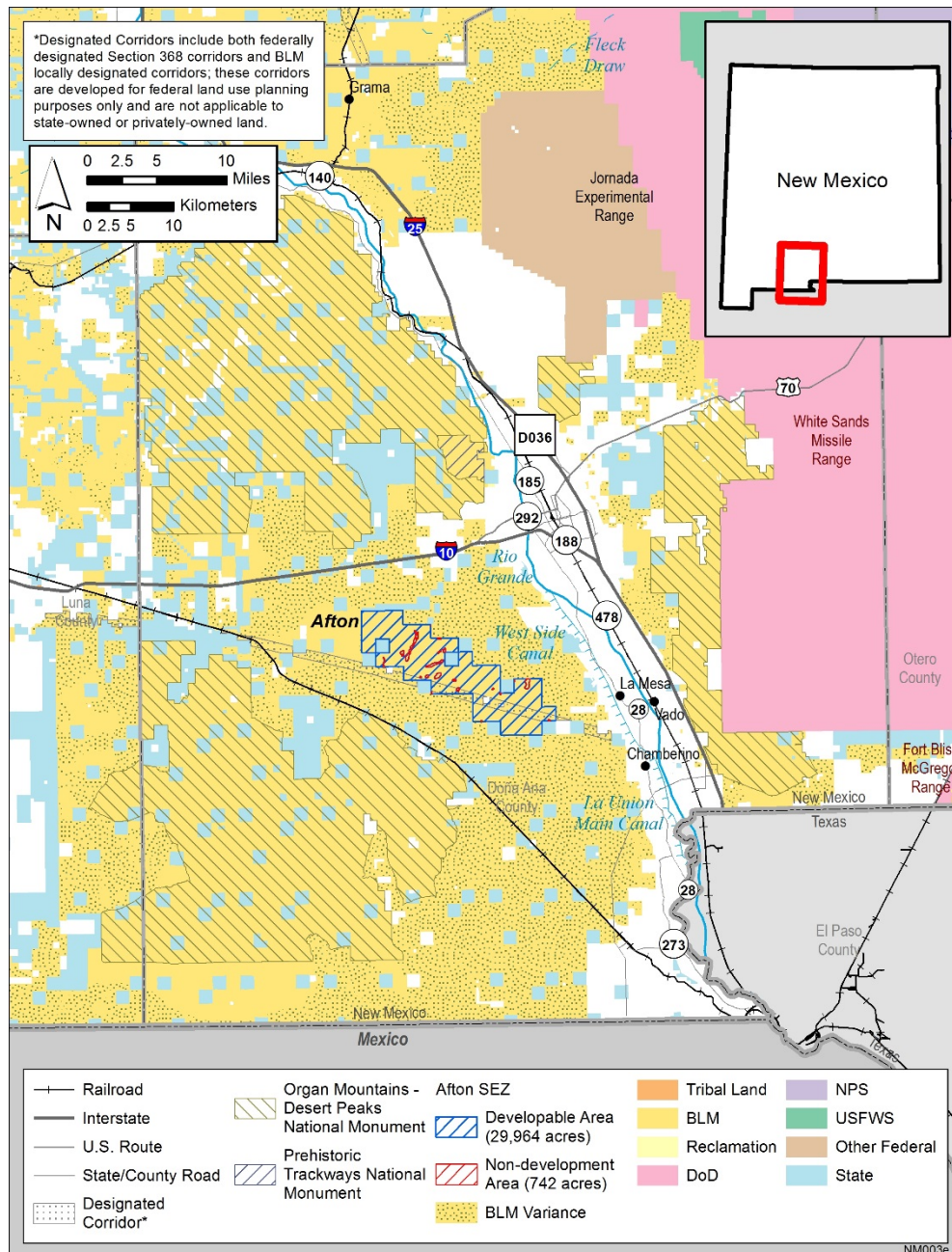


## Process for Nominating Candidate Mitigation Sites and Actions

### Introduction

In the [Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement \(PEIS\)](#), BLM designated the [Afton Solar Energy Zone \(SEZ\)](#) in Doña Ana County, New Mexico as a priority area for utility-scale solar energy development. This SEZ constitutes approximately 30,000 acres of land (**Figure 1**). Through the Solar PEIS, the BLM has committed to establishing a Solar regional mitigation strategy (SRMS) to identify potential unavoidable impacts of solar development in the SEZ that may warrant regional compensatory mitigation, and identify appropriate mitigation measures and processes to address these impacts.



