



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Phoenix Area Office
6150 West Thunderbird Road
Glendale, AZ 85306-4001
JUN 08 2022

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Memorandum

To: All Interested Persons, Organizations, and Agencies

From: Leslie A. Meyers **LESLIE**
Area Manager **MEYERS**

Digitally signed by
LESLIE MEYERS
Date: 2022.06.01
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Subject: Notice of Public Scoping for an Environmental Assessment on the Babbitt Ranch Energy Center Interconnection Project in Coconino County, Arizona (Action by 30 days from the date of this Memorandum)

The United States Bureau of Reclamation is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that would consider the impacts of Reclamation's approval of the interconnection of the Babbitt Ranch Energy Center (BREC) to the Navajo Southern Transmission System (NSTS) at the Moenkopi to Cedar Mountain 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, referred to as the BREC Interconnection Project.

NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, is proposing to construct, operate, and maintain a renewable energy facility, BREC, located north of the Moenkopi to Cedar Mountain 500-kV transmission line, approximately 30 miles northwest of Flagstaff, Arizona. The proposed BREC Interconnection Project would interconnect the renewable energy facility to the 500-kV transmission line. At full buildout the renewable energy facility would provide up to 160 megawatts of generation output to the transmission line, operated by Arizona Public Service (APS), via the proposed interconnection.

The Moenkopi to Cedar Mountain 500-kV transmission line is part of the NSTS, of which Reclamation is a part owner. All interconnection requests for the NSTS that result in a Large Generator Interconnection Agreement must be approved by Reclamation's Lower Colorado Basin Regional Director. As such, Reclamation is requesting public input to help identify issues and concerns associated with the proposed interconnection.

INTERIOR REGION 8 • LOWER COLORADO BASIN

ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA*, NEVADA*

* PARTIAL

Project Description

The proposed BREC Interconnection Project is located on Kaibab National Forest (NF), private, and Arizona State Land Department lands (Figures 1 and 2). The major components of the Project include:

- Three 34.5 kV underground electrical collection lines
- A BREC 5-acre substation and 10-acre switchyard
- APS line tap facility with microwave communications tower
- A 500-kV generation tie-in from the BREC substation to the APS line tap
- Transmission poles outside the APS line tap area to connect the line tap with the Moenkopi to Cedar Mountain transmission line
- Powerline road improvements: access to the interconnection and fiber line
- A 25-mile fiber optic communications corridor located within the APS right-of-way from Cedar Mountain Substation to the interconnection's APS line tap

Approximately 9 miles of the 25-mile fiber optic communication line would cross the Kaibab NF; therefore, the United States Forest Service (Forest Service) is participating as a cooperating agency in the NEPA process. APS plans to file a special use permit application to the Kaibab NF for the installation and maintenance of the fiber optic line, which falls within National Forest System (NFS) lands. The fiber line may be buried where resource and engineering constraints allow. The Kaibab NF would consider these requests in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 251, Subpart B, and if approved, would issue a separate decision and the special use permit on NFS lands. The proposed activities occurring on NFS lands would be a project implementing the Kaibab NF's land management plan and is not authorized by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. As such, the activities occurring on NFS lands are subject to subparts A and B of 36 CFR 218. Additional information about the Forest Service portion of the project can be obtained from <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61288>.

Reclamation has determined that an EA is the appropriate level of review under NEPA. The EA will evaluate the impacts of the proposed interconnection on the human and natural environments. As part of this EA process, Reclamation is seeking your participation in identifying any potential issues or concerns with the proposed activity. This information will be used to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed action and prepare the EA. To be most helpful, comments should be as specific as possible and related to the activities of the proposed project. Please be aware that by law, your name, address, and other personal identifying information may be made publicly available at any time. Individuals may request that their personal identifying information be withheld from public review by stating so prominently at the beginning of their comment. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so; however, we will honor your request to the extent allowable by law. All comments from organizations or businesses will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

Comments should be submitted to: Bureau of Reclamation, ATTN: BREC Interconnection Project, 1645 South Plaza Way, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, or via email to brecinterconnectionea@swca.com, no later than 30 days from the date of this Memorandum.

For additional information regarding this Memorandum, please contact Ms. Kelly Bergin, Environmental Protection Specialist, Reclamation's Phoenix Area Office, at (623) 773-6422 or via email at kbergin@usbr.gov.

