor would follow a transmission line corridor.

North Palm Springs–Riverside Area

In San Bernardino County, an approximately 13-mile Section 368 corridor extends in a southeast direction from the southeastern boundary of the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea near the Lugo Substation. This Section 368 corridor would generally align with proposed transmission line corridors.

In Riverside County, a Section 368 corridor extends approximately 57 miles west from the western boundary of the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains ecoregion subarea. This Section 368 corridor would align with proposed transmission line corridors.

III.13.7.1.3 Land Use Authorizations for Exclusion Areas

The following land use plan designations may be excluded: ACECs, Desert Wildlife Management areas, NLCS units, wilderness and wilderness study areas, grazing allotments, mineral lease areas, withdrawal areas, and recreation lands. The BLM determines if an area is excluded by one of these uses or designations on a case-by-case basis when an application is received.

III.13.7.2 BLM LUPA Decisions – Out of Plan Area

The boundaries of the CDCA Plan do not align with the boundaries of the Plan Area. The following are the CDCA-designated lands outside of the Plan Area:

- Approximately 180,770 acres north of the northern boundary of the Panamint Death Valley ecoregion subarea
- Approximately 477,330 acres surrounding the Panamint Death Valley and Owens River Valley ecoregion subareas

- Approximately 300,000 acres in Riverside County, south of the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea, west of the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains ecoregion subarea, and north of the Imperial Borrego Valley ecoregion subarea
- Approximately 75,850 acres west of the Imperial Borrego Valley ecoregion subarea