



CHAPTER 5
CONSULTATION AND
COORDINATION

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INTRODUCTION

In response to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (1978) for implementing NEPA, an extensive coordination program was developed for the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) to ensure that all the appropriate members of the public and federal, state, and local agencies were contacted, consulted, and given an adequate opportunity to be involved in the process. This section describes the public and agency scoping process, the public participation program, the issues and concerns identified from the public's and agency comments, and the environmental planning process.

The scoping phase of the SWIP Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA), covered in this section, consisted of a regional environmental study to identify reasonable and feasible alternative transmission line routes, agency contacts for purposes of gathering data and disseminating project information, and public and agency scoping meetings to identify issues. The regional study area covered approximately 80,000 square miles (also refer to Chapter 2 and Figure 2-1).

PUBLIC AND AGENCY SCOPING PROCESS

The DEIS/DPA process was begun with the filing of a Right-of-Way Application by Idaho Power Company (IPCo) on September 29, 1988 with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to construct a transmission line from Midpoint Substation near Twin Falls, Idaho to a new substation near the Intermountain Generating Station near Delta, Utah. Subsequent to this application, BLM determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Plan Amendment would be required. The NEPA requires an EIS to be completed when a federal action, in this case a right-of-way grant to construct a 500kV transmission line across federal land, has potential for significant environmental impacts. The plan amendment was required by BLM because of the potential for the route to be located outside of corridors established in various BLM Resource Management Plans (RMPs), Management Framework Plans (MFPs), or Forest Service (FS) Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans).

Dames & Moore was selected by BLM as the third-party contractor to prepare the DEIS/DPA. A regional study to identify reasonable and feasible alternative transmission line routes was completed in December of 1988. Also during this period, IPCo determined that an intermediate substation would be required in the Ely, Nevada area.

Preliminary comments were obtained from the public following the first newsletter, and from the initial meetings with the various federal, state, and local agencies. The regional study, along with agency meetings and newsletters, were the initial step in the scoping process. The BLM assumed the role of lead federal agency. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the National Park Service (NPS), and the FS, were identified as cooperating agencies during this process and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the BLM to cooperate in preparing the DEIS/DPA.

The public involvement program during the regional environmental study involved disseminating information on the results of the studies and soliciting public comment. The public involvement program also introduced the public to the EIS/PA process and established key agency and public contacts. Seven public scoping meetings were held in six locations (two in Ely, Nevada) to further facilitate identifying the public and agency issues (refer to later sections in this chapter).

Information developed during the scoping process formed the basis for the identification of alternatives and the plan of work for the SWIP DEIS/DPA inventory, impact assessment, and mitigation planning studies. The scope of these studies was developed through a comprehensive and systematic process:

- review of previous environmental studies
- public information fact sheet and responses
- agency contacts and consultation
- public scoping meetings and planning workshops

As directed by the CEQ regulations (1978), the extent of analysis for the issues and concerns raised during the agency and public scoping process were determined through consultation among the lead and cooperating agencies. Additional information on this process is provided in the sections that follow.

The project was expanded with an amendment to the Right-of-Way Application on May 7, 1990 to include a route extending south of Ely, Nevada to a new substation site in the Dry Lake valley in southern Nevada (also refer to Chapter 2).

Previous Projects

Existing published and unpublished environmental data, maps, reports, and statements prepared for previous transmission line related projects in the area were reviewed and evaluated to determine their applicability and adequacy for use in the environmental studies. The most relevant information was included from the following reports:

- Intermountain Power Project EIS
- Midpoint to Malin 345kV Transmission Project EIS
- White Pine Power Project EIS
- Thousand Springs Power Plant Draft EIS
- Harry Allen Generating Station EIS

Intermountain Power Project - In November 1979, the BLM released a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for a Utah, California, Nevada, and Wyoming joint venture to construct a 3,000-megawatt coal fired generating station at Salt Wash site in Wayne County, Utah. A Record of Decision approving the project was later issued. The power would be distributed to six municipalities in California and participating utilities in Nevada and Utah. The project consists of a generating station, support facilities, and transmission lines. A right-of-way application for 39,500 acres on public land was granted and 4,640 acres of public land were conveyed for power plant facilities. The second transmission line portion of the right-of-way grant was also granted, and was transferred to Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) on behalf of the participants of the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP) in 1990.

