

News Release

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ENERGY CORRIDORS IN THE ELEVEN WESTERN STATES DESIGNATED

Decision provides for increased protection of natural resources

WASHINGTON, Jan 14, 2009-- USDA Undersecretary Mark Rey has signed a Record of Decision (ROD) amending 38 National Forest Land Management Plans to identify locations of corridors suitable for future energy transmission infrastructure across Forest Service land. The corridors protect or minimize resource impacts to lands and surface resources by identifying preferred locations for corridors that also cross Federal lands managed by other agencies. These corridors offer the American public a way to meet the increasing energy demands while mitigating potential harmful effects to the environment.

“National Forest Systems (NFS) lands play an integral role in supporting America,” said Undersecretary Rey, “By identifying these corridors we can minimize haphazard impacts to NFS lands and ensure that the energy future of America is well served by its forests.” The Record of Decision includes specific Interagency Operating Procedures designed to ensure that projects are treated consistently by various federal managers and offer the agencies methods to improve efficiency and consistency.

- **States Involved.** As required by Section 368(a) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, this decision applies to National Forests located in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.
- **No Occupancy is Authorized by this Decision;** this is a decision identifying the preferred locations of corridors. Future use requires compliance with National Environmental Policy Act and other relevant laws.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 directs the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, and the Interior to designate energy transport corridors for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands in portions of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The Act further directs that environmental reviews be completed for the designation of such corridors, and that the designated corridors are incorporated into the relevant agency land use and resource management plans or equivalent plans.

The Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement supporting this decision was published on November 28, 2008. The PEIS identifies 332,734 acres of NFS lands for Section 368 energy corridors. A separate decision by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Department of Defense, Fish and Wildlife Service or Bureau of Reclamation will be made, as appropriate for their lands.

This ROD does not affect existing pipeline or transmission authorizations. Furthermore, it does not authorize any ground disturbing activities. This ROD is the final decision of the

Department of Agriculture and is not open to appeals under the regulations found at 36 CFR 219.13(a)2.

Copies of the Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement are available upon request from Forest Supervisor's Offices in the eleven western states or the Washington Office of the Forest Service. These documents will also become available on the Project Web site at: <http://corridoreis.anl.gov/>.

The mission of the US Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land and is the largest forestry research organization in the world.

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