

United States Department of Agriculture

#### **Rural Development**

### SKELETON CREEK PROJECT DRAFT EIS PUBLIC MEETING NOVEMBER 9 -10, 2021

# AGENDA

- Welcome and logistics
- Agency opening remarks
- Presentations
  - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and timeline
  - Proposed Project overview
  - Alternatives
  - Draft EIS (DEIS) findings
  - Next steps
- Questions and comments
- Public meeting closes



# WELCOME

Skeleton Creek DEIS Public Meeting

- 1. Learn about the Project
- 2. Understand the NEPA process
- 3. Learn how to provide public comments on the DEIS

# **BEFORE WE DIVE IN...**

- You have joined this webinar as an attendee in listen-only mode
- During the presentation:
  - You can ask questions by using the Q&A feature
- You will have the opportunity to ask verbal questions after the presentation by using the **Raise Hand** function. If you are calling in on your phone, type **\*9** on your keypad.
- Please watch the **Chat** for additional information







# **NEPA PROCESS**

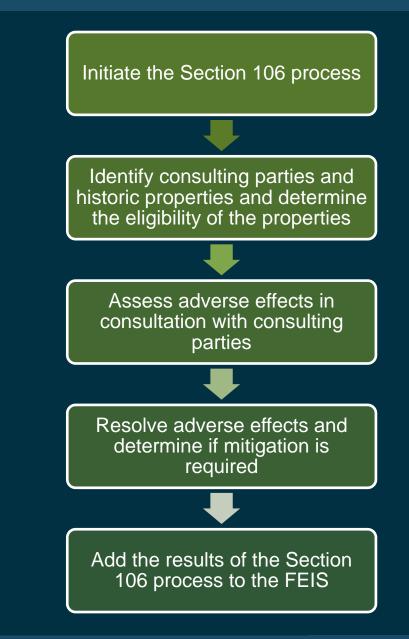
- DEIS is now available for public review and comment
- We need your input to help determine revisions or additions for the final EIS (FEIS)





### NHPA (SECTION 106) PROCESS

- Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) will parallel the NEPA process
- We need your input regarding historic properties for the Cultural Resources section of the DEIS





# **ISSUES EVALUATED**

- Soils and geology
- Air quality
- Noise
- Biological resources
  - Vegetation
  - Wetlands and riparian areas
  - Wildlife, including specialstatus species
- Water resources

- Land Use
- Visual resources
- Transportation
- Cultural resources
  - Archaeological and historic resources
  - Tribal consultation
- Public health and safety
- Socioeconomics and environmental justice



# QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



# **Email address**

SkeletonCreekSolarPublicComments@ usda.gov

# **RUS** website

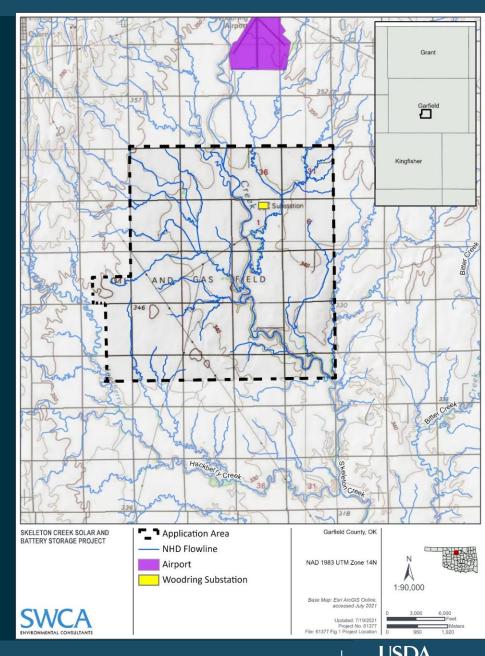
https://www.rd.usda.gov/environmental study/skeleton-creek-solar-and-batterystorage-project-garfield-countyoklahoma

Please visit the Project website for additional information



# **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

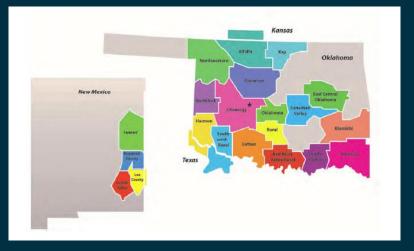
- 250-MW solar array
- 200-MW/800-MW hour storage facility
- Located in Garfield County, Oklahoma
- Application Area encompasses approximately 12,250 acres



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# **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

• 20-year power purchase agreement (PPA) with Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC)

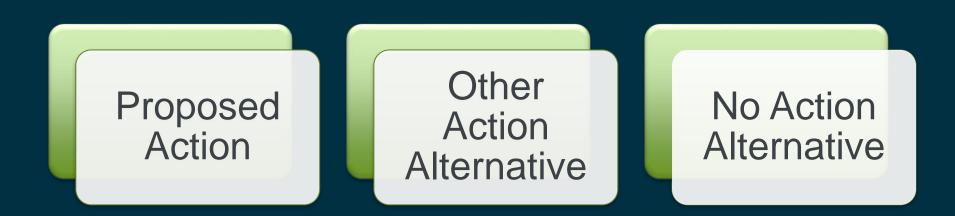


 WFEC supplies the electrical needs of 17 member distribution cooperatives and Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma, plus four cooperatives in New Mexico





