

Skeleton Creek Draft EIS Public Meeting #2

11/10/2021

12

00:01:10.080 --> 00:01:12.270

Meg Perry, SWCA: Hi, I see a couple of folks are joining us welcome.

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00:01:13.170 --> 00:01:14.910

Meg Perry, SWCA: We will be getting started in just a.

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00:01:15.000 --> 00:01:18.330

Meg Perry, SWCA: couple of minutes here at the top of the hour we're so glad to have you with us.

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00:01:19.290 --> 00:01:24.120

Meg Perry, SWCA: I'm Meg Perry with SWCA Environmental Consultants and I'll be facilitating the meeting so.

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00:01:25.260 --> 00:01:32.010

Meg Perry, SWCA: It can couple minutes to get settled in and we'll get started in just a few minutes here thanks.

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00:05:11.310 --> 00:05:12.810

Meg Perry, SWCA: Alright, it has just turned.

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00:05:14.370 --> 00:05:22.650

Meg Perry, SWCA: 6:01 central by my clock and we do have just a couple of people signed in we're going to give it a few more minutes to see if anyone else joins us.

19

00:05:24.390 --> 00:05:25.620

Meg Perry, SWCA: Before we get started.

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00:08:11.760 --> 00:08:18.330

Meg Perry, SWCA: Good evening and welcome if you're just joining us I'm Meg Perry I'll be facilitating the meeting this evening.

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00:08:19.290 --> 00:08:35.010

Meg Perry, SWCA: With SWCA Environmental Consultants and we just have a few people signed in right now so we're giving it a couple more minutes to see if others may join us as we're just past the top of the hour, at the moment, so thanks for sticking with us and we'll get started shortly.

22

00:09:38.400 --> 00:09:44.730

Meg Perry, SWCA: Alright, well, we are just five minutes past the hour and we've got a good few people signed in so.

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00:09:45.900 --> 00:09:56.040

Meg Perry, SWCA: We don't want to punish those of you who are on time and and ready to listen so we're going to go ahead and get started, and if others join us as we as we're moving along, so much the better, so.

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00:09:56.820 --> 00:10:09.810

Meg Perry, SWCA: Once again, I'm Meg Perry with SWCA Environmental Consultants and I'll be facilitating this evening's meeting the second of two public meetings focused on the Skeleton Creek Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

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00:10:11.010 --> 00:10:17.460

Meg Perry, SWCA: With that I'm going to turn it over to Kristen Bastis with Rural Utility Service to offer a few words of welcome, on behalf of the Agency.

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00:10:19.350 --> 00:10:28.650

Kristen Bastis - RUS: Yes, thank you for attending tonight's public meeting about Skeleton Creek Solar Project in Garfield County Oklahoma.

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00:10:30.360 --> 00:10:37.590

Kristen Bastis - RUS: we're happy to have you in attendance tonight and we will be going through a short presentation and then.

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00:10:38.730 --> 00:10:41.820

Kristen Bastis - RUS: Looking for any comments or questions.

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00:10:45.810 --> 00:10:46.350

Meg Perry, SWCA: Great thanks Kristen.

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00:10:48.870 --> 00:10:56.100

Meg Perry, SWCA: So just as Kristen was alluding to the primary purposes of this evening's meeting are to.

31

00:10:57.090 --> 00:11:09.180

Meg Perry, SWCA: offer an opportunity for everyone to learn about the project understand the National Environmental Policy Act process and to learn how to provide public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement which is part of that.

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00:11:10.290 --> 00:11:12.270

Meg Perry, SWCA: NEPA compliance process.

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00:11:13.320 --> 00:11:21.180

Meg Perry, SWCA: Our agenda for this evening we're currently in welcome and logistics I'll share a few Zoom tips with you in just a moment.

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00:11:22.530 --> 00:11:33.390

Meg Perry, SWCA: And then we'll turn to some brief presentations that Kristen and my colleague Sue will offer covering the NEPA process and timeline proposed project overview.

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00:11:34.140 --> 00:11:45.900

Meg Perry, SWCA: alternatives that were considered in the draft EIS the findings in the draft EIS and anticipated next steps and then we'll open up the meeting for any questions and comments that you all might have.

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00:11:47.130 --> 00:11:50.310

Meg Perry, SWCA: pertaining to what you've heard in the draft EIS yes.

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00:11:51.450 --> 00:11:58.920

Meg Perry, SWCA: So with that just a couple of reminders about Zoom and your opportunities to participate, this evening.

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00:12:00.390 --> 00:12:10.920

Meg Perry, SWCA: So you have joined as a participant in this Zoom webinar which means you're in listen only mode during the presentation, you will be able to submit any questions that might come up.

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00:12:11.790 --> 00:12:22.860

Meg Perry, SWCA: For you, using the Q&A feature So if you look in your little black Zoom ribbon on your screen, you should see two little talk bubbles with Q&A underneath and if you click on that.

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00:12:23.370 --> 00:12:29.400

Meg Perry, SWCA: You can type in any questions and then we will respond to those verbally following the presentation.

