
County of San Bernardino

NOTICE OF PREPARATION



DATE: February 29, 2008

FROM: San Bernardino County Land Use Services Department, Advance Planning Division,
385 N. Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182

TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and
a Draft Environmental Impact Report

PROJECT TITLE: GRANITE MOUNTAIN WIND ENERGY PROJECT

An environmental review of the proposed project must be conducted under both California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Implementation of the project will require discretionary approvals from federal, state, and local agencies, and therefore, this project is subject to the environmental review requirements of both NEPA and CEQA. As Lead Agency for CEQA, the County of San Bernardino issues this Notice of Preparation for the proposed Granite Mountain Wind Energy Project near Apple Valley, California.

To ensure coordination between the NEPA and CEQA processes, and to avoid duplication of effort, the lead agencies will prepare a joint EIS/EIR as recommended by 40 CFR § 1506.2 and CEQA Guidelines § 15222. The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be the NEPA Lead Agency and the County of San Bernardino (County) will be the CEQA Lead Agency, for preparation of the EIS/EIR. As the federal lead agency, the BLM issued a separate Notice of Intent (NOI) for the proposed project. The BLM and the County will evaluate whether potentially significant environmental effects will result from the project. The EIS/EIR will assess the effects of the proposed project on the environment, identify potentially significant impacts, identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant environmental impacts, and discuss potentially feasible alternatives to the proposed project that may accomplish basic project objectives, while lessening or eliminating any potential significant project impacts.

This Notice provides a description of the proposed project and solicits comments on the scope and content of the environmental document to be prepared to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Comments are solicited from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, state and local agencies and the

general public. Comments received in response to this Notice will be reviewed and considered by the lead agencies in determining the scope of the EIS/EIR. Due to time limits, as defined by CEQA, your response should be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than thirty (30) days after publication of this notice. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

Comments and questions may be directed to Carrie Hyke, Principal Planner, Land Use Services Department, Advance Planning Division, 385 North Arrowhead Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0182. Please include the name, phone number, and address of the contact person in your response.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Environmental Setting

The Granite Mountain Wind Project will be located approximately 11 miles east of Apple Valley, on the Granite Mountain range, in San Bernardino County, California. Granite Wind is planning to place approximately 27 Siemens 2.3 megawatt (MW) wind turbines (or a similar model of wind turbine of up to 3 MW in capacity) on Granite Mountain within the area currently under combination of a Right of Way Grant from the BLM (for wind energy monitoring and testing and exclusive project area) and private land. The proposed project will have a capacity of up to 62.1 to 81 MW, depending on the make and model of wind turbine used. Of the 27 wind turbines, 19 wind turbines are proposed on BLM-administered land and 8 are proposed on private land. The wind turbines are proposed to run in a northwest-to-southeast direction along the ridgeline in order to maximize the flow of the prevailing wind to each wind turbine. In addition to the erection of wind turbines, the proposed project will require the construction of a new access road, project substation, overhead transmission line, interconnection to the Southern California Edison (SCE) 230 kV transmission system, an operations and maintenance (O&M) building, a temporary office, and temporary staging areas. Each wind turbine will have a pad-mounted transformer located beside the wind turbine tower, a maintenance road, and an underground electrical and communication line. Two permanent meteorological masts will be installed to measure the wind-speed and direction across the site, as required by the purchaser of the power generated by the project.

Project Activity

The number of persons on site is expected to range from 5 to 75 (during peak construction) and the equipment on site during the various stages of construction will generally include:

- Road construction equipment,
- General excavation equipment,
- Rock-drill and explosives,
- Trenching machinery,
- The concrete batching plant,

- Heavy-haul trucks, and
- Heavy-lift cranes.

Construction traffic via Johnson Road is expected to peak at approximately 350 one-way trips per day during the construction period (based on 75 construction personnel and 100 delivery trucks leaving and entering the project site). This is likely to be the maximum possible amount of trips, would only occur for a short period of time, and assumes that no car-pooling takes place for construction workers.

Construction is anticipated to begin in early/mid 2009 and take up to seven (7) months to complete.