### **ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED**

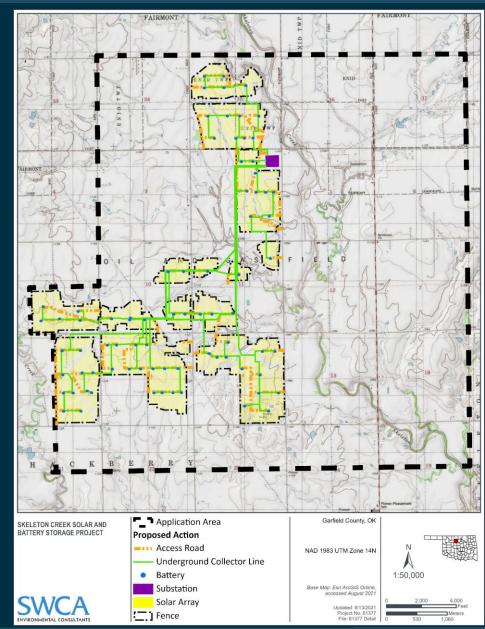






# **PROPOSED ACTION**

- Major components
  - PV arrays
  - Solar trackers or fixed support structures
  - Linear structures (cables and lines, internal access roads, etc.)
  - Solar power inverters and transformers
  - Energy storage (battery) system
- Approximately 2,120 acres



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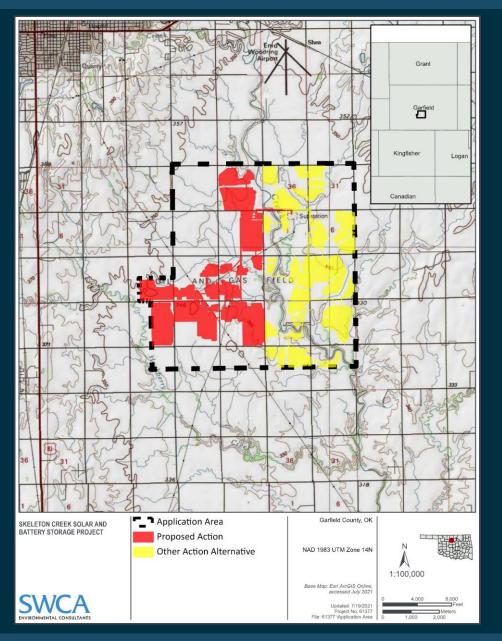
# **PROPOSED ACTION TIMELINE**

- Construction start: Summer 2022
- Construction duration: 18 months
- Commercial operation date: December 2023





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# OTHER ACTION ALTERNATIVE

- Same components as Proposed Action
- Approximately 1,744 acres, depicted in yellow



# **NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

- The Project would not be constructed, and environmental and socioeconomic impacts would not occur
- Would not help increase WFEC's generation capacity to meet electricity demand within its service territories of member cooperatives
- WFEC would forego opportunities to increase renewable energy generation within its portfolio and offer its member cooperatives a source of low-cost, emissions-free energy.





- Air quality
  - Temporary increase in pollutants, greenhouse gases, fugitive dust
  - Long-term reduced air emissions and risk of health events
- Geology and soils
  - Short-term displacement/alteration of soil and rock
  - Potential increase in soil erosion, soil compaction, and loss of soil productivity
- Water resources
  - Temporary and long-term impacts to streams and waterbodies
  - Impacts to floodplains
  - Limited groundwater use



- Vegetation
  - Temporary to long-term vegetation removal or conversion
  - No impacts to special-status plant species
  - Invasive and noxious plant species risk
- Wetlands
  - Temporary to long-term wetland removal or conversion
- Wildlife
  - Temporary to long-term wildlife habitat loss or alteration
  - RUS determination of "no effect" for the piping plover, rufa red knot, and Arkansas river shiner
  - RUS determination of "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect," for the whooping crane



#### • Transportation

- Temporary and long-term increase in traffic
- No adverse impacts for glint/glare

### • Visual quality and aesthetics

Views from some key observation points would change

#### • Cultural and historic resources

- Potential exists for discovery during construction
- Two Centennial Farm and Ranch Properties occur in the area of potential effects

#### Land use

- Conversion of cropland to developed use
- Negligible impacts to existing infrastructure
- Changes in land use by landowners



- Noise
  - Temporary increase due to traffic and construction activities
  - No significant impacts to noise-sensitive receptors
- Public health and safety
  - Temporary increased risk for traffic/worker incidents
  - Long-term risk associated with fire and severe weather
  - Long-term, negligible increase in potential electromagnetic field exposure
- Socioeconomics and environmental justice
  - Temporary and long-term benefit to employment and economic activity
  - Temporary increase in public service and housing demand
  - No disproportionately high or adverse impacts to environmental justice populations





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# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

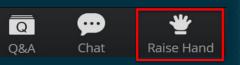
#### To ask a WRITTEN question

- Click the Q&A button
- A text box will pop up
- Type out your question
- Hit send
- Question may be responded to live or in the Q&A box



#### To ask a VERBAL question

- Click Raise Hand or \*9 on telephone
- Moderator will call your name
- Attendee unmutes their microphone







Telephone Keypad



# REMINDERS

### How to Comment

• Email:

<u>SkeletonCreekSolarPublic</u> Comments@usda.gov

# For More Information

https://www.rd.usda.gov/enviro nmentalstudy/skeleton-creeksolar-and-battery-storageproject-garfield-countyoklahoma

## Next Steps

- RUS will incorporate all comments received into the FEIS
- RUS will issue a notice of availability for the FEIS



# **THANK YOU FOR COMING!**

We are available to answer any questions until the meeting ends

If you have a question, please use the **Raise Hand** or **Q&A** buttons at the bottom of your screen and we will get right back to you.





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