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00:12:30.360 --> 00:12:42.030

Meg Perry, SWCA: And then, once we get into the question and comment portion of the meeting, you will have opportunity to ask verbal questions you can raise your hand to show that you'd like to share a question or comment.

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00:12:43.080 --> 00:12:56.130

Meg Perry, SWCA: And you'll find the raise hand function, either under reactions or, possibly, you may need to click on participants and then look down at the bottom of that window to find the raise hand depends on your version of Zoom.

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00:12:57.420 --> 00:13:03.240

Meg Perry, SWCA: If you're joining us via phone I don't think anyone is at the moment, but if you get kicked out of Zoom and need to call in using.

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00:13:03.840 --> 00:13:13.170

Meg Perry, SWCA: The phone number, you can always dial star nine on the phone to raise your hand there and so we'll see that you have a question or comment.

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00:13:13.920 --> 00:13:19.350

Meg Perry, SWCA: I'll be sharing a few links and other pieces of information in the chat as well throughout the meeting so.

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00:13:19.920 --> 00:13:27.630

Meg Perry, SWCA: That would be another button in Zoom that you might want to click so that you can see those links and other things that will be sharing there.

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00:13:28.620 --> 00:13:45.690

Meg Perry, SWCA: And then just a reminder that you probably are seeing subtitles generated on the bottom of your screen that's distracting for you, you do have the option to turn those off, you should see a little CC button in the Zoom ribbon and if you click on that you'll see an option to hide subtitles.

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00:13:48.690 --> 00:13:50.910

Meg Perry, SWCA: Alright, so with that I will turn it.

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00:13:52.440 --> 00:13:55.830

Meg Perry, SWCA: To start our presentations Kristen take it away.

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00:13:58.260 --> 00:13:59.040

Meg Perry, SWCA: And you're muted.

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00:14:01.170 --> 00:14:06.600

Kristen Bastis - RUS: I did just want to let everyone know that we are recording this session, just so you are aware of them.

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00:14:08.460 --> 00:14:27.180

Kristen Bastis - RUS: So yeah, this is an overview of the NEPA process this project started back in the spring, we had a public scoping period from mid march to mid April, and we did have a public scoping public meetings where we.

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00:14:28.800 --> 00:14:30.390

Kristen Bastis - RUS: took comments from the public.

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00:14:32.100 --> 00:14:35.520

Kristen Bastis - RUS: and incorporated those into the Draft EIS.

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00:14:36.840 --> 00:14:47.190

Kristen Bastis - RUS: Which just came out a little while ago, and the public comment period is ongoing it's 45 days long and ends on December sixth.

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00:14:48.930 --> 00:15:06.420

Kristen Bastis - RUS: And then, after the public comment period closes we will consider all the comments that we get from the public and develop the final EIS in the winter and early spring and then publish that.

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00:15:08.550 --> 00:15:10.890

Kristen Bastis - RUS: Finally, is in the springtime.

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00:15:12.000 --> 00:15:31.650

Kristen Bastis - RUS: So the draft EIS's purpose really is to give the public a chance to review the project and its impacts on the environment and then provide input about the project to the federal agency who's overseeing the project.

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00:15:33.720 --> 00:15:34.410

Kristen Bastis - RUS: Next slide.

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00:15:39.210 --> 00:15:48.510

Kristen Bastis - RUS: And then concurrently with the NEPA process RUS is running its National Historic Preservation Act or Section 106 process right alongside of it.

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00:15:49.020 --> 00:16:06.810

Kristen Bastis - RUS: So we initiated the Section 106 process also back in the spring, we contacted the State Historic Preservation Office and the office, the Oklahoma Archaeological Society, as well as tribes that may have an interest in the area.

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00:16:08.670 --> 00:16:15.510

Kristen Bastis - RUS: And our tribal consultation and consultation with State Historic Preservation Office and the OAS is ongoing.

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00:16:17.130 --> 00:16:24.690

Kristen Bastis - RUS: And we are working on identifying any historic properties that might be in the project area.

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00:16:25.980 --> 00:16:27.600

Kristen Bastis - RUS: field crew will.

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00:16:28.890 --> 00:16:30.540

Kristen Bastis - RUS: I think they went out today actually.

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00:16:31.590 --> 00:16:32.970

Kristen Bastis - RUS: But there'll be out in the field.

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00:16:34.170 --> 00:16:41.160

Kristen Bastis - RUS: Over this next month and we'll get their data into be incorporated into the final EIS.

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00:16:44.430 --> 00:16:46.740

Kristen Bastis - RUS: And then other steps for.

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00:16:53.370 --> 00:16:54.990

Meg Perry, SWCA: Kristen you just froze.

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00:16:59.220 --> 00:17:00.420

Meg Perry, SWCA: looks like we lost Kristen.

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00:17:07.980 --> 00:17:08.910

Kristen Bastis - RUS: Back I do.

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00:17:13.230 --> 00:17:14.970

Meg Perry, SWCA: Kristen you're kind of coming in and out.

73

00:17:15.120 --> 00:17:21.030

Meg Perry, SWCA: it's possible you're having some bandwidth issues, so you might want to turn your video off and we can maybe just hear your audio.