Proposed Construction Schedule (Approximate)

Facility	Start	Duration
Road Construction	Week 1	12 weeks
Road Maintenance	Week 13	15 weeks
Foundation Construction	Week 7	7 weeks
Trenching and Cabling	Week 12	8 weeks
Wind Turbine Generator Installation	Week 16	8 weeks
Wind Turbine Generating Commissioning	Week 24	4 weeks
O&M Building	Week 8	16 weeks
Substation Construction	Week 4	20 weeks
Transmission Line	Week 2	22 weeks
Meteorological Masts	Week 4	2 weeks
Project Substantial Completion	Week 28	Milestone
Site Restoration	Week 24	4 weeks

Operations

The project is expected to have an operating lifetime of 25 to 30 years. During this period, the project will be operated and maintained by a team of up to eight (8) personnel. There will be approximately three (3) operations and maintenance trucks to transport the operations and maintenance team, tools and materials around the project site to perform routine operations and maintenance activities. The trucks will be housed in the operations and maintenance building.

On normal workdays (excluding weekends and holidays), long-term operations and maintenance traffic will average approximately four (4) to eight (8) vehicle trips per day to and from the project site in each direction, via the project access road from Johnson Road.

Potential Environmental Impacts

The Lead Agencies have determined that this project could result in significant environmental impacts and/or have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. As such, preparation of a joint EIS/EIR is appropriate. Accordingly, the Lead Agencies did not prepare an Environmental Assessment or Initial Study for the project. However, the Lead Agencies have identified the following environmental considerations as potential significant effects of the project:

Air Quality (Short-term Construction)
Biological Resources
Cultural Resources
Cumulative Impacts

