

WGA Western Renewable Energy Zone (WREZ) Initiative
Environment and Lands Working Group & Western Governors Wildlife Council
Exclusion & Avoid List – June 2009

The Environment and Lands Working Group (ELWG), working cooperatively with the Western Governors Wildlife Council (WGWC), has developed a list of lands that have been categorized within the Candidate Study Areas as either “Exclusion” or “Avoidance” for purposes of establishing the Qualified Resource Areas. The criteria for each of these categories are described below, and does not include wildlife-specific categorizations identified separately through the WGWC. The list was circulated and revised based on public comment feedback received in October 2008.

“Exclusion” Criteria

- Areas where development is already precluded by statute or regulation (federal, state, local)
[NOTE: WREZ ZITA resource exclusions were also be applied (urban areas, slope, watersheds, wetlands, military lands)]

“Avoidance” Criteria

- Areas that should be avoided because of purpose, policy, or restrictions.

In developing the exclusion and initial avoidance areas, the following premises were used.

- (a) Categorization of areas as “avoidance” does not represent a binding preclusion from future development. These areas are solely used to refine candidate study areas into qualified resource areas and ultimately renewable energy zones targeted for utility-scale development of wind, solar, or geothermal energy.
- (b) These categorizations are not intended to replace, supplement, or reverse any project site specific placement or associated permit or other land use mechanism. Future projects, whether placed in renewable energy zones or not, will need to undergo the appropriate environmental and permitting reviews.
- (c) These categorizations will not directly apply, at this time, to the assessment of pathways for potential transmission lines or associated infrastructure, and another work process will be undertaken later in the renewable energy zone identification process to determine which of these land type determinations also apply to transmission siting.
- (d) The categorization will represent the current understanding of these lands as of this point in time, while recognizing that future changes in policy, law, and/or knowledge could change the categorization.
- (e) Categorization of lands within qualified resource areas will be limited to utility-scale wind, solar, and geothermal resources primarily, and hydropower and biomass in specific instances.
- (f) Identification of lands was limited to:
 - a. the United States located in the Western Interconnection;
 - b. areas of Baja, Mexico within the Western Interconnection; and
 - c. Alberta and British Columbia, Canada.

List of “Exclusion” Areas

Federal:

- BLM Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for geothermal development
- BLM National Landscape Conservation System Units except as specifically for wind and geothermal development
- BLM National Monuments
- BLM Wilderness Study Areas
- BLM, NPS, USFS and USFWS Designated Wilderness Areas
- Units of the National Park System
- US Forest Service primitive areas*
- US Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas in the 9th Circuit
- USFS Wilderness Study Areas*
- USFS Recommended Wilderness*
- USFS Wild and Scenic Rivers*
- Units of the National Wildlife Refuge System
- Canadian Marine Protected Areas
- Canadian Marine Wildlife Areas*
- Canadian Migratory Bird Sanctuaries
- Canadian National Historic Sites*¹
- Canadian National Parks
- Canadian National Wildlife Areas
- Jackson Pronghorn Migration Corridor (WY)
- WA State Natural Area Preserves
- WA State Natural Resource Conservation Areas
- Alberta Eastern Slopes Zone 1 & 2
- Alberta Ecological Reserves
- Alberta Heritage Rangelands
- Alberta Natural Areas
- Alberta Provincial Parks
- Alberta Provincial Recreation Areas
- Alberta Wilderness Areas
- Alberta Wildlands Parks
- Alberta Willmore Wilderness Park
- British Columbia Class A Parks
- British Columbia Class B Parks
- British Columbia Class C Parks
- British Columbia Biodiversity Areas*
- British Columbia Conservancies
- British Columbia Ecological Reserves
- British Columbia Motor Vehicle Closure Areas
- British Columbia Protected Areas
- British Columbia Recreational Areas

State/Province:

- State-held conservation easements where policy precludes development (can only map if data individually submitted by states)*²
- State lands designated through a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) that are legally protected*³
- Existing Conservation and Mitigation Banks
- CA State Forests
- CA State Parks
- CA State Wetlands
- CA State Wildlife Areas
- CA State Wilderness Areas
- ID State Wildlife Management Areas and lands

¹ Only data available for Alberta.

² CA and MT data included in QRAs.

³ CA and UT data included in QRAs.

List of “Avoidance” Areas

Federal:

- BLM Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for wind and solar development
- BLM National Landscape Conservation System Units for solar development except as specifically excepted
- BLM Visual Resource Management Class I and Class II*
- BLM RMP designated lands which have development constraints*, such as:
 - Seasonal restriction areas
 - ROW avoidance areas
 - Special Recreation Management Areas
 - OHV open areas
 - No Surface Occupancy (NSO) Restriction areas
 - Research Natural Areas
 - Wildlife Management Areas (and Sikes Act tracts)
 - Lands inventoried by BLM and found to have wilderness characteristics
 - BLM lands managed for wilderness characteristics
- Lands proposed for designation in federal legislation (Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, California Wild Heritage Act of 2007, California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park Wilderness Act, and Eastern Sierra and Northern San Gabriel Wild Heritage Act)*
- US Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas in the 10th Circuit
- US Forest Service Research Natural Areas and Proposed Research Natural Areas*
- US Forest Service Special Interest Areas*
- US Forest Service Congressional Reserved Areas - includes Riparian Conservation Areas*
- US Forest Service Administratively Withdrawn Areas*
- US Forest Service Backcountry, Non-motorized Land Management Zones*
- US Forest Service Critical Biological Areas*
- Canadian Forces Bases

State/Provincial:

- Lands acquired through federal funds for conservation purposes (i.e. Pittman-Robinson or Section 6 grants)*⁴
- State Wildlife Areas (those specific states where development is excluded are listed on the exclude list)*⁵
- State Parks (those specific states where development is excluded are listed on the exclude list)*⁶
- Existing Conservation and Mitigation Banks (those specific states where development is excluded are listed on the exclude list)*⁷
- Habitat Conservation Plans and NCCPs that are not legally protected (legally protected areas occur on the exclusion list)*⁸
- British Columbia Biodiversity Areas*
- British Columbia Endangered Species and Ecosystems – Masked Sensitive Occurrences and Non-sensitive Occurrences⁹

⁴ CA and MT data included in QRAs.

⁵ CA, ID, MT, NV, OR, WA, WY data included in QRAs.

⁶ CA, MT, OR, WA and WY data included in QRAs.

⁷ CA data included in QRAs.

⁸ CA data included in QRAs.

- British Columbia Old growth Management Areas¹⁰
- British Columbia Ungulate Winter Range¹¹
- British Columbia Wildlife Management Areas¹²
- Alberta Flagship Viewsheds*
- Alberta Sensitive Habitat Areas

*Data is incomplete or does not exist. For incomplete data, we used what was available and will continue to collect available data for inclusion in revised maps. Where data does not exist the information was not used to develop the WREZ Qualified Resource Area maps.

⁹ Not mapped for identifying the WREZ QRAs, but included in the wildlife sensitivity mapping effort through the Western Governors' Wildlife Council.

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² *ibid*