



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Rural Development**

A wide-angle photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a lush green field of crops, possibly soybeans, with rows extending into the distance. To the left, a wire fence runs parallel to the field. The background shows a rolling hill under a bright, overcast sky with scattered white clouds.

**SKELETON CREEK PROJECT  
EIS SCOPING MEETING  
MARCH 30, 2021**

# AGENDA

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 4:00 CT | Welcome and logistics   |
| 4:10 CT | Agency opening remarks  |
| 4:15 CT | Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NEPA process and timeline</li><li>• Proposed Project overview</li><li>• Preliminary analysis and alternatives</li></ul> |
| 4:45 CT | Questions and comments  |
| 8:00 CT | Scoping meeting closes  |

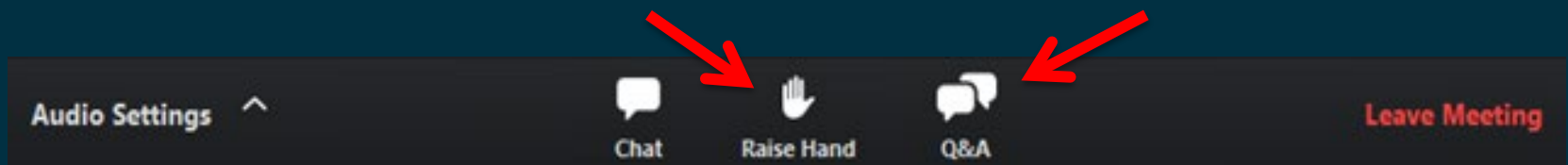
# WELCOME

## Skeleton Creek EIS Virtual Public Meeting

1. Learn about the Project
2. Understand the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
3. Learn how to provide public comments on the environmental impact statement (EIS)

# 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
- If you are calling in on your phone, you will have the opportunity to ask verbal questions after the presentation by using the **Raise Hand** function
- Please watch the **Chat** for additional information



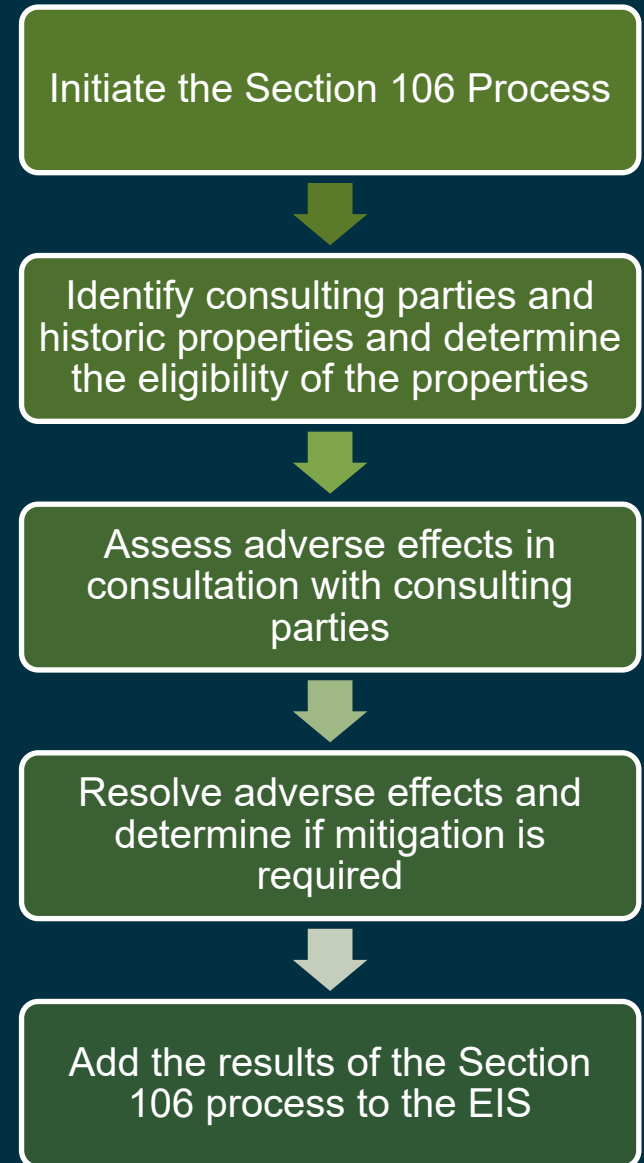
# NEPA PROCESS

- Rural Utilities Service (RUS) will review the Applicant's funding request through an EIS
- EIS process begins with public scoping
- We need your comments to help determine issues and alternatives to analyze in the EIS



# 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 EIS



# HOW TO COMMENT

- We want to hear from you!
- Please submit comments via email:  
[SkeletonCreekSolarPublicComments@usda.gov](mailto:SkeletonCreekSolarPublicComments@usda.gov)
- Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, hard copies of mail will not be collected.