Midpoint to Malin 345kV Transmission Line - In July 1977 BLM released a FEIS for a 345kV transmission line proposed by Sierra Pacific Power Company and IPCo. A subsequent Record of Decision approved the right-of-way grant and construction of the project. The transmission line crosses private, BLM, and state lands in Nevada and Idaho. The 240 mile long transmission line extends due south of Midpoint substation to Rock Creek. There it turns southwest crossing U.S. Highway 93 eight miles north of the stateline. The corridor continues southeast to the Valmy and Oreana substations in Nevada. Additional construction included the new substation at Valmy and new access roads.

White Pine Power Project - In August 1984, the BLM released a FEIS in which White Pine County, Nevada Power Company, and Sierra Pacific Power Company proposed to construct a two-unit, 1500 megawatt coal-fueled, steam-electric generating facility in White Pine County, Nevada. The Record of Decision approving the project was issued in 1985. The site is located on 2250 acres of land currently administered by the BLM. Eight entities in Nevada and six municipalities in California contracted the electrical output of the project.

Thousand Springs Power Project - A DEIS was released by BLM in January, 1990 to construct and operate an eight-unit, 2,000 MW, coal-fired, steam electric power plant in Elko County, Nevada. Thousand Springs Generating Company, a consortium of private investors led by Sierra Pacific Resources, proposed to enter into a land exchange with BLM involving some 15,960 acres of public land and 13,410 acres of private land on a surface-estate-only basis. The project proposed to market electrical energy to utilities in Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. In 1991 permitting efforts were discontinued and a FEIS was not released on the project.

Harry Allen Generating Station - In 1980, four utilities and a county water conservancy district received a BLM right-of-way grant to develop the proposed Allen Warner Valley energy system. The 2,000 MW Harry Allen powerplant, a section of this system, would be located in Dry Lake, Nevada. Water to cool the Harry Allen plant would be supplied through Clark County (Nevada) Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility via a 24.5 mile long pipeline. The electrical transmission and supporting communication systems would deliver power to market areas in Utah, Nevada, and California.

Public Participation Program

To facilitate disseminating information and involving the public in the decision-making process for the SWIP, a comprehensive public participation program was developed to meet four objectives:

- establish and maintain the credibility of the technical studies with the public
- inform and educate the public as to the need for the project and possible effects to the environment
- accurately identify and consider the issues and concerns of the public and agencies
- assure that public input and agency policy are integrated with technical data into the overall decision-making processes

The following sections describe how the public was informed about the project and what opportunities were made available for the public to become involved in the DEIS/DPA planning process.

Public Information

During the course of the project a series of newsletters, fact sheets, and project updates were published to inform the interested parties about the environmental process, the project status, and opportunities to participate. Publications were sent out to the individuals, organizations, and agencies on the project mailing list. The mailing list included names and addresses from the lead and cooperating agencies' and IPCo's existing mailing lists, as well as all potentially affected federal, state, and local agencies and environmental organizations. The mailing list was expanded to include about 3,000 interested parties during the process. Copies of all the newsletters, fact sheets, and project updates are located in the Objectives, Procedures, and Results technical report.

