

Now we'd like to get started with a discussion on the background of the Solar PA.

Stephen, can you provide us with the background for this training and the Solar PA?

Let me start with a brief introduction. The Solar PA requires the BLM to develop online training in consultation with the Signatory Parties. We are requesting that in-place and newly hired managers, cultural and mineral program specialists, and tribal liaisons all complete the training as part of their Individual Development Plans.

We anticipate updating the training modules every 3 years or sooner if necessary. It will be revised and offered as long as the Solar PA remains in effect.

I would like to thank in particular Nancy Brown (from the Advisory Council), Ann Howard (from the AZ SHPO) and Kathy Pedrick (from the AZ BLM State Office) for participating in the training. We also benefitted enormously from review comments provided from Deputy Preservation Officers and SHPOs in the six solar states of AZ, CA, CO, NV, NM, and UT.

Provisions of the Solar PA were incorporated into the Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement or PEIS to insure a consistent approach to consider the effects of solar development upon historic properties across the six states.

The Solar PEIS and the Solar PA are interrelated and I would encourage BLM staff to review both documents. The programmatic Design Features applicable to cultural resources and Native American concerns will be implemented as the BLM moves through the Section 106 steps enumerated in the Solar PA.

During the preparation of the Solar PEIS, the BLM contacted over 300 tribes in 13 states regarding the planning effort and our development of the Solar PA. The final Agreement reflects detailed criticisms and suggestions for improvement provided by several tribes. The Solar PA was executed in September 2012 between the BLM, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and State Historic Preservation Officers in AZ, CA, CO, NV, NM, and UT.

Concurring Parties included the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The final document benefitted from the critical review and suggested revisions provided by these folks as well as a variety of Indian tribes and interest groups such as the Society for American Archaeology.

The Solar PA describes how the BLM considered cultural resources in the preparation of the Solar PEIS. It also explains how future decisions about land use planning related to solar development will take cultural resources into account.

However, what we will concentrate on in this training are the specific steps the BLM has committed to take to comply with Section 106 for new solar applications in the six southwestern states.

The Solar PA provisions apply to future, site-specific solar energy program applications when the BLM is the lead federal agency and the application is for projects on public lands managed by the BLM. The Solar PA DOES NOT apply to tribal land.

If future solar applications include projects that extend onto state or private lands, the BLM will consult with the SHPO or other state agencies, such as the State Land Office, to decide how much of the Solar PA's provisions to implement or modify for the non-federal lands involved.