# ISSUES UNDER CONSIDERATION

- Soils and geology
- Air quality
- Noise
- Biological resources
  - Vegetation
  - Wetlands and riparian areas
  - Wildlife
  - Special-status species
- Land resources
  - Land use
  - Farmlands
  - Formally classified lands
  - Recreation
- 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](mailto:SkeletonCreekSolarPublicComments@usda.gov)



## RUS website

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/environmental-study/skeleton-creek-solar-and-battery-storage-project-garfield-county-oklahoma>

Please visit the Project website for additional information

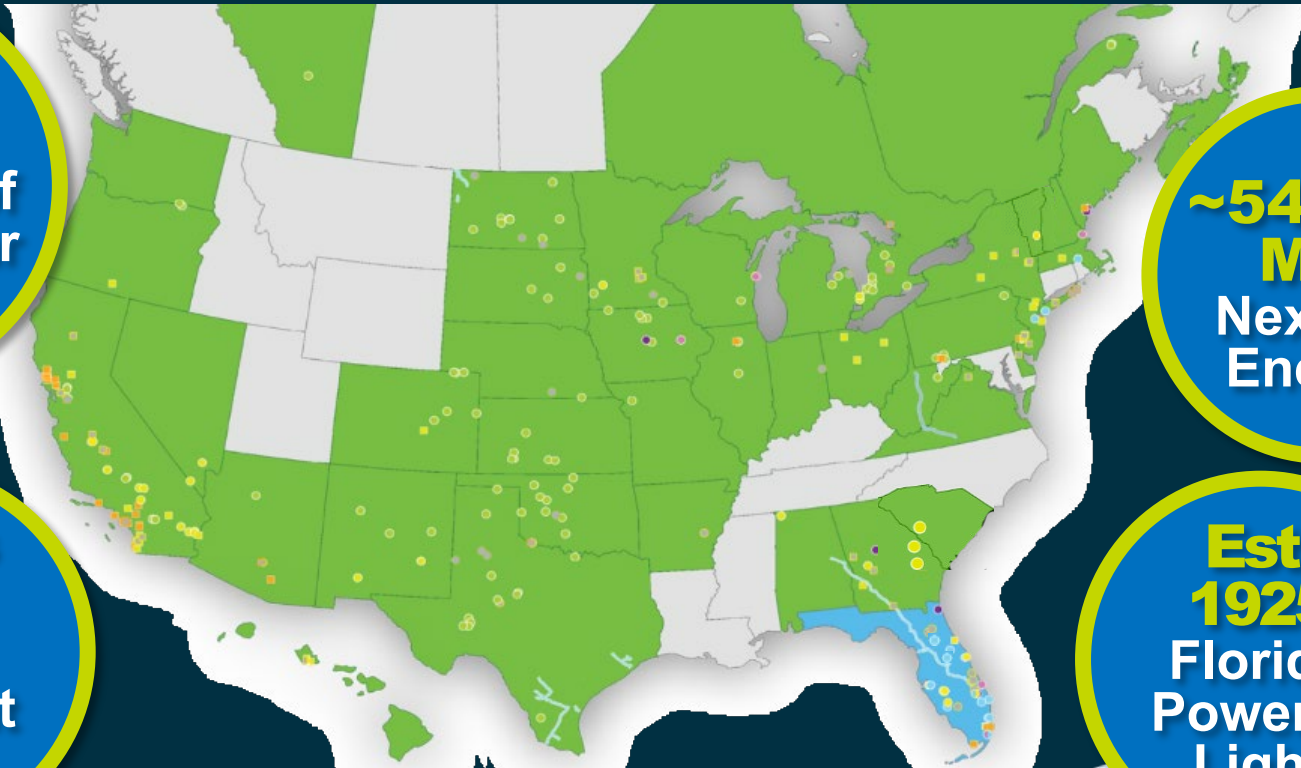
# NEXTERA ENERGY IS A RENEWABLE ENERGY LEADER