Hydrology/Water Quality
Visual Resources
Geology/Soil Erosion

Figure 1 - Regional Setting

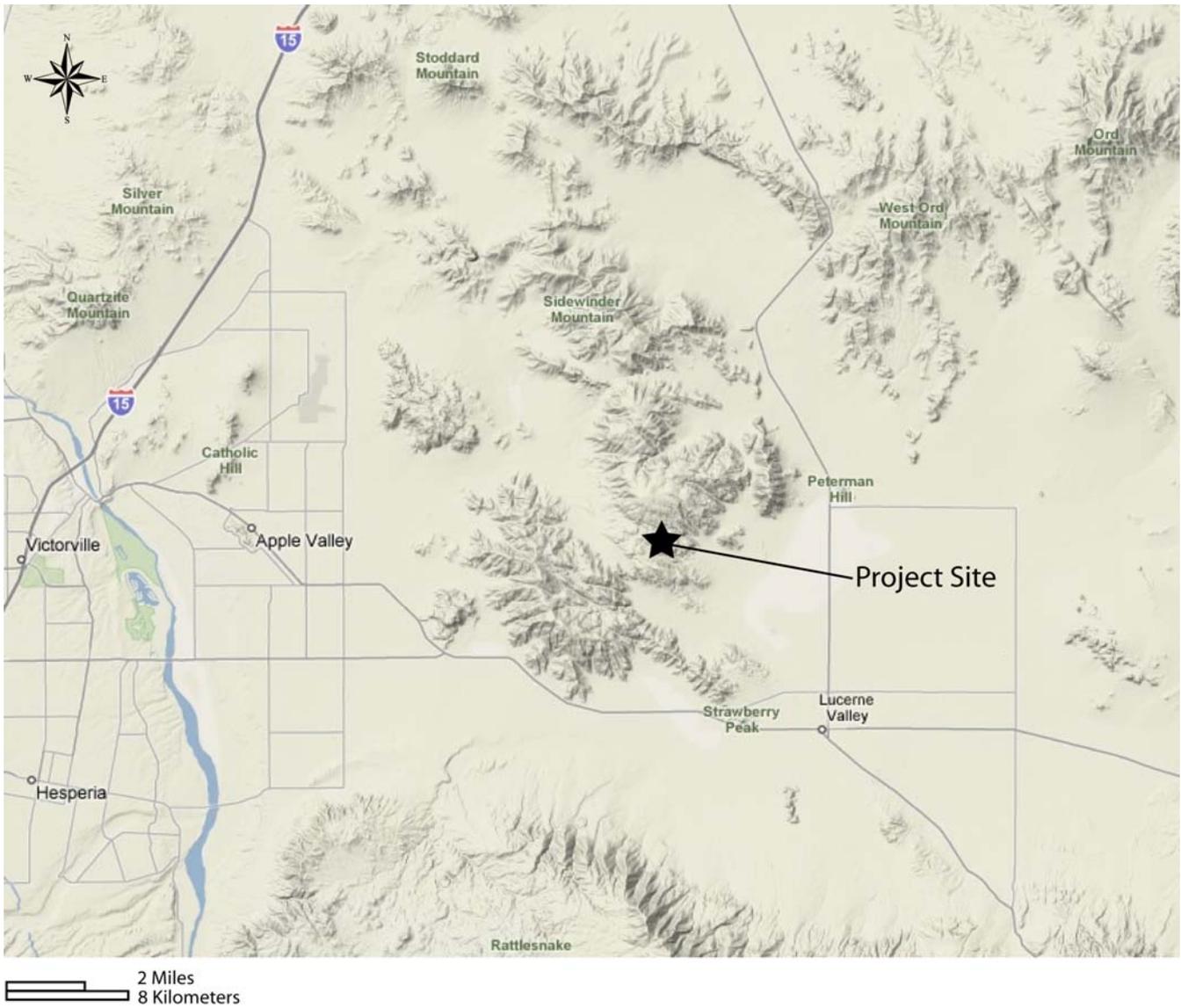


Figure 2 - Project Vicinity Map

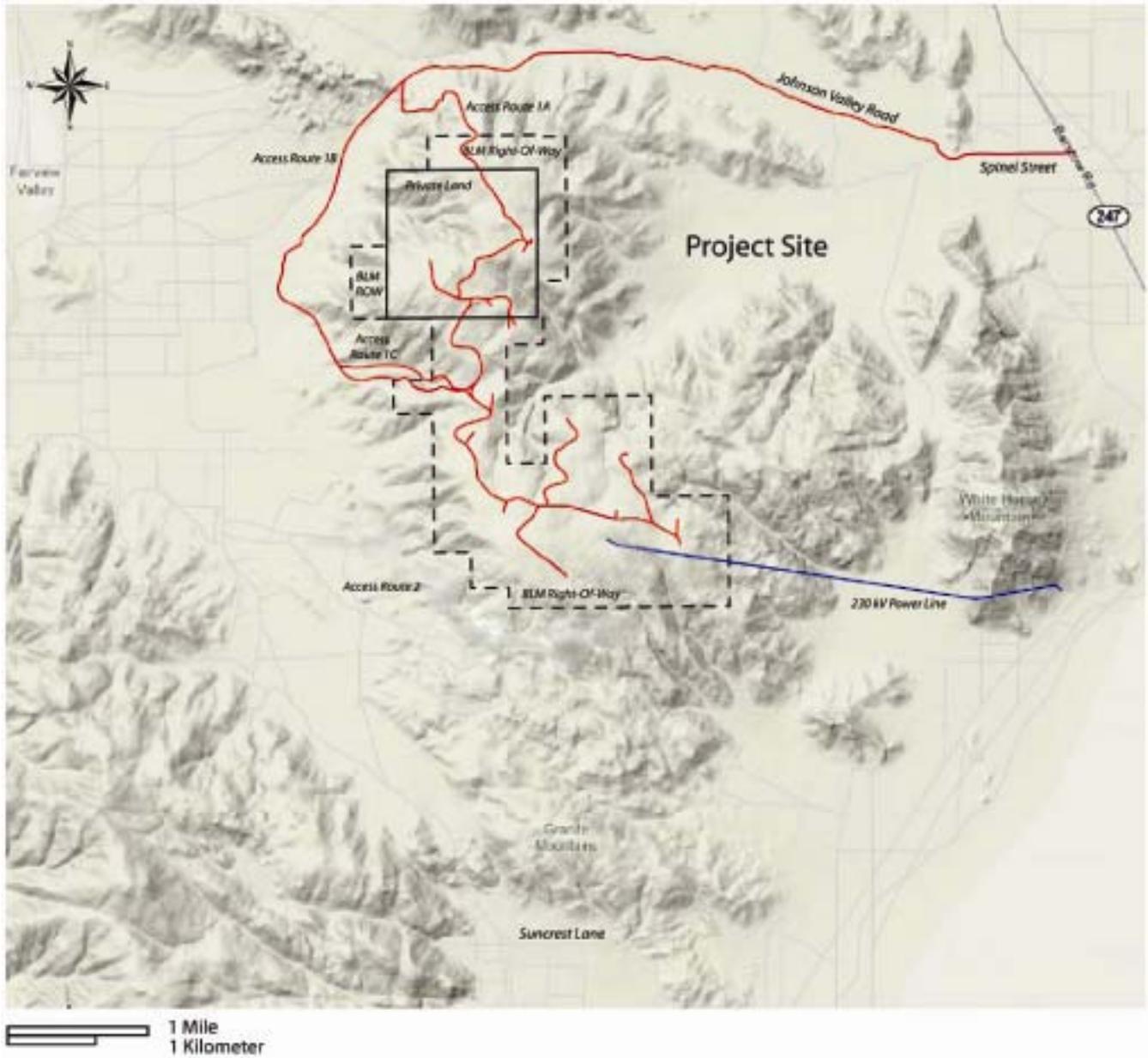
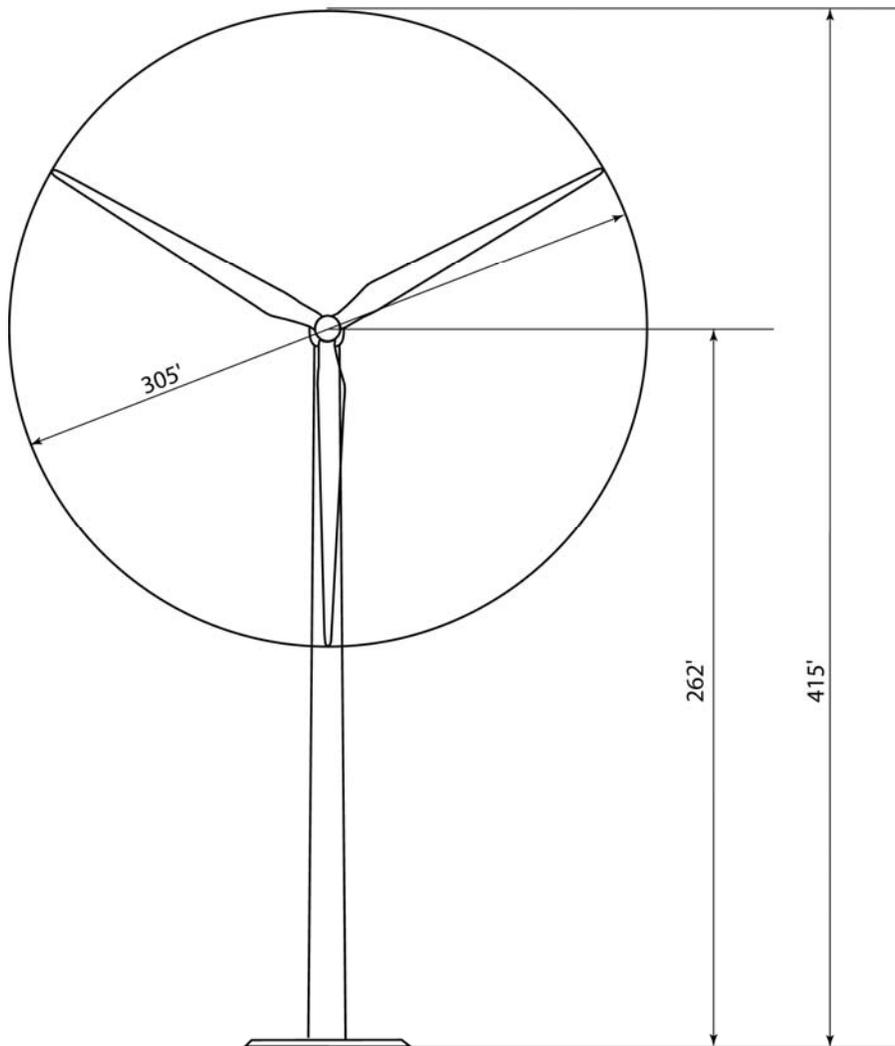