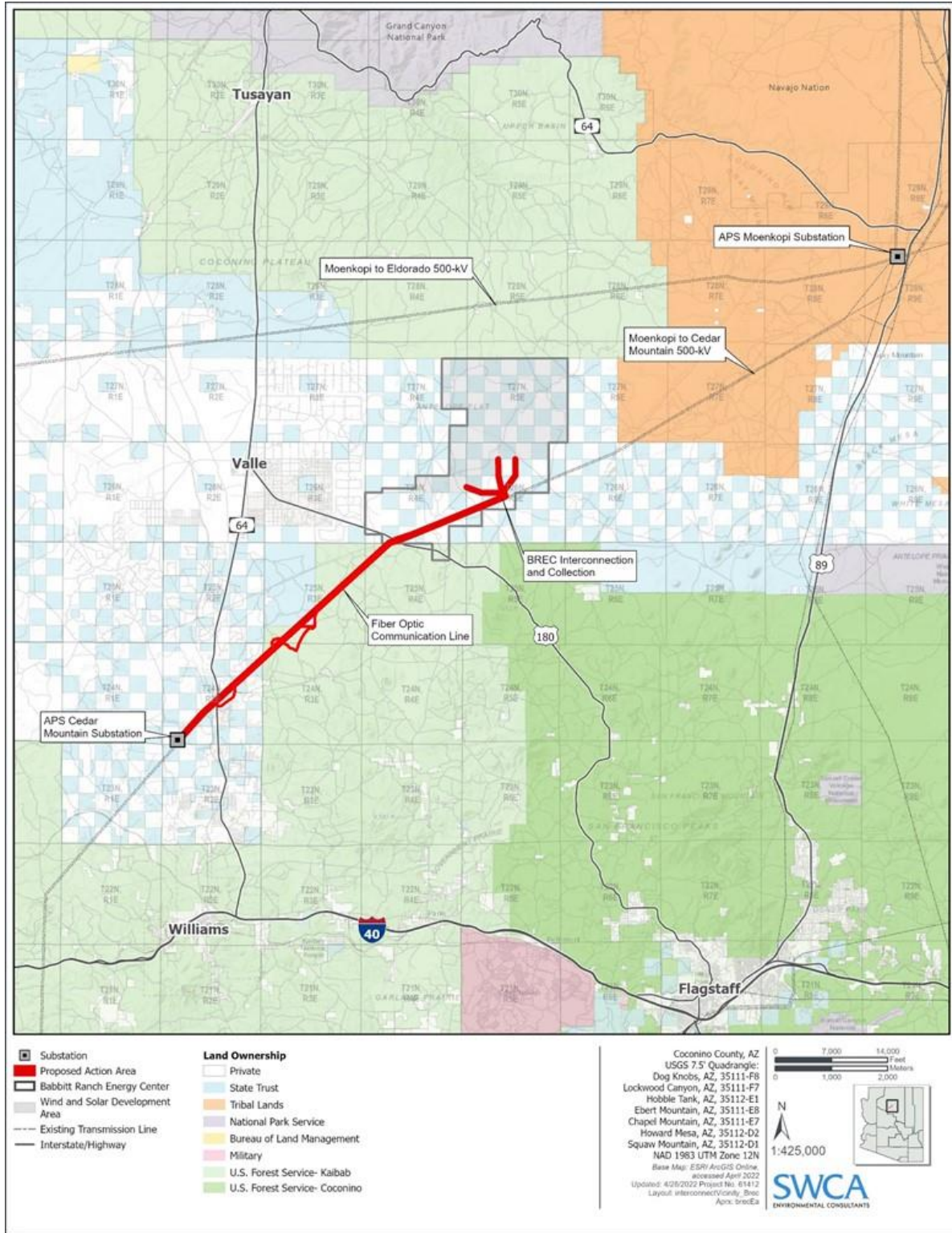


Figure 1. BRE C Interconnection Project Vicinity Map

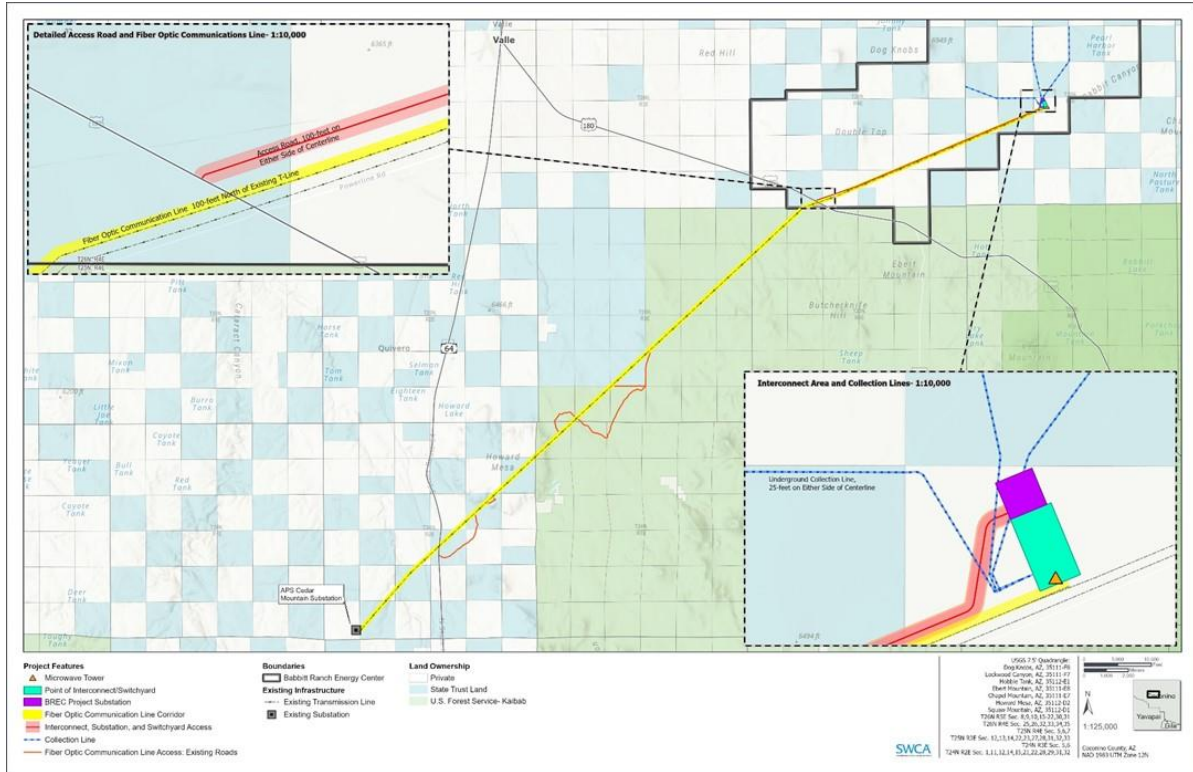


Figure 2. BREC Interconnection Project Components