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00:17:27.810 --> 00:17:29.010

Meg Perry, SWCA: we're not hearing you right now.

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00:17:43.380 --> 00:17:47.430

Meg Perry, SWCA: Okay bear with us folks we'll see if we can get Kristen back online here.

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00:18:32.970 --> 00:18:37.200

Meg Perry, SWCA: Alright we're gonna have Kristen log out and log back in and hopefully she'll be able to reconnect.

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00:18:38.640 --> 00:18:40.770

Meg Perry, SWCA: The joys of technology, you never know when.

78

00:18:42.840 --> 00:18:43.920

Meg Perry, SWCA: wink out on you.

79

00:18:49.860 --> 00:18:54.330

Meg Perry, SWCA: While we're waiting for that I'm just going to put a couple things in the chat for folks reference.

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00:18:55.440 --> 00:19:07.140

Meg Perry, SWCA: Do you have the project website available, which has background information on the project, including the draft environmental impact statement so that's available there for your reference.

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00:19:16.290 --> 00:19:18.060

Kristen Bastis: All right, am I back.

82

00:19:18.450 --> 00:19:19.440

Meg Perry, SWCA: We can hear you.

83

00:19:20.130 --> 00:19:24.420

Kristen Bastis: Okay, well, I am going to leave my video off I apologize for that.

84

00:19:25.530 --> 00:19:28.710

Kristen Bastis: I don't know why I'm having technical difficulties but.

85

00:19:30.450 --> 00:19:32.280

Kristen Bastis: um so let's see.

86

00:19:34.260 --> 00:19:44.160

Kristen Bastis: Yes, if if there are any historic properties found in the project area, we will assess the any adverse effects to those historic properties with our consulting parties.

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00:19:44.730 --> 00:19:56.970

Kristen Bastis: And then to resolve those adverse effects and determination, determine if mitigation is required, and then add the results of Section 106 to the Final EIS.

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00:19:58.590 --> 00:19:59.730

Kristen Bastis: And again.

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00:20:01.080 --> 00:20:10.800

Kristen Bastis: We do need your input regarding historic properties, if you know anything about historic properties in the project area, we would be happy to hear about that too.

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00:20:12.510 --> 00:20:12.960

Kristen Bastis: and

91

00:20:14.340 --> 00:20:15.390

Kristen Bastis: Next slide.

92

00:20:19.200 --> 00:20:24.870

Kristen Bastis: Okay, so we have the draft EIS looks at a variety of resources.

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00:20:26.280 --> 00:20:27.870

Kristen Bastis: Many of them are listed here.

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00:20:29.580 --> 00:20:44.460

Kristen Bastis: We do look at the soils and geology and how the project may impact those resources if there'll be any impacts air quality or additional noise that's generated by the project.

95

00:20:44.970 --> 00:21:03.750

Kristen Bastis: And then there's a whole group of biological resources, including vegetation wetlands and streams and riparian areas and then wildlife, including special status species and that's flora and fauna and threatened and endangered species.

96

00:21:04.950 --> 00:21:08.070

Kristen Bastis: Water Resources both surficial and.

97

00:21:09.570 --> 00:21:10.680

Kristen Bastis: underground.

98

00:21:12.990 --> 00:21:32.460

Kristen Bastis: Water resources and then land use, how the land has been being used and how it will be used as a result of the project um any visual impacts, to the area, this is quite a large solar installation and there may be visual impacts, to the surrounding areas.

99

00:21:34.110 --> 00:21:36.420

Kristen Bastis: Transportation includes traffic.

100

00:21:37.470 --> 00:21:38.430

Kristen Bastis: and any.

101

00:21:40.320 --> 00:21:44.610

Kristen Bastis: Any issues regarding roads and other types of transportation.

102

00:21:46.920 --> 00:21:54.270

Kristen Bastis: cultural resources, we talked a little bit about that in the historic properties discussion that those include archaeological.

103

00:21:54.780 --> 00:22:10.290

Kristen Bastis: resources, as well as above ground like historic homes and farms, the century farmstead and things like that, and then, of course, any sites that are sacred to Native Americans in the area.

104

00:22:11.370 --> 00:22:14.370

Kristen Bastis: will be covered with our tribal consultation.

105

00:22:16.410 --> 00:22:31.290

Kristen Bastis: Public health and safety issues if the project has any impact on that in the area and then also socioeconomics and environmental justice, does the project unfairly.

106

00:22:32.610 --> 00:22:40.140

Kristen Bastis: have an impact on people of color or low economic status.

107

00:22:42.720 --> 00:22:43.440

Kristen Bastis: Next slide.

108

00:22:47.130 --> 00:23:03.060

Kristen Bastis: And these are some ways to comment you can send a comment to this email address or questions all the information that is publicly available about the project is on the RUS website at this address.

109

00:23:04.770 --> 00:23:06.630

Kristen Bastis: So you can visit there for.

110

00:23:07.830 --> 00:23:09.630

Kristen Bastis: A transcript of.

111

00:23:10.680 --> 00:23:13.440

Kristen Bastis: yesterday's presentation and today's presentation.