Figure 3 –Typical Wind Turbine Dimensions

The proposed wind turbine generators will be the latest generation of three-bladed, upwind, variable speed Siemens 2.3 MW models, or a similar model of wind turbine of up to 3 MW in capacity. For the Siemens 2.3 MW wind turbine, the blades will have a 305-foot rotor diameter and a total height from tower base to tip of blade of approximately 415 feet and for the Vestas 3 MW wind turbine, the blades will have a 295-foot rotor diameter and a total height from tower base to tip of blade of approximately 415 feet. For both models, the blades will be made of fiberglass with steel internal components. The nacelle (or main turbine body), which contains the generator, gearbox, main shaft, bearings, yaw mechanism that rotates the turbine around its tower and various safety systems, will be fully enclosed with a steel chassis and fiberglass covering. Each wind turbine is fully automatic and self-regulating, and has been designed to operate in the high winds and hot conditions of the site. Fully enclosed conical steel tubular towers (262-foot tall) will support the turbines and will contain the electronic power and control systems. The wind turbines will be painted bright white as required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).



Comment Due Date

Due to the time limit of 30 days mandated by State law, your comments must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than **March 31, 2008**.

Sincerely,

Carrie Hyke, Principal Planner
Advance Planning Division
Land Use Services Department
County of San Bernardino