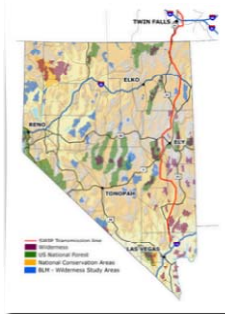




What is 350? **LATEST UPDATES:** Check out the plans for 350.org 2010: <http://www.350.org/2010>

Thru-hiker Adam Bradley and The Nevada Wilderness Project gear up for the “SWIP Trip”

13 April, 2010 - 15:14 — Sara Camp



Developing a renewable energy portfolio in the U.S. couldn't be more important: it will create green jobs, a more sustainable economy, lessen our dependence on fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions. However, bringing clean energy to people on a large scale isn't easy. New infrastructure needs to be built to transmit wind, solar and geothermal energy long distances, from load sources all the way to people's homes. That is why we're excited about the **SWIP (Southwest Intertie Project) Transmission Line**, scheduled for construction before the end of 2010. It's a renewable energy transmission line that will extend 501 miles from Idaho south through eastern Nevada to just north of Las Vegas, and it will allow for the development of feeder projects (such as solar and wind farms) throughout the state.

Before construction begins, thru-hiker Adam Bradley will be embarking on the “**SWIP Trip**”, and staff from the **Nevada Wilderness Project** will be following him on his journey. Starting on April 22, he will be hiking the entire 501 miles of the future transmission line in order to document, from a ground-eye level, what the potential impacts of the project will be. Adam is one of the best thru-hikers in the U.S., and will complete the trip in about 15 days.

But even when the ultimate goal is clean energy, new infrastructure projects can create some environmental problems, especially in terms of protecting habitat. Charlotte Overby, Communications Director of the **Nevada Wilderness Project**, says that the overall purpose of the SWIP Trip is explore how the new line will impact “sage-grouse habitat and populations (particularly in the northern parts of the state), raptor populations, people's view sheds, native/invasive plants, and how access roads built during the line's construction will invite illegal use by off-roaders and lead to vehicle incursions into previously remote areas. These are some of the challenges. We also want to learn everything we can about the SWIP corridor so we can make solid recommendations and weigh in with authority on future development.”

The Nevada Wilderness Project has deemed the SWIP Transmission Line “**smart from the start**.” That's the branding they give to renewable energy projects that incorporate habitat conservation and environmental sustainability in the development process, which is possible, in part, because they are proactively studying those conservation issues before the construction even begins. “We are building good cooperative relationships with the developers, not the old model of ‘us against them,’ to site projects in places that are not in the highest quality habitat. Places that are already degraded by over-grazing, off-road vehicle use, or invasive species,” says Charlotte. “We are working with our congressional delegations to legislate these projects so they also include a strong conservation component, such as ‘build this solar plant here on 8,000 acres AND designate this area over here as Wilderness or National Conservation area.’”

As Adam hikes through the beautiful Nevada wilderness, NWP staff will be posting a daily **blog**, and we encourage you to keep tabs on his journey and findings. Good luck, Adam!