112

00:23:14.700 --> 00:23:24.450

Kristen Bastis: In a few probably in a few weeks, but the presentation itself is already up on our website, as well as the draft environmental impact statement.

113

00:23:25.830 --> 00:23:47.880

Kristen Bastis: And a site selection study and the public scoping materials as well, the presentation and the transcript of those meetings are all posted on the RUS website, right now, at this address, and this email address will be active until the end of the public comment period on December sixth.

114

00:23:53.730 --> 00:23:54.810

Kristen Bastis: So next slide.

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00:23:57.630 --> 00:24:06.300

Kristen Bastis: So a little bit about the project, this is a kind of a general overview, this area is what we call the application area.

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00:24:07.470 --> 00:24:19.650

Kristen Bastis: And the project will be fully contained within this area, although it won't take up the entire area design is still in process.

117

00:24:20.190 --> 00:24:41.940

Kristen Bastis: And there are two alternatives that fit with inside this larger application area, the project will be a 250 megawatt solar array with battery storage facility it's located in Garfield County and this application area is just a little over 12,000 acres.

118

00:24:43.260 --> 00:24:49.440

Kristen Bastis: You can see this substation in yellow this will be where the solar array ties in.

119

00:24:54.270 --> 00:24:58.080

Kristen Bastis: I think that's about it for this slide.

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00:24:59.700 --> 00:25:12.270

Kristen Bastis: And then the project, there has been a 20-year power purchase agreement with Western Farmers Electric Cooperative which operates in Oklahoma and a little bit in New Mexico.

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00:25:13.110 --> 00:25:23.100

Kristen Bastis: So the power generated from this project will serve the local Oklahoma community and a little bit in Eastern New Mexico.

122

00:25:24.720 --> 00:25:27.390

Kristen Bastis: So it is a local of local benefit.

123

00:25:29.280 --> 00:25:29.910

Kristen Bastis: Next slide.

124

00:25:35.790 --> 00:25:36.120

Kristen Bastis: and

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00:25:36.780 --> 00:25:38.700

Kristen Bastis: I will turn it over to Sue.

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00:25:38.880 --> 00:25:40.200

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: yep thanks Kristen.

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00:25:40.680 --> 00:25:42.390

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So again, my name is Sue Wilmot.

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00:25:42.480 --> 00:25:49.080

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: I'm a senior environmental planner with SWCA Environmental Consultants and we are the third party.

129

00:25:49.980 --> 00:26:10.500

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: contractor that was brought in to assist RUS with development of the EIS, I want to take the next 10 ish minutes to just provide a very high level overview of some of the key contents in the draft EIS, if you have not done so yet I definitely encourage you to download a copy.

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00:26:11.730 --> 00:26:26.340

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Of the draft EIS it's available on the on RUS' website, if you are a local Garfield County resident, you can also review a printed copy or an electronic copy at the Enid Library as well.

131

00:26:27.810 --> 00:26:36.540

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So the EIS has four main chapters .Chapter one really provides the project background description of purpose and need a lot of the content that.

132

00:26:37.170 --> 00:26:45.870

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Kristen has touched on already in this presentation and then the remaining chapters really focus on, so the alternative development and environmental analysis.

133

00:26:46.740 --> 00:26:55.950

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: that's conducted in the EIS just as a brief recap the primary purpose of a need for the project.

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00:26:56.400 --> 00:27:07.230

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: is to provide the additional generation capacity needed by Western Farmers Electric Cooperative who's the energy buyer for them to ensure safe.

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00:27:07.710 --> 00:27:19.530

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Adequate and reliable power to their members at the lowest reasonable cost so there's a lot more information and background on that purpose need in Chapter one if you're interested.

136

00:27:20.580 --> 00:27:36.990

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: We also talk provide information on the purpose of need and background, as part of our scoping presentation that Kristen mentioned earlier, so you can also go to RUS' website and take a look at the scoping materials, additionally, if you are so inclined.

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00:27:38.010 --> 00:27:45.480

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: But for now I'm going to move on to Chapter two, which really describes the alternative development process that happened in the EIS.

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00:27:46.200 --> 00:27:57.570

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: As this slide shows that EIS looks at three alternatives, we two to action alternatives and one no action alternative and I'll talk about each of these briefly so next slide.

139

00:28:00.660 --> 00:28:11.310

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So the proposed action is the action being put forth by the applicant and it as Kristen mentioned it's 250 megawatt solar array plus 200 megawatts of battery storage.

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00:28:12.030 --> 00:28:27.060

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: That project has a variety of components, including photovoltaic arrays solar trackers power inverters linear structures that includes things like access roads collection lines transmission lines.

141

00:28:27.630 --> 00:28:35.220

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: As well as the battery storage itself additionally the applicant intends to fence the lands that contain those components.

142

00:28:35.700 --> 00:28:57.600

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So, collectively, the project footprint covers approximately 2,100 acres and I do say approximately because the design is still being refined so we anticipate that any any refinements to the components and or footprints will be disclosed as part of the final EIS.

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00:28:58.860 --> 00:29:11.220

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Likewise impacts that are disclosed in the draft EIS represent the best available information, we have now, but are certainly subject to change based on input we received during these draft.