Many of the project information publications contained a response sheet for readers to detach and mail to the project team. The sheets were designed to provide respondents an opportunity to participate in the project's public process and to request additional

information about the project. Through the response sheets, the public was provided a mechanism to express their concerns and opinions about the proposed project, the routing alternatives, and the DEIS/DPA process. Response sheets requested the following information:

- name and address of the respondent
- whether or not the respondent wished to receive a copy of the DEIS/DPA
- to list names and addresses of other people the respondent felt should be included on the project mailing list
- if the respondent would like to receive other information about the project
- if the respondent had any comment on existing routing alternatives, new alternative routing alternatives, or other aspects of the project
- to list issues of concern and specific areas or resources that should be avoided or considered when siting the transmission line

The first public information release was a fact sheet in March 1989 that announced the project and described IPCo's plans. This fact sheet was mailed to the more than 1,200 names on the list at the time. This fact sheet introduced the DEIS/DPA process, and included project background, a brief project description, the locations and times of scheduled public scoping meetings, and a schedule of project milestone dates.

A newsletter was published in July 1989 to respond to questions about the project purpose and need. This newsletter also summarized the issues of concern raised at the public scoping meetings and contained information on the project participants and a general description of project scope, planning process, and schedule. A map illustrated the regional study area and the alternative corridors discussed at public scoping meetings.

In August 1989, a brief project update was released to announce the identification of a major new alternative from the North Steptoe Valley in Nevada to the Confusion Range in Utah. A map was included to illustrate the general location of the alternative. This update conveyed a brief background of how and why the new alternative was included in the environmental studies. Another project update released in October 1989 announced the extension of the project schedule to accommodate additional environmental studies needed for the new alternative.

Another new alternative along the Juab-Millard county line in Utah was announced in the project update released December 1989. This project update conveyed the reasons and circumstances behind the addition of the new alternative, and contained a map illustrating the location of the new routing segments.

In June 1990, a fact sheet announced the expansion of the SWIP south to a new endpoint northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada, to facilitate transporting power to a connection point

with other regional transmission facilities. This fact sheet was mailed to the original mailing list of over 1,200 plus an additional 1,700 individuals and organizations provided by the Las Vegas District of the BLM. The fact sheet announced the times and locations of three additional public scoping meetings in southern Nevada. The fact sheet explained that previously other lines were planned to be built from the Las Vegas area north to Ely, Nevada, before completion of the SWIP. However, the SWIP was now projected to be the first transmission line completed. Formal notification of the project expansion appeared in the Federal Register on June 4, 1990.

A project update was released in October 1990 detailing additional alternatives requested by the U.S. Air Force at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. These alternatives resulted from concerns for low-level aircraft operations raised by military representatives at the public scoping meetings held in June 1990. A response sheet was mailed with this project update to obtain feedback about the additional alternatives.

The project update released in December 1990 announced the completion of the detailed environmental resource studies. The information in this update included a brief summary of the results of the resource studies and a synopsis of the planning process. A response sheet was included to once again provide the public with an opportunity to comment.

The addition of several localized alternatives to the east of the Arrow Canyon Range and across the Moapa Indian Reservation northeast of Las Vegas was announced in a project update released in November 1991. The new alternatives followed concerns expressed by the Las Vegas District of the BLM for desert tortoise habitat in Coyote Spring Valley and Hidden Valley. This update announced a public information meeting held at the Tribal Hall of the Moapa Band of the Paiute.

Public Scoping and Input

Public scoping meetings were held in four communities during the last week in March 1989. In addition to the notice published in the Federal Register, notification of the meetings also appeared in newsletters mailed to the project mailing list. A press release and map were sent to 14 newspapers serving the communities in the study area. The public scoping meetings were held in:

- Twin Fall, Idaho
- Wells, Nevada
- Ely, Nevada
- Delta, Utah

The purpose of the scoping meetings was to:

- inform the public of the project and solicit their participation in the project planning process

- obtain public and agency input on significant issues of concern that should be addressed
- obtain public comment on concerns about adjustments to alternatives being considered
- focus the scope of the future detailed environmental resource studies for the DEIS/DPA

Each meeting began with a presentation by representatives of BLM, IPCo, and Dames & Moore. The presentation addressed the project description, purpose and need, DEIS/DPA planning process, results of the regional environmental studies, alternative routes identified, and the project schedule. The meeting also provided a forum for public input.

