

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

---

## 1.1 Project Background

In August 2009, Palen Solar I, LLC (PSI), filed an Application For Certification (AFC) with the California Energy Commission (CEC or Commission) to construct and operate the Palen Solar Power Project (PSPP), a nominal 500 megawatt (MW) concentrating solar thermal electric power generating facility, in Riverside County using solar parabolic trough technology. The Commission issued a Final Decision approving two alternative configurations for the PSPP on December 15, 2010 (CEC 2010). Approved Reconfigured Alternative 3 focused the development of project facilities on federal land managed by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM), while Approved Reconfigured Alternative 2 allowed development of project facilities on federal land and on adjacent private parcels should PSI acquire the private parcels in the future.

On April 2, 2012 PSI, along with other Solar Millennium US-based companies, petitioned for relief in federal bankruptcy court. On June 21, 2012, the bankruptcy court approved the transfer of the project to BrightSource. The Commission subsequently approved a petition to amend the Final Decision to transfer ownership of the Project to Palen SEGS I, LLC, a wholly owned, indirect subsidiary of BrightSource (Order No. 12-0711-3). After approval of the ownership transfer of the Final Decision to Palen SEGS I, LLC, BrightSource and Abengoa Solar LLC formed a joint venture to develop the site using BrightSource's solar power tower technology. The joint venture company is known as Palen Solar Holdings (PSH) and the project has been renamed the Palen Solar Electric Generating System (PSEGS or Project).

The PSEGS site is located in the Southern California inland desert, approximately 10 miles east of Desert Center, in eastern Riverside County, California (see Figure 1, Vicinity Map). Project facilities will be located entirely on land managed by BLM, CACA # 48810, in Townships 5 and 6 South, Range 17 East.

PSEGS will replace the previously approved parabolic trough solar collection system and associated heat transfer fluid system with the BrightSource technology. The BrightSource technology uses heliostats—elevated mirrors guided by a tracking system mounted on a pylon—to focus the sun's rays on a solar receiver steam generator (SRSG) located atop a solar tower near the center of each solar field to create steam. The Project will be comprised of two adjacent solar fields and associated facilities with a total combined nominal output of approximately 500 MW. PSH proposes to develop PSEGS in two operational phases: each phase will consist of one solar field and power block with approximately 250 MW of electricity. Each phase will also share common facilities, including a common area containing an administration building, warehouse, evaporation ponds, maintenance complex and a meter/valve station for incoming natural gas service to the site; an onsite switchyard; and a single-circuit 230-kilovolt (kV) generation tie-line to deliver power to the electricity grid. Other onsite facilities will include access and maintenance roads (either dirt, gravel or paved), perimeter fencing, tortoise fencing and other ancillary security facilities (see Figure 2, Site Plan). Access to the site will be the same as the original and the PSEGS will continue to

interconnect to the regional transmission grid at Southern California Edison's (SCE) Red Bluff Substation, which is currently under construction.

The Project Disturbance Area, which includes both permanent and temporary disturbance, will be approximately 3,794 acres, and includes approximately 3575 acres for the Plant Site and approximately 119 acres for the linear facilities. No private parcels will be developed as part of the PSEGs project.

A revised Plan of Development has been submitted to the BLM and concurrent with the ongoing CEC permitting process, the BLM is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to support the process to issue a Record of Decision as required for PSH to utilize public lands owned by the federal government for the Modified Project. As part of the environmental review process, BLM has requested that PSH prepare and submit a draft Weed Management Plan (WMP) that can be evaluated as part of the Draft SEIS.

## 1.2 Plan Goals and Objectives

Condition of Certification BIO-14 in the CEC Final Decision for the original project requires preparation and implementation of a WMP. PSH has prepared this draft WMP to address monitoring, prevention, and management strategies for weed control during construction and operation of the Project. This document was prepared following guidance from other documents, including the approved weed management plans for the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System and Genesis Solar Project.

The goal of the WMP is to protect the biological resources surrounding the Project Disturbance Area from the expansion of weeds that may result from Project construction and maintenance activities and to avoid unintended harm from weed management techniques. To achieve this goal, the WMP provides specific guidance on early detection protocols, containment strategies, and control methods for noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are opportunistic, exotic plant species that readily colonize disturbed areas. Their introduction and spread often result in adverse effects to the environment and may also result in economic impacts. These plant species may exclude or out-compete desired native species and decrease species diversity.

WMP objectives need to be consistent with existing and proposed future Site conditions, the specific biology of the identified weed species, and environmental context of the Project. The WMP also must be consistent with all applicable Laws, Ordinances, Regulations, and Standards (LORS) (see Section 2.0). Weed management objectives for the Project include the following:

- **Prevention:** Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive weeds to the Project by implementing sound construction and site management strategies.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the Project Disturbance Area on a specific schedule to ensure early detection and treatment of incipient populations of weeds that may be new to the Project Disturbance Area and/or vicinity, plus populations of weeds already present that may be spreading into new areas.

- **Eradication:** Eliminate all individuals of a particular species within specified areas. This will be the goal for most weed species in the Project disturbance area, and is appropriate where the weed is of considerable economic and environmental concern and the population size is manageable. This method is also important to eliminate incipient populations before they can become problematic.
- **Suppression:** Reduce current infestation density, but not necessarily directed at reducing the total area occupied by the infestation. This applies to many widely distributed, high-density weeds where complete eradication is not feasible.
- **Containment:** Prevent infestation expansion and spread, with or without any attempt to reduce infestation density. Containment focuses on halting spread until suppression or eradication can be implemented, and is practical only to the extent that the spread of seeds or vegetative propagules can be prevented.

### 1.3 Management Roles

The Project Owner is ultimately responsible for implementing this WMP. It is anticipated that the Project's Contractors and other designees responsible for implementing components of the WMP will include the following:

- **Contractor(s):** Contractual language will be included in all construction documents and ongoing maintenance contracts to ensure that all contractors, subcontractors, vendors, maintenance personnel and other parties performing either construction or ongoing maintenance or repairs at the Project site abide by and implement the provisions of this WMP. Implementing the construction provisions of this WMP will be a part of construction contracts.
- **Construction Manager:** The construction manager will have ultimate oversight of the construction contractor to ensure compliance with the provisions of this WMP.
- **Environmental Compliance Manager:** The Project Owner will designate an Environmental Compliance Manager (ECM) to provide oversight of construction practices and ensure compliance with the provisions of this WMP. The ECM (including support staff as needed) will be contracted directly and coordinate with the construction manager to ensure contractor compliance with environmental requirements for construction.
- **Designated Biologist:** PSEGS will designate a qualified biologist who will be responsible for the direction and oversight of compliance activities consistent with all onsite biological Conditions of Certification. The Designated Biologist (DB) will be responsible for compliance with the provisions of this plan and have authority to ensure compliance.

- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM):** As the administering land management agency, BLM will provide ultimate approval of the contents of this WMP and compliance oversight of its provisions. BLM will provide timely review of work products including this WMP, modifications or amendments to this WMP, and subsequent reports as required by this WMP.