

San Juan Basin

Energy Connect

Federal Review Process

Increasing electric load growth in the San Juan Basin region of Colorado and New Mexico, in residential, commercial and industrial sectors, has put a strain on the existing electrical system.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State) is proposing a new project that would involve the construction of a 230-kilovolt transmission line from the Farmington area in northwest New Mexico to Ignacio, Colorado. This line and supporting electrical facilities are needed to provide the power delivery infrastructure for the San Juan Basin that will relieve transmission constraints, serve new loads and offer economic development through renewable energy opportunities.

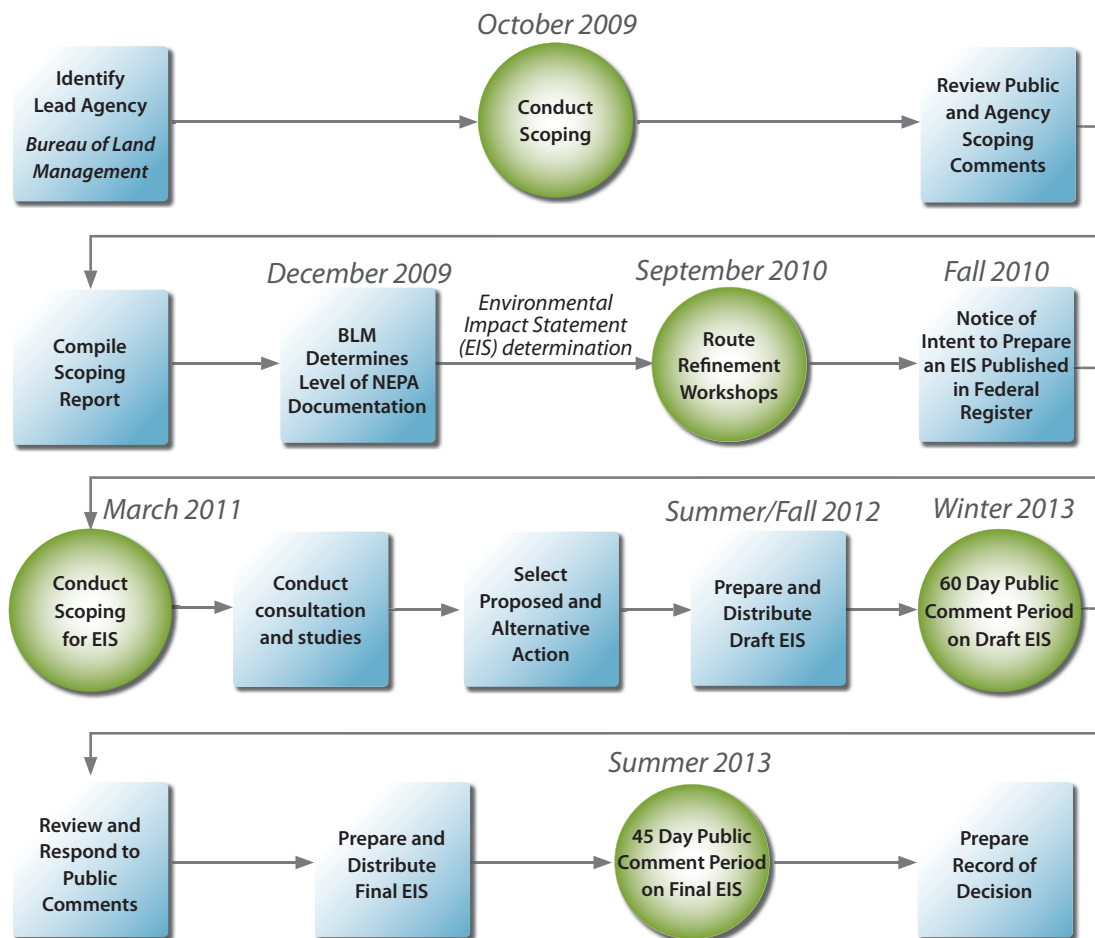
Tri-State is requesting right-of-way grants from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as well as financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for their San Juan Basin Energy Connect Project. The Western Area Power Administration (Western) also is a cooperating agency.

Prior to making a decision about whether to approve funding requests or to grant rights-of-way for the proposed project, federal agencies including the BLM, BIA, RUS and Western are required to conduct environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with federal agency policies and procedures.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and affords the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment. Section 7 requires federal agencies to evaluate impacts to species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The BLM is the lead federal agency for NEPA, NHPA, Section 106 and ESA Section 7 review and compliance. The BIA, RUS, Western and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe are cooperating in these processes. Additional agencies may coordinate throughout the life of the project.

Below is the estimated timeline for the process:



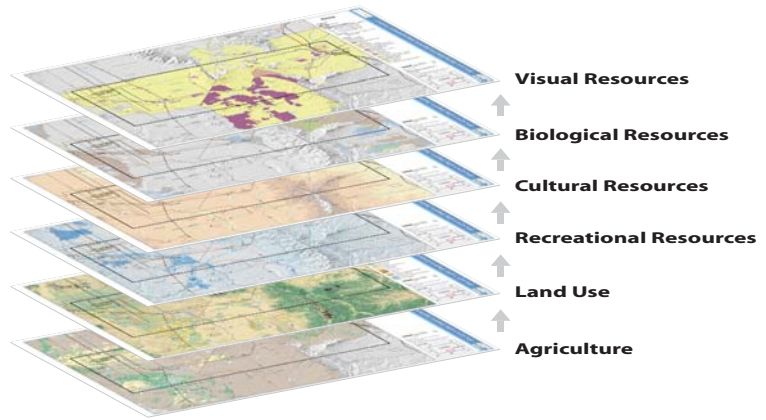
Opportunities for public comment

The above schedule contains estimated dates and is subject to change.



The NEPA process evaluates the project's potential effects on environmental resources such as

- Land use
- Threatened and endangered species
- Wetlands
- Cultural and historic properties
- Socioeconomics
- Scenic areas



The utilities would obtain the required approvals from federal agencies including, but not limited to, the following:

Agency	Permit/Decision/Action
Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Rural Utilities Service, Western Area Power Administration	43 CFR 2800 Rights-of-Way under Federal Land Policy Management Act 25 CFR 169 Rights-of-Way Over Indian Lands National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) National Historic Preservation Act Section 106
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental Review Process (ERP), Clean Air Act Section 309, NEPA Section 102 (2)(c) Consultation and Review
Federal Aviation Administration	Title 14 CFR Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers	Clean Water Act, Section 404/Nationwide Permit 12 Jurisdictional Waters of the United States
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Consultation

What is NEPA?

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a federal law that requires all federal agencies to consider the potential effects of their proposed actions to the human and natural environments.
- NEPA promotes better agency decision-making by ensuring that high quality information is available to officials and the public before the agency decides whether and how to undertake a major federal action.
- Through the NEPA process, the public has an opportunity to learn about the proposed action and to provide information and comments.
- Many projects are required to prepare an environmental analysis, which becomes a public document.
- An environmental impact statement (EIS) is the highest, most detailed level of analysis.
- The NEPA process is typically followed on projects such as proposed airports, mines, buildings, military complexes, energy facilities, railroads and highways when these projects include a federal action.

Please contact BLM for more information:

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