**World's  
#1**  
generator of  
wind & solar  
energy

Assets  
in  
**37**  
different  
states

**~54,000  
MW**  
NextEra  
Energy

**Est.  
1925**  
Florida  
Power &  
Light

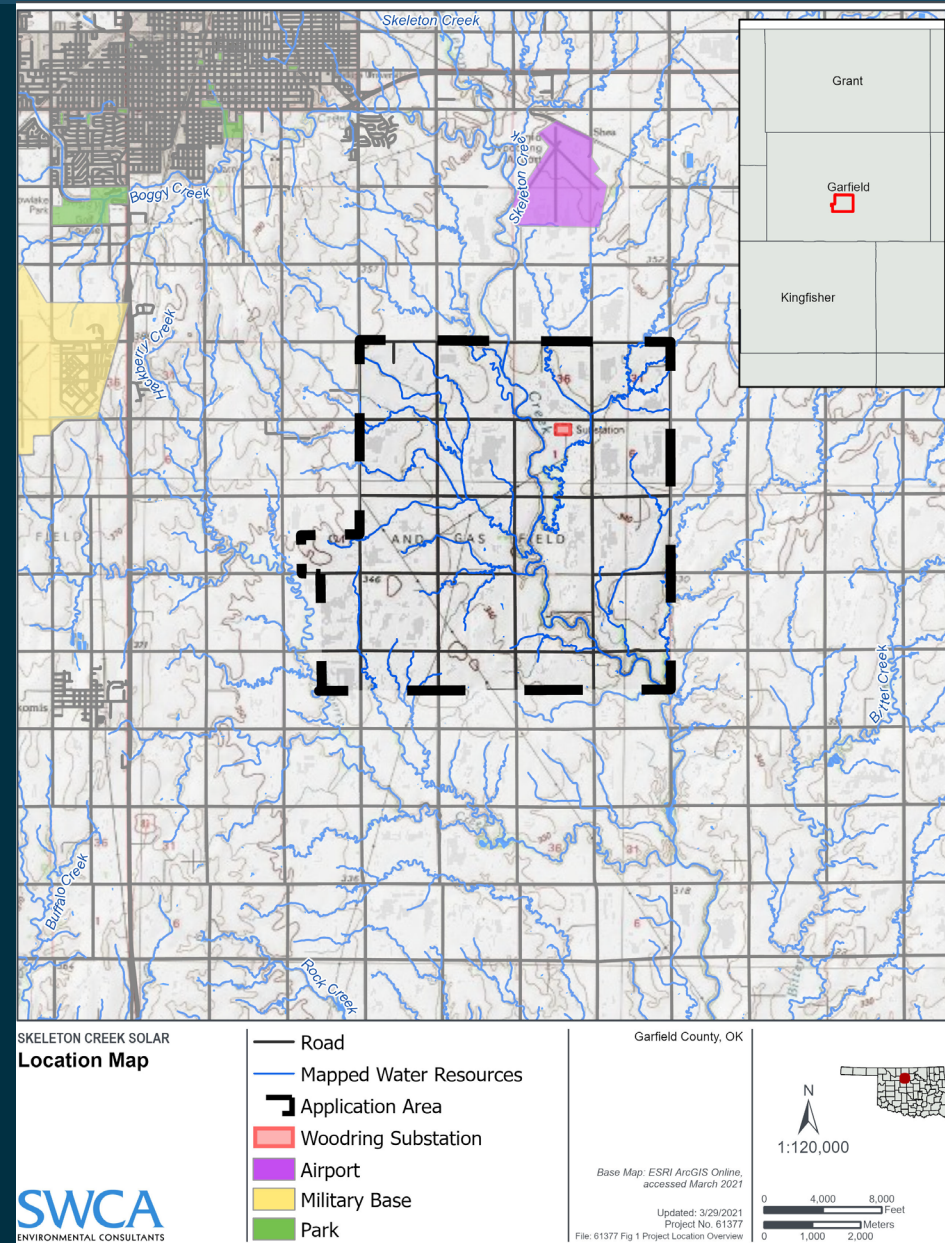


Providing Clean Energy  
Across North America

LEGEND:  
● Wind ● Natural Gas ● Nuclear ● Solar (universal) ● Solar  
● Battery Energy Storage ● Other ● Development/Construction ● Pipeline  
States and provinces served by: ■ NextEra Energy Resources ■ Florida Power & Light Company  
Locations with more than one facility are illustrated with a single dot; locations are those in operation as of February 2017.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

