

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

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

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

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

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

- Fax: (760) 833-7199; or

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Thomas Pogacnik,**

*Deputy State Director, California.*

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

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

**BILLING CODE 4310-40-P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

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

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

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

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

**DATES:** The request to terminate the Environmental Impact Statement and proceed with an Environmental Assessment was approved by the Chief of the NPS Environmental Quality Division on November 4, 2009. The draft general management plan and Environmental Assessment is expected to be distributed for a 30 day public comment period early in 2011 and a decision is expected to be made in the fall of 2011. The NPS will notify the public by mail, Web site, and other means, and will include information on where and how to obtain a copy of the GMP/EA, how to comment on the plan, and the dates of the public comment period.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Steve Riley, Superintendent, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, HC 68 Box 100, Silver City, NM 88061. Telephone (575) 536-9461.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In place of the EIS, the NPS will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes four alternatives (no-action and three action alternatives) that look at different ways of protecting resources, providing appropriate visitor experiences, and addressing joint NPS/Forest Service operations:

- Alternative 1 (No-Action) would continue the present management direction.
- Alternative 2 would emphasize and expand high-quality visitor services and experiences by providing more comprehensive interpretation of the Gila Headwaters area and its 2,000 years of human occupation.
- Alternative 3 would enhance visitor understanding and enjoyment of the Gila Headwaters' natural and cultural heritage by providing a more unified management approach to the two units of the monument.
- Alternative 4 would forge more personal connections between visitors and the ancient cultures and wilderness character of the monument.

Dated: November 12, 2009.

**Michael D. Snyder,**

*Director, Intermountain Region, National Park Service.*

[FR Doc. 2010-443 Filed 1-12-10; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4312-FA-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2009-N162; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

#### Lower Florida Keys Refuges, Monroe County, FL

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability: final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and finding of no significant impact.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce our decision and the availability of the final CCP and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the Environmental Assessment for the Lower Florida Keys Refuges in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. We completed a thorough analysis of impacts on the human environment, which are included in the Environmental Assessment (Appendix N of the CCP). The CCP will guide us in managing and administering the Lower Florida Keys Refuges for the next 15 years.

**ADDRESSES:** You may obtain a copy of the CCP by writing to: Ms. Anne Morkill, Refuge Manager, Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 28590 Watson Boulevard, Big Pine Key, FL 33043. You may also access and download the document from the Service's Web site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Anne Morkill; telephone: 305/872-2239; or Mary Morris, Natural Resource Planner; telephone 850/567-6202.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Introduction

With this notice, we finalize the CCP process for the Lower Florida Keys Refuges. We started this process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on May 9, 2003 (68 FR 25058).

The Lower Florida Keys Refuges includes three wildlife refuges—Key West National Wildlife Refuge (Key West NWR), Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge (Great White Heron NWR), and National Key Deer Refuge in Monroe County, Florida. These are a collection of low-lying, subtropical islands between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean that protect all the vital habitats representative of the Florida Keys ecosystem, including the globally imperiled pine rockland and tropical hardwood hammock. These geologically and climatically distinct islands provide

a haven for a diversity of native flora and fauna, including endemic, threatened, endangered, and candidate species.

##### Key West NWR

Located west of Key West and accessible only by boat, the refuge consists of the Marquesas Keys and 13 other keys distributed across over 375 square miles of open water. Key West NWR is among the first refuges established in the United States. President Roosevelt created the refuge in 1908 as a preserve and breeding ground for colonial nesting birds and other wildlife. The refuge encompasses 208,308 acres of land and water with only 1 percent (2,019 acres) being land. Most islands are dominated by mangrove plant communities.

The refuge provides habitat and protection for Federally listed species, including piping plovers and roseate terns. The refuge harbors the largest wintering population of piping plovers and the largest colony of white-crowned pigeons in the Florida Keys. It is a haven for over 250 species of birds, including 10 wading-bird species that nest in the refuge. Other notable imperiled species include sea turtles. More loggerhead and green sea turtle nests are found each year in Key West NWR than in any area of the Florida Keys except the Dry Tortugas. Waters within the refuge's administrative boundaries are important developmental habitat for these sea turtle species, as well as hawksbills and Kemp's ridley sea turtles. In 1975, Public Law 93-632 designated all islands in Key West NWR, except Ballast Key, which is privately owned, as a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. These islands total 2,109 acres.

##### Great White Heron NWR

Great White Heron NWR was established in 1938, by Executive Order 7993 signed by President Roosevelt, as a haven for great white herons, migratory birds, and other wildlife. The refuge encompasses 117,683 acres of land and water with 6,300 acres of land, including 1,900 land acres which were designated Wilderness Areas in 1975, also under Public Law 93-632. While the islands are primarily mangroves, some of the larger islands contain pine rockland and tropical hardwood hammock habitats. This vast area, known locally as the "backcountry," provides critical nesting, feeding, and resting areas for more than 250 species of birds. We co-manage this area with the State through a "Management Agreement for Submerged Lands Within