

Forest Service Issues
Notice of Availability of Record of Decision for the
Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Land in Western States

On March 24, 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, announced the availability of the record of decision amending 38 Land Management Plans for National Forests in ten of eleven Western States. See 74 Fed. Reg. 12,306 (March 24, 2009). Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 directed the Secretaries of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, and the Interior to designate corridors on federal land in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines, as well as electricity transmission and distribution facilities. Those designated corridors were then to be incorporated into the relevant agency land use and resource management plans or equivalent plans. In October, 2008, the Bureau of Land Management released a final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement concerning the designation of the energy corridors. The Forest Service and BLM subsequently issued their respective records of decision amending both agencies' land use plans in support of designation of the energy corridors.

The energy corridors comprise a comprehensive, coordinated network of preferred locations for future energy projects that could be developed to satisfy energy demands. The corridors are located to avoid, to the maximum extent possible, significant, known environmental resources, and are designated considering potential renewable energy development in the West. The designated corridors are generally 3,500 feet wide, although that width may vary in some areas to address specific environmental or topographic conditions or management needs.

The Forest Service ROD designates approximately 990 miles of energy corridors on national forest system lands in ten of the eleven western states as the preferred location for oil, natural gas, and hydrogen pipelines as well as electricity transmission and distribution lines. The Forest Service is not designating any corridors on Forest Service lands within the state of New Mexico. The BLM ROD amends 92 land use plans to designate more than 6,000 miles of energy corridors. The plan amendments effected by the RODs do not eliminate the need for site-specific NEPA analysis of individual development proposals.

Copies of the Forest Service and BLM RODs may be accessed [here](#).