- 250-MW solar
- 200-MW/800-MW-hour storage facility
- Located in Garfield County, Oklahoma
- Application Area encompasses approximately 12,250 acres
- Project will encompass up to 6,500 acres of buildable area



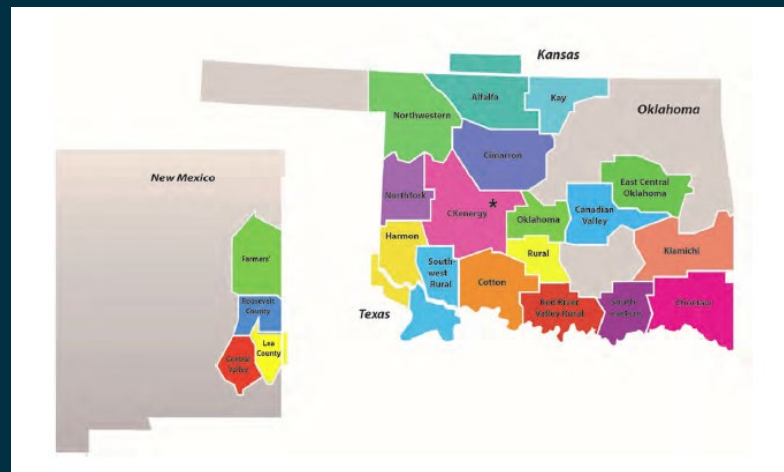
# PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **Currently optimizing the layout to maximize resource avoidance and minimize impacts**
- **Includes substation and approximately 1- to 2-mile 345-kV transmission line to connect to existing OG&E Woodring substation**



# SKELETON CREEK ENERGY CENTER PROJECT OVERVIEW, CONT.

- 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. Some service territories extend into Kansas and Texas.

# **SKELETON CREEK ENERGY CENTER PROJECT TIMELINE**

- **Construction Start: Summer 2022**
- **Construction Duration: 18 months**
- **Commercial Operation Date: December 2023**



# PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS AND ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives  
Evaluation  
Study (AES)

Site Selection  
Study (SSS)

Preliminary  
Site  
Investigations

# ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION STUDY

- The AES contains the following information:
  - Section 2.1 Introduction
  - Section 2.2 Purpose and Need, which consists of the following information:
    - Demand load forecast
    - Planning history
    - Existing resources
    - Needs summary
  - Section 2.3 Load Management Alternatives
  - Section 2.4 Consideration of Technical Alternatives



# PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

- Based on the Applicant's PPA with WFEC for the Project.
- WFEC's objective is to provide safe, adequate, and reliable power to its members at the lowest reasonable cost.
  - The Project will allow the Applicant to provide the additional generation capacity needed by WFEC to achieve these goals within the service territories of their member cooperatives.
- The Project will help the Southwest Power Pool continue to comply with Oklahoma legislative declarations to facilitate the delivery of renewable energy.

# ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- No Action Alternative
  - The Project would not be constructed, and environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with the Project 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.

# ACTION ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- Load management alternatives
- Technical alternatives
  - Distributed generation
  - Repowering/uprating existing units
  - Participation in another company's generation project
  - Non-renewable fuel sources
  - Other renewable energy sources
  - Other PPAs
  - New transmission capacity

# SITE SELECTION STUDY

- The SSS contains the following information:
  - Section 3.1 Introduction
  - Section 3.2 Technological Alternative(s) Under Evaluation
  - Section 3.3 Site Selection Process, which includes:
    - Scope and basic project requirements
    - Approach and methodology
    - Identification of potential sites
    - Identification of candidate sites
    - Comparative analysis and site evaluation
    - Selection of alternative sites to carry forward for consideration in EIS

# STUDY AREA

12,250-acre Application Area



SKELETON CREEK SOLAR  
Project Aerial

Application Area

Garfield County, OK

NAD 1983 UTM Zone 14N

(Credits: Data Sources if Needed)  
Base Map: ESRI ArcGIS Online, accessed March 2021

