

TIMELINE

- 2009-05-15** LCRA Open Houses Landowners notified
- 2009-06-01** CVA goes live on world wide web
- 2009-09-24** Motion to Delay & Expand Study Area
- 2010-02-15** 1/4 scale model lattice tower tours region
- 2010-02-15** LCRA Open Houses second round
- 2010-04-19** LCRA / Fish & Wildlife Scoping Meetings
- 2010-07-28** Filing of CCN
- 2010-09-01** Hearing on the Merits, Austin Conv. Center
- 2010-12-17** ALJ issued PFD recommendation to PUC
- 2010-12-23** CVA filed Exceptions to PFD
- 2011-01-13** PUC routing deliberations / Final Order

TERMS

- PFD** Proposal for Decision
- ALJ** Administrative Law Judge
- CVA** Clear View Alliance
- LCRA** Lower Colorado River Auth
- PUC** Public Utilities Commission
- CCN** Certificate of Convenience & Necessity
- TPWD** Tx Parks & Wildlife Dept.
- PURA** Public Utility Regulatory Act
- CREZ** Competitive Renewable Energy Zones
- CTO** CREZ Transmission Optimiz

Land Fragmentation www.ClearViewAlliance.org



actual construction of FPL private wind energy line near Harper, TX 2009

Land Fragmentation

Routes MK33 (and MK32) would be least likely of all the proposed routes to precipitate additional land fragmentation. These routes follow US 277 and I 10 where land already has been bisected and fragmented by the presence of the highways.

LAND FRAGMENTATION



**Rolling Plains oil and gas wells a few miles north and west of the Edwards Plateau
photo showing one type of land fragmentation**

Land Fragmentation

In their discussion of land fragmentation, the ALJs identify land fragmentation as one of the greatest concerns of those parties opposed to the central routes. From a fragmentation perspective, the ALJs conclude that the absence of a major highway or transmission line for much of the central study area argues against placing the line there and favors paralleling the I 10 corridor. The ALJs obviously understand the importance of the fragmentation concerns expressed by TPWD and CVA. This is another example, however, of the ALJs understanding the importance of an environmental impact but nonetheless allowing cost considerations to result in a recommended route that only partially addresses those concerns. While it is beneficial to avoid the true central part of the study area, the ALJs' recommended route would contribute to fragmentation in the northern part of the study area and bisect several large properties.

CVA witness Dr. Neal Wilkins has studied and documented land fragmentation trends throughout Texas for over a decade. Since 1997 over 2.8 million acres of larger farms and ranches in the Trans Pecos, Edwards Plateau and South Texas were fragmented into mid-sized and smaller ownerships. Dividing a large tract into smaller parcels causes a series of changes that are often negative from the standpoint of wildlife management, natural resource conservation, and agricultural production. Dr. Wilkins testified about the effects of the proposed transmission line on land fragmentation and the PFD references parts of his testimony.



Edwards Plateau / Hill Country is the most intact ecoregion in Texas

Looking at the routes as they leave McCamey D, all but one of the proposed series of links cross Schleicher County (and parts of adjacent Sutton County) through native mixed grasslands and live-oak savannas that once characterized much of the native rangelands throughout the Edwards Plateau. Except for a small number of county roads and Highway 190, these native habitats are interrupted only by the mesquite flats and productive grasslands along the North and Middle Valley Prongs of the Concho River. The ranchland traversed by any of the Links b14a-c, b84, b86, b11-b16, and P1 would likely be impacted in such a way that current land uses and natural resource values would be damaged.

Preferred Route MK13 and Staff MK15 all cut diagonally across existing large ranches using Links b14a-c, b84 and b86. Further east, Links b34 and b36 of Preferred Route MK13 cross through the headwaters of the James River basin. MK13 approaches the Little Devil's River from the east across unfragmented grasslands and oak-juniper woodlands. As the route crosses the Little Devil's and James River, it comes in close proximity to the Eckert James River Bat Cave Preserve, with one of the largest known concentrations of breeding Mexican free-tailed bats anywhere. Routes MK33 (and MK32) would be least likely of all the proposed routes to precipitate additional land fragmentation. These routes follow US 277 and I 10 where land already has been bisected and fragmented by the presence of the highways.