144

00:29:11.880 --> 00:29:20.490

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: comment periods, as well as again any updates to the project and design provided by the applicant okay next slide.

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00:29:21.720 --> 00:29:23.880

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Just briefly talking about the.

146

00:29:24.930 --> 00:29:39.360

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: duration or timeline for the project, the applicant is planning to start construction in summer of next year, assuming that they've obtained all relevant authorizations and permits it's an 18 month.

147

00:29:40.440 --> 00:29:47.340

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: approximate construction duration, with a targeted operation date of December 2023.

148

00:29:48.600 --> 00:29:49.080

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Next slide.

149

00:29:52.920 --> 00:29:57.750

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So in addition to the proposed action, the EIS does look at one other action alternative.

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00:29:58.410 --> 00:30:08.220

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: The alternative is similar to proposed action in many ways it has the same project components, has the same construction activities and general duration.

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00:30:08.610 --> 00:30:21.930

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: However, is sited on lands east of the proposed action layout with still within that \ that overarching application area so on the map, the proposed action layout is in red on the left.

152

00:30:22.440 --> 00:30:33.300

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: and other action lands are in yellow on the rights they cover approximately 1,700 acres although it's important to note that no.

153

00:30:34.500 --> 00:30:38.670

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Land leasing leasing has occurred, for these.

154

00:30:39.930 --> 00:30:52.830

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: These yellow lands, they just represent lands that would be, or could be suitable for construction, so if this alternative were selected the applicant was still need to obtain land access for for this alternative.

155

00:30:54.270 --> 00:30:54.780

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Next slide.

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00:30:56.760 --> 00:31:04.620

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So the last alternative evaluated in the EIS is the no action alternative so then under the no action alternative project would not be constructed.

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00:31:04.980 --> 00:31:17.400

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: And there would not be any impacts associated with the project, however, it does not mean that nothing would change, one of the new CEQ regs is to.

158

00:31:17.910 --> 00:31:26.190

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Make sure we're thinking about current and reasonably foreseeable actions as part of our baseline so when you read the no action.

159

00:31:27.120 --> 00:31:41.550

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: and review its analysis in the EIS it does discuss other actions that would occur irregardless of this project and how they may affect environmental and or social resources that are present in the analysis area.

160

00:31:42.480 --> 00:31:51.480

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Additionally, the no action does not meet the purpose of need, it does would not allow Western Farmers to increase their.

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00:31:52.200 --> 00:32:02.820

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: generation capacity to meet their member cooperatives electricity demand and Western Farmers would also lose opportunities to expand their renewable energy.

162

00:32:03.600 --> 00:32:13.170

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: portfolio That being said, CEQ regs do require us to evaluate the no action alternative so that's why it's included as part of the EIS.

163

00:32:14.820 --> 00:32:27.090

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: In addition to these three alternatives RUS did engage in a broader alternative development process and looked at a wide range of other options that could meet the purpose and need.

164

00:32:27.840 --> 00:32:42.570

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Those are described in section 2.2 of the EIS so I definitely encourage you to go take a look there if you're interested includes things like alternative solar or battery technology options for different transmission or interconnect.

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00:32:43.800 --> 00:32:49.290

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Low locate locations, ultimately, however, none of those were carried forward because.

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00:32:50.010 --> 00:32:56.940

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: The Rural Utility Service determined that either they would not meet purpose, a need, or that would not help resolve impacts.

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00:32:57.720 --> 00:33:16.260

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: That we're now could be associated with the proposed action so definitely take a look at that Chapter two is alternatives is often considered the heart of of our of our NEPA document so we always welcome feedback and thoughts on on that process.

168

00:33:17.550 --> 00:33:18.570

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Okay next slide.

169

00:33:22.320 --> 00:33:32.550

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Alright, so now I'm going to jump into some overarching findings that are disclosed in the draft EIS for various resources.

170

00:33:34.080 --> 00:33:48.090

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: related to the resources that Kristen mentioned earlier in this presentation, these are just a very quick overview really just focused on the proposed actions, since the other action alternative has, in most cases very similar.

171

00:33:49.260 --> 00:33:51.870

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: magnitude and duration of impacts.

172

00:33:53.280 --> 00:34:04.470

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: And so, if you're interested in any of these resources, I definitely encourage you to go to Chapter three and read about them in detail, but we'll touch on briefly now or as briefly as I can.

173

00:34:05.580 --> 00:34:17.250

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So this slide contains physical resources that were evaluated in the EIS we have air quality geology and soils and water resources with regards to air quality, certainly.

174

00:34:18.630 --> 00:34:31.650

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Project activities, most notably construction equipment vehicle use would result in temporary increases to air air emissions, as well as greenhouse gases and possibly generate additional dust.

175

00:34:32.640 --> 00:34:54.360

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: However long term replacing traditional fossil fuel sources in the grid with renewable energy sources, such as this project could help reduce emissions long term regionally and also help reduce potential health health events health risks associated with air pollution.

176

00:34:56.040 --> 00:35:02.970

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: For geology and soil certainly excavation activities could result in displacement or alteration of soil and rock.