Updated: 3/29/2021  
Project No: 61377  
File: 61377 Fig 2-Proposed Aerial

1:55,000

0 2,000 4,000 Feet  
0 500 1,000 Meters

Area selected based on:

- Proximity to WFEC service area
- Existing points of interconnect
- Low load congestion
- Locations with high solar irradiance



WFEC Co-op Members

# DESKTOP EVALUATION

- Threatened and endangered species
- Other biological resources
- Wetlands
- Water quality and supply, sole source aquifer
- Floodplains
- Geology and soils
- Historic resources
- Tribal/First Nation lands
- Land use
- Formally classified lands
- Recreational resources
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental justice
- Hazardous substances
- Air quality
- Noise
- Transportation

# SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Resource	Findings
Threatened and endangered wildlife species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federally listed species with potential to occur in Garfield County: Arkansas River shiner (<i>Notropis girardi</i>), red knot (<i>Calidris canutus rufa</i>), whooping crane (<i>Grus americana</i>), and piping plover (<i>Charadrius melodus</i>)</li> <li>No federally designated critical habitat and no state listed species</li> </ul>
Other biological resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Application Area contains a variety of land covers that may be used as habitat by nonregulated wildlife</li> <li>Mixed forest and freshwater habitats may serve as potential foraging habitat for non-listed bat species</li> <li>The Application Area is within the Central Flyway—a major migratory route for birds</li> <li>No federally listed or state listed plants</li> </ul>
Wetlands, water quality and supply, sole source aquifer, floodplains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application Area contains 100-year floodplain, Skeleton Creek, 27 unnamed intermittent tributaries, and an estimated 160 acres of wetlands</li> <li>No areas designated for water protection</li> </ul>
Geology and soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application Area is generally flat or with gentle rolling hills</li> <li>No mapped karst features, but hydric soils are present</li> </ul>

# SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Resource	Findings
Historic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No previously documented archaeological sites, Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory sites, NRHP, Oklahoma State Register of Historic Places-listed properties, cemeteries</li> </ul>
Tribal/First Nation lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No tribal-owned lands, but tribes may have interest in the region</li> </ul>
Land use, formally classified lands, recreational resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application Area contains prime farmland</li> <li>No public recreation sites, parks, wildlife management areas, or major scenic viewpoints or byways</li> <li>Falls within the Vance Jackson military airspace and is within the range of long-range radar</li> </ul>
Socioeconomics, environmental justice, hazardous substances, air quality, noise, transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covington Solar Farm and three wind power projects (Armadillo Flats, Breckinridge, and Chisolm View) currently in operation within the county</li> <li>Populations are predominantly white with an even sex ratio, educated, and the percentage of residents below the poverty line is not significantly higher or lower</li> <li>No hazardous waste facilities, Superfund sites, or other facilities designed to mitigate, manage, and contain hazardous wastes</li> <li>Garfield County is in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards</li> </ul>