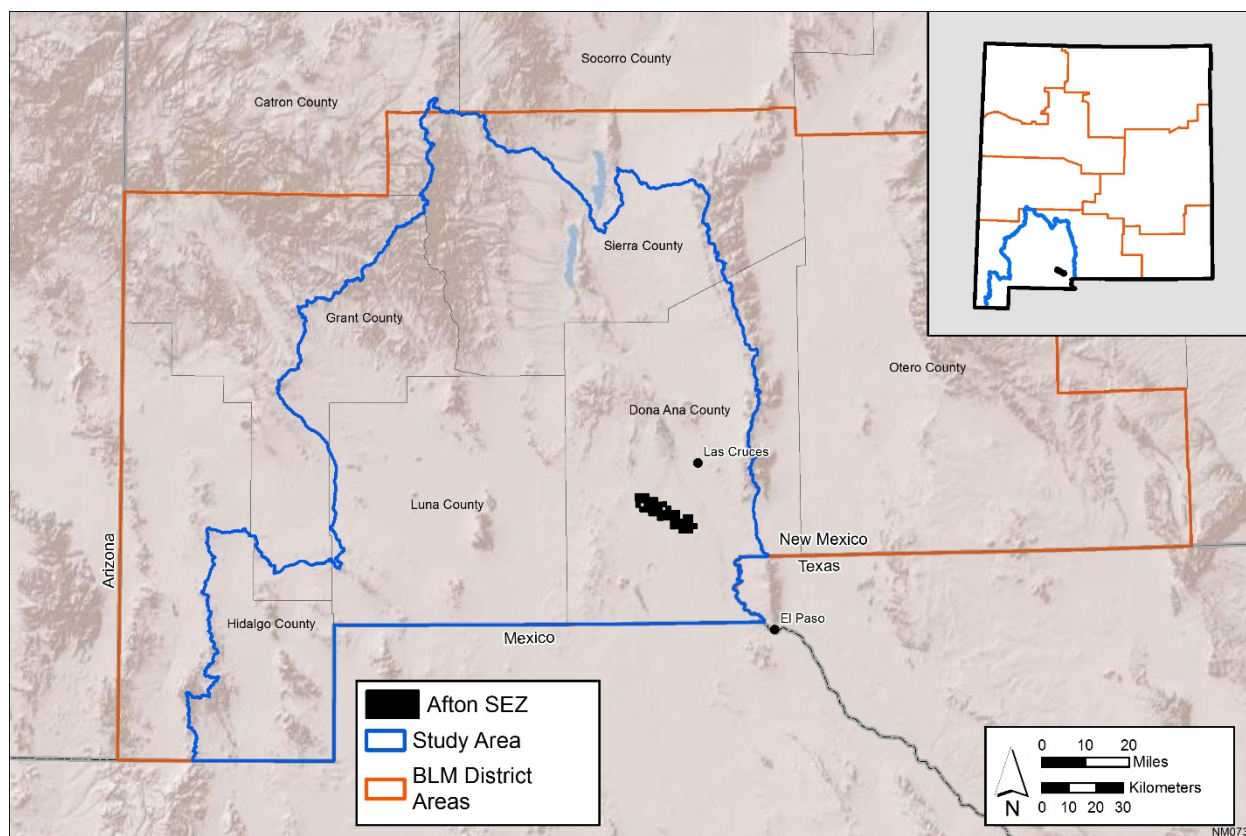
**Figure 1. Afton Solar Energy Zone and Surrounding Areas.**

### Candidate Mitigation Sites and Actions

As discussed in the [September 2016 Public Webinar](#), one aspect of the Afton SRMS is to identify and evaluate mitigation actions and/or locations. To complete this activity, the BLM is requesting stakeholder input through recommendations for mitigation sites/actions. The mitigation recommendation should work to offset impacts to at least one of the following resources that have been identified to warrant mitigation<sup>1</sup>:

- Vegetation
- Visual Resources
- Special Designations

BLM selected the Rio Grande-Mimbres HUC 4 watershed as the regional study area for this SRMS (Figure 2). This study area encompasses approximately 7 million acres and includes portions of Catron, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, and Sierra counties. [GIS data](#) for this SRMS regional boundary are available on the project web page. Compensatory mitigation recommendations within this region are preferred.



**Figure 2. SRMS study area (Rio Grande-Mimbres HUC 4 Watershed, shown in blue).**

All regional compensatory mitigation recommendations will be evaluated in a consistent manner using a mitigation screening table; there is one screen table for each resource warranting regional mitigation. Screening table templates are available on the [project web page](#), which score each candidate mitigation recommendation based on the following criteria:

<sup>1</sup> Based on the BLM IDT assessment of [Impacts that May Warrant Mitigation](#).

- Importance criteria
  - Indicate the support for the recommended mitigation action
  - e.g., degree of support from other organizations
- Feasibility criteria
  - Consider the cost, timeline, and administrative or technical requirements
- Effectiveness criteria
  - e.g., factors that measure how effective mitigation actions will be in terms of meeting goals and objectives.
- Timeliness criteria
  - The timeframe for completing the mitigation action and achieving mitigation goals and objectives.
- Risk criteria
  - Indicate the degree to which other factors might jeopardize long-term success of the mitigation action.
- Durability criteria
  - Factors that measure the durability of the mitigation in terms of the permanence and stability of the recommended mitigation action.
- Additionality criteria
  - Determine whether the recommended mitigation action consists of activities not currently eligible for BLM funding or funding from other sources (i.e., Is the recommended mitigation action in addition to currently-funded activities?).
- Additional Considerations
  - Does the recommended mitigation action address other resource concerns not previously identified above?

When submitting mitigation recommendations, the BLM asks stakeholders to provide information on how their recommended mitigation may be evaluated relative to the screening criteria by completing the appropriate template screening table for the recommended mitigation.

To fill out a screening table, please:

- 1) Identify which resource you'd like to recommend for regional mitigation (vegetation, special designations, or visual resources).
  - a. Note: If a mitigation location or action would mitigate for more than one resource (i.e. vegetation AND visual), then fill out the screening table for the primary resource.
- 2) Fill out one column for each mitigation action from top to bottom
- 3) Please address each of the 8 categories by answering all subquestions. BLM will use the information provided to the subquestions, as well as BLM resource specialist knowledge of the sites and actions, to provide an overall score (in the yellow rows).

### **Submission Guidelines**

Please submit the following to BLM ([tashby@blm.gov](mailto:tashby@blm.gov)):

- Completed Screening table(s) for each recommended mitigation site/action.
- Location information such as a maps and/or geospatial data.
- Available supporting information, documents or reports.