177

00:35:03.570 --> 00:35:19.680

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Additionally, ground disturbing activities could lead to some localized increases in erosion, or soil compaction, at least within the footprints of the more permanent structures we could also have some again small localized loss of soil productivity.

178

00:35:20.730 --> 00:35:22.440

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: For water resources it.

179

00:35:23.940 --> 00:35:28.380

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: I think it's important to premise this with the fact that the applicant has.

180

00:35:29.040 --> 00:35:41.490

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: purposely chose a larger application area so that they could work to site the project in ways that would avoid or minimize resources, to the extent practicable and one of the resources that they looked at very carefully is water resources, so.

181

00:35:42.750 --> 00:35:56.250

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So the project has been sited to avoid you know streams water bodies floodplains to go to the maximum extent that they can that being said, the draft plan does have.

182

00:35:57.750 --> 00:36:15.420

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Some localized aquatic resources water resources that could have impacts due open trenching or sedimentation and again with caveat being that design is still being refined and so any updates to impacts us to this resource will be disclosed in the final EIS.

183

00:36:16.710 --> 00:36:24.450

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Groundwater uses anticipated to be negligible just based on the limited amount required for construction, operation next slide.

184

00:36:27.180 --> 00:36:47.970

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: With regards to biological resources certainly ground disturbing any type of vegetation removal type of activities would lead to vegetation removal on lands outside the construction footprint, but within the fenced area those would be mowed, so we could also have some.

185

00:36:49.500 --> 00:37:01.620

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: vegetation conversion and some more grassland type habitats, based on our analysis evaluation of special special status species in that we could have presence we don't.

186

00:37:02.280 --> 00:37:09.240

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: We don't not aware of any special status plant species that would be present and could be impacted by the project.

187

00:37:09.990 --> 00:37:25.800

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: RUS also anticipates that applicant would implement their invasive species and noxious weed management plan to help reduce the risk of introduction or spread of those types of invasive or noxious plants.

188

00:37:26.910 --> 00:37:37.140

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: For wetlands similar to other aquatic resources, the project has been sited to you know avoid wetlands, to the extent extent practicable.

189

00:37:37.620 --> 00:37:57.450

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: But again, based on the current draft plan, there is some limited potential for wetland fill or conversion RUS does expect applicant would comply with section 404 of the Clean Water Act and obtain any necessary authorizations through the US Army Corp to address wetland impacts.

190

00:37:58.770 --> 00:38:10.260

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: With regards to wildlife, again ground clearing vegetation removal activities associated with the project could lead to habitat loss or alteration.

191

00:38:10.920 --> 00:38:17.850

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: RUS has submitted a Biological Assessment to the Fish and Wildlife Service as part of Section 7 informal consultation.

192

00:38:18.540 --> 00:38:26.010

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: As part of that BA biological assessment there's a preliminary determination of no effect for most threatened.

193

00:38:26.670 --> 00:38:39.810

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: or endangered wildlife species that could be present as well as a termination determination of may affect but not likely to adversely affect for whooping crane but, again, that consultation is ongoing.

194

00:38:40.290 --> 00:38:53.520

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: And the final EIS will disclose the outcome of that including any potential changes to determinations with regards to threatened or endangered wildlife species next slide.

195

00:38:56.670 --> 00:39:01.320

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So, moving on, then the more kind of social or ecological.

196

00:39:02.730 --> 00:39:11.070

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: economic impacts with regards to transportation certainly increases in equipment and or vehicle traffic associate with project.

197

00:39:11.910 --> 00:39:16.050

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: could increase traffic levels on local roads, although.

198

00:39:17.040 --> 00:39:26.670

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: The RUS does anticipate that applicant would coordinate with all relevant agencies and comply with regulations to help minimize those types of transportation impacts.

199

00:39:27.180 --> 00:39:39.960

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: The applicant also prepared glint and glare analysis which determined that there would be no predicted glare occurrences for runway approaches associated with the adjacent Air Force base or Woodring Airport.

200

00:39:41.160 --> 00:39:56.160

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: For visual resources there, there could be changes to the view shed for specific locations that have an unobstructed view of construction activities and or permitted infrastructure, although both.

201

00:39:57.720 --> 00:40:10.290

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: natural vegetation screening that that may already occur, as well as the revegetation so restoration activities that occur post construction would help minimize some of those visual impacts long term.

202

00:40:11.760 --> 00:40:22.620

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: For cultural resources to date no archaeological resources have been found, although there are two centennial farm and ranch properties that occur in the area of potential effects.

203

00:40:23.640 --> 00:40:41.160

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: That being said, is Kristen mention there are cultural service ongoing so any new information that comes out of the surveys will be disclosed in the final EIS additionally RUS is consulting with currently consulting with state agencies and tribes as part of the Section 106 process.

204

00:40:42.240 --> 00:40:47.220

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: to identify and resolve any potential adverse effects that may be.

205

00:40:48.270 --> 00:40:49.410

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: That may be identified.

206

00:40:50.970 --> 00:41:10.560

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: and land use, of course, the land use currently the land in the analysis areas predominantly agricultural in nature that's that's a lot of a lot of ag activities happening in the analysis area, and so, certainly the project would result in conversion of those agricultural uses to more developed.