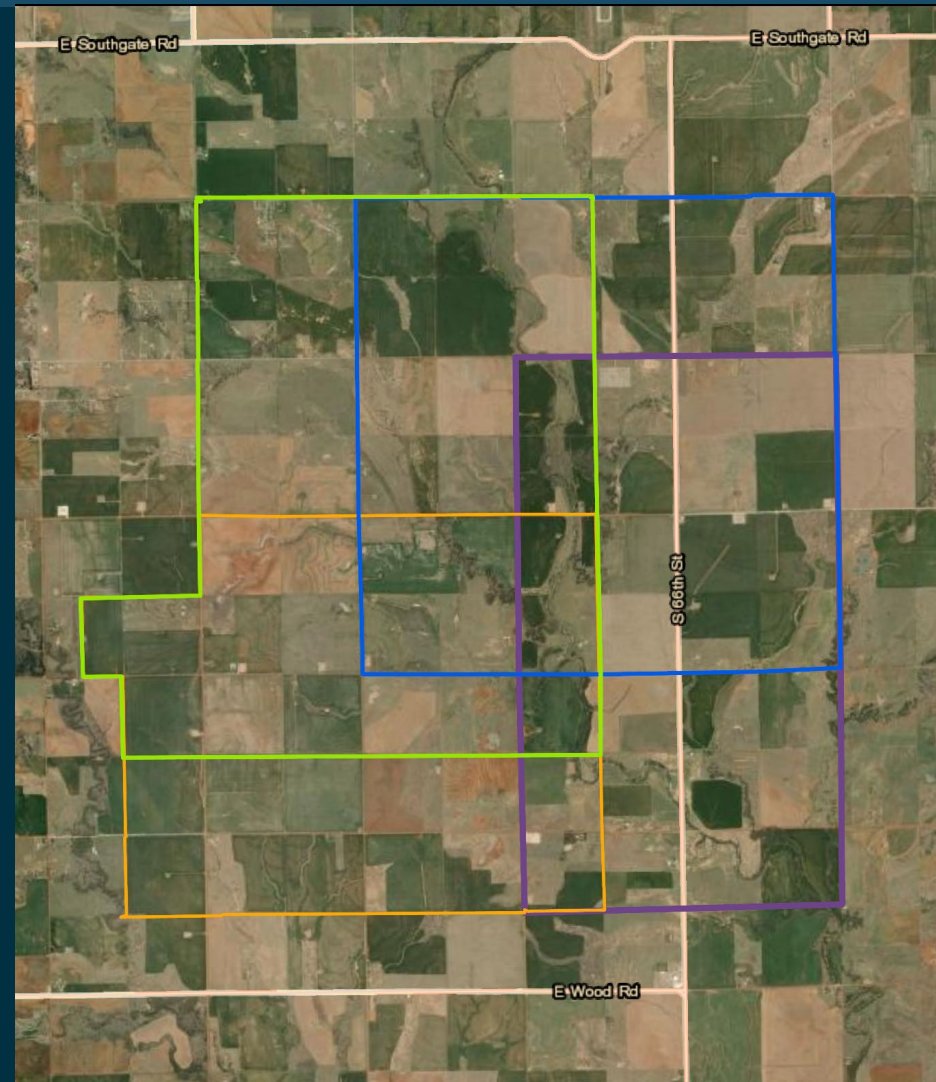


# SITE PHOTOS



# LOCATION ALTERNATIVES

- Four preliminary alternative locations
  - Alternative A: Located in the northwest corner of the Application Area, encompassing 6,042 acres
  - Alternative B: Located in the northeast corner of the Application Area, encompassing 5,774 acres
  - Alternative C: Located in the southwest corner of the Application Area, encompassing 4,728 acres
  - Alternative D: Located in the southeast corner of the Application Area, encompassing 4,489 acres



	<b>SKELETON CREEK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Alternative A</li><li> Alternative B</li><li> Alternative C</li><li> Alternative D</li></ul>	1:60,000  Created By: jkainer Project Number: 12345.01 Date: 7/24/2020
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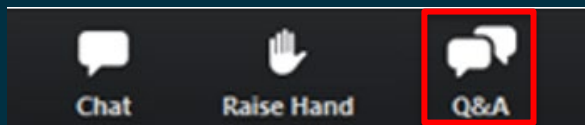
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# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

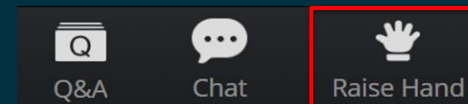
## To ask a *WRITTEN* question

- 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

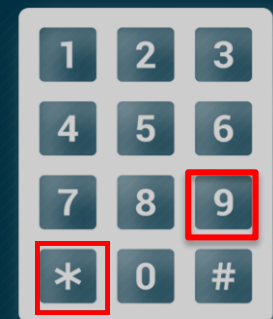


## To ask a *VERBAL* question

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



On-Screen Button



Telephone Keypad

# REMINDERS

## How to Comment

- Email:  
[SkeletonCreekSolarPublicComments@usda.gov](mailto:SkeletonCreekSolarPublicComments@usda.gov)

## For More Information

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/environmentalstudy/skeleton-creek-solar-and-battery-storage-project-garfield-county-oklahoma>

## Next Steps

- Scoping comment period closes: April 19, 2021
- Next public involvement opportunity:
  - Draft EIS public comment period
  - Late 2021

# THANK YOU FOR COMING!

We are available to answer any questions  
until the meeting ends at 8:00 p.m. CT

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.