207

00:41:11.580 --> 00:41:14.250

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: You know, energy, energy uses.

208

00:41:16.170 --> 00:41:26.520

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: That would change land use for effective landowners, however, that change would be voluntary, as they you know, engage in a lease agreement with the applicant.

209

00:41:27.990 --> 00:41:37.950

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: For infrastructure, the impacts are anticipated to be negligible, because the applicant has again sited the project to avoid existing infrastructure such as pipelines or.

210

00:41:38.370 --> 00:41:48.360

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: You know residences or you know distribution distribution lines to to the maximum extent possible to avoid this impacts next slide.

211

00:41:50.490 --> 00:41:53.790

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Alright final slide and it's a lot thrown at you.

212

00:41:55.890 --> 00:42:09.660

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So with regards to noise there obviously would be a temporary increases in noise associated with construction predominantly as well as some to lesser degree, operation and maintenance activities in the analysis area.

213

00:42:11.460 --> 00:42:26.010

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So those would be noticeable in localized areas, but that noise, the noise levels would dissipate fairly fairly quickly over distance, particularly if there's any type of vegetative or or other, you know noise obstacles.

214

00:42:27.210 --> 00:42:32.880

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: That that would preclude its dissemination and in terms of.

215

00:42:35.640 --> 00:42:46.620

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Noise sensitive receptors which typically define as, as you know, schools residences churches, you know populations locations, that would be more vulnerable to noise impacts.

216

00:42:47.250 --> 00:43:00.390

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: The draft EIS made to determine that there would be no significant adverse impacts, so no long term discomfort or hearing loss associated with noise project generated noise.

217

00:43:01.470 --> 00:43:11.850

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: For public health and safety that could be a temporary increase risk for traffic and worker incident just because of the increase in in volume and activity on local roads.

218

00:43:12.450 --> 00:43:20.520

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: However, RUS does anticipate that applicant would follow all you know standard OSHA and other safety requirements to minimize that.

219

00:43:21.120 --> 00:43:39.180

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: there's also a small long-term risk associated with potential fire or severe weather, but again expectation is that the applicant would comply with all requirements, you know building electric codes national electric safety requirements to.

220

00:43:40.200 --> 00:43:46.680

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: take into account, you know fire risk and severe weather events in design of their projects.

221

00:43:47.550 --> 00:44:03.300

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: And then finally with regards to potential electromagnetic electromagnetic field exposure based on best available science, the draft EIS made a determine that determination that once operational EMF levels associated with the project would be negligible.

222

00:44:04.800 --> 00:44:08.940

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: And the final item on the slide is related to socioeconomics and environmental justice.

223

00:44:09.450 --> 00:44:18.960

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: And certainly there would be economic benefits, with the project is associated with employment look like spending with regards to environmental justice populations.

224

00:44:19.560 --> 00:44:28.560

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: There are no low income or minority populations, based on the census data and we follow methodology through the EPA promising practices.

225

00:44:29.700 --> 00:44:30.540

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: That being said.

226

00:44:32.010 --> 00:44:48.030

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: You know if there are smaller pockets that aren't captured by census data based on the impacts for other resources in the draft EIS impacts to air quality water quality land use public safety transportation none those rise to significantly.

227

00:44:49.230 --> 00:44:58.710

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Significantly adverse level, additionally, you know RUS is in consultation with interested tribes through Section 106 to identify.

228

00:44:59.130 --> 00:45:12.660

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: and resolve any potential adverse effects so based on that finding the draft EIS does make a determination, there would be no disproportionately high or adverse impacts to environmental justice populations.

229

00:45:13.800 --> 00:45:17.160

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: And with that I will stop talking and turn it back over to Meg.

230

00:45:18.990 --> 00:45:26.490

Meg Perry, SWCA: hey Thank you Sue and Kristen for those presentations and thanks to all of you for sticking with us this evening.

231

00:45:27.240 --> 00:45:46.950

Meg Perry, SWCA: we're turning now to the portion of this meeting focused on your questions and comments so I'll just share a reminder, about how your options for participating evening, and we do really want to hear from you, if you have any questions or would like to share comment for the project record.

232

00:45:48.540 --> 00:45:53.760

Meg Perry, SWCA: You can type a question into us using the Q&A feature in Zoom so you should see.

233

00:45:54.390 --> 00:46:01.980

Meg Perry, SWCA: That little icon with to talk bubbles, and that says Q&A if you click on that it will open up a window, where you can type in your question.

234

00:46:02.610 --> 00:46:18.990

Meg Perry, SWCA: And then hit send and we'll see that pop up and we can address it live here during the webinar if you'd like to share a question verbally, you can raise your hand in Zoom to let us know and you'll find the raise hand under reactions, there should be a little reactions button.

235

00:46:20.820 --> 00:46:31.410

Meg Perry, SWCA: or you may see just a raise hand button in your Zoom window and then, if you're calling on the phone, you can use star nine to raise your hand so.

236

00:46:32.760 --> 00:46:38.970

Meg Perry, SWCA: Those are options for sharing your questions and comments with us and the rest of the time is yours to.

237

00:46:39.960 --> 00:46:49.500

Meg Perry, SWCA: ask for any clarifications, based on what you heard or to share any comments and so just so you're aware and comments that are shared during this meeting will be part of the project record.

238

00:46:50.730 --> 00:46:57.060

Meg Perry, SWCA: And formerly documented as part of the DEIS process.

239

00:46:58.590 --> 00:47:05.130

Meg Perry, SWCA: Questions will be addressed live they'll be captured as part of the summary of this meeting, but they won't be formally recorded in the project record.

240

00:47:06.960 --> 00:47:11.610

Meg Perry, SWCA: So with that I'll turn it to our attendees to see what questions or comments any of you might have.

241

00:47:13.890 --> 00:47:25.140

Meg Perry, SWCA: I'm just going to post again in the chat the link to the project website where you can find all the background information, including the slides that are being shared this evening.

242

00:47:26.430 --> 00:47:28.230

Meg Perry, SWCA: In case that's helpful to you in.

243

00:47:31.170 --> 00:47:34.320

Meg Perry, SWCA: deciding what you might like to ask for share the comment.

244

00:47:44.850 --> 00:47:51.270

Meg Perry, SWCA: just give folks a minute or two to think it over we've thrown a lot of information at you in a short time so.

245

00:47:56.070 --> 00:47:57.840

Meg Perry, SWCA: Let us know what you'd like to hear.

246

00:48:13.440 --> 00:48:28.710

Meg Perry, SWCA: And also just a reminder that the questions and comments are really useful to the team at this point in the process to help refine the draft EIS information so anything you might be wondering.

247

00:48:30.150 --> 00:48:38.160

Meg Perry, SWCA: is good information for us to have so that we can help me the final EIS as as complete and good as possible.

248

00:49:05.160 --> 00:49:10.020

Meg Perry, SWCA: I'm not seeing any hands up or any questions in the Q&A but.

249

00:49:11.160 --> 00:49:18.240

Meg Perry, SWCA: We will stay on for a while, in case any questions come up or comments that you'd like to share and.

250

00:49:20.520 --> 00:49:26.760

Meg Perry, SWCA: I'll give it another minute and then we'll run through a few reminders about next steps and your opportunity to comment.

251

00:49:29.370 --> 00:49:32.580

Meg Perry, SWCA: And questions any comments you'd like to share.

252

00:49:44.070 --> 00:49:48.990

Meg Perry, SWCA: Okay, see I'm Claire Birch you shared a question in the Q&A.

253

00:49:51.120 --> 00:49:57.510

Meg Perry, SWCA: And the question was you mentioned battery storage were there any specific considerations for the battery component.

254

00:50:01.800 --> 00:50:05.370

Meg Perry, SWCA: So wanting to understand better that element of the project.

255

00:50:08.910 --> 00:50:10.920

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: I can chime in briefly.

256

00:50:12.660 --> 00:50:18.720

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: So I would say, Claire that the EIS currently evaluates the battery storage.

257

00:50:21.660 --> 00:50:36.030

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: as of part of the whole so it looks at kind of how you know the footprints and you know what you know what what what resources it overlaps and how it might impact those there's not a.

258

00:50:37.320 --> 00:50:45.750

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Specific analysis solely for the the battery component, so it sounds like that might be a great comment, if there are.

259

00:50:47.280 --> 00:50:50.970

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: Particular analyses or or or.

260

00:50:53.670 --> 00:50:58.620

Sue Wilmot, SWCA: special considerations you'd like to see in the EIS that it does it cover we'd love to hear it.

261

00:51:02.250 --> 00:51:02.820

Meg Perry, SWCA: Thanks.

262

00:51:04.860 --> 00:51:05.580

Meg Perry, SWCA: Good question.

263

00:51:17.490 --> 00:51:18.810

Meg Perry, SWCA: Other questions or comments.

264

00:51:26.970 --> 00:51:35.760

Meg Perry, SWCA: Okay, well, we will be keeping the line open for anybody who does have questions and comments um and just as a reminder.

265

00:51:36.810 --> 00:51:49.170

Meg Perry, SWCA: The deadline to submit comments during the public comment period is December six and you can send comments to the email shown on the screen, which has also been shared in the chat.

266

00:51:51.060 --> 00:51:54.690

Meg Perry, SWCA: And then Kristen would you like to just speak to these next steps coming up.

267

00:51:56.940 --> 00:52:11.910

Kristen Bastis: Sure um yes, so when the public comment period closes on December six, we will take all the comments we have received and address those and thoughtfully in the final EIS.

268

00:52:12.480 --> 00:52:23.610

Kristen Bastis: And then we will issue a notice of availability for the final EIS and publish that in the Federal Register and in local newspapers.

269

00:52:26.550 --> 00:52:32.070

Kristen Bastis: And I guess they'll be also be a copy at the Enid library, just like the draft.

270

00:52:35.760 --> 00:52:50.400

Meg Perry, SWCA: Great all right well with that we'll we'll stay on if there any other questions or comments and otherwise we are adjourned so Thank you everyone once again for your time and attention this evening and your interest in this project and the NEPA process.