Over 85 people attended the public scoping meetings in March 1989. All public comments from the BLM scoping meetings were recorded and summarized by resource or issue. This comment summary was used to identify key issues for the environmental studies and to identify individuals and organizations that have an interest in the project studies. Some of these individuals and organizations were contacted to obtain further information or to identify others who should be informed of the project.

Frequently voiced comments included:

- preference that route remain on public lands and not cross private lands
- route use existing transmission line corridors
- minimize impacts on sensitive visual resources, existing or planned land uses, and cultural and biological resources
- potential conflicts with military aircraft operations

The scoping process also included meetings with federal agencies whose lands or resources may be affected by the proposed project, including the various offices of BLM, FS, and NPS. These agencies made specific recommendations for corridors or areas that were determined to be unsuitable for transmission line routing, or conversely those corridors that may be recommended by agency land management plans. Other corridors not previously identified were recommended for further consideration. Also, scoping served to help eliminate alternative routes from detailed consideration (refer to Chapter 2).

A newsletter was distributed in July 1989 that summarized the results of the scoping meetings and the alternatives that were to receive detailed environmental study.

As a result of the expansion of the SWIP south to an endpoint in the vicinity of Las Vegas, Nevada, three additional public scoping meetings were held in June 1990. These

meetings were held in Ely, Caliente, and Las Vegas to inform the public of changes to the project description and to solicit comments on issues of concern in areas affected by the expansion.

On December 17, 1991, a public information meeting was held at the Tribal Hall of the Moapa Band of the Paiute. The purpose of the meeting was to present the project description, purpose and need, DEIS/DPA planning process, and new alternatives identified east of the Arrow Canyon Range northeast of Las Vegas. The meeting also provided a forum for public input.

Summary of Issues and Concerns

As a result of all public scoping meetings, the following list summarizes the major issues and concerns expressed by the agencies and public:

- visual impacts
- maximize use of public lands
- use of existing transmission line corridors
- minimize land use impacts
- minimize impacts to cultural resources
- minimize impacts to biological resources
- property values

The Objectives, Procedures, and Results technical report contains detailed lists of specific issues, concerns, and comments summarized in the list above.

Publish Notice of Intent

A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS/PA for the Southwest Intertie Project was published in the Federal Register (Vol. 54, No. 41) on March 3, 1989. The notice described the project, the environmental planning process, the plan amendment process, the times and locations of scheduled scoping meetings, and the applicable legislation and regulations. The anticipated environmental issues outlined in the notice included visual resources, sensitive land uses, cultural sites, threatened or endangered plants and animals, and important wildlife habitats.

Formal notification appeared in the Federal Register on June 4, 1990 to inform the public of the expansion of the SWIP south to a new endpoint in the vicinity of Las Vegas, Nevada.

Planning Workshops

Six public planning workshops were held in January and February 1991 by the BLM and the cooperating federal agencies to:

- report results of the environmental studies for the alternative corridors
- present the preliminary alternative transmission line routes
- gain public input on the acceptability of the preliminary alternative transmission line routes

The planning workshops were held in the following locations:

Twin Falls	Idaho	January 7, 1991
Wells	Nevada	January 8, 1991
Ely	Nevada	February 13, 1991
Delta	Utah	February 14, 1991
Las Vegas	Nevada	February 20, 1991
Caliente	Nevada	February 21, 1991

These workshops were noticed in the December 1990 SWIP newsletter, distributed to the almost 3,000 on the mailing list. Press releases were sent to eight newspapers serving the communities in the area to inform the public of the workshops. Flyers were also posted in and around public establishments in the communities where the meetings were held.

The remainder of this section briefly summarizes each of the public workshops. Public comments, issues, and concerns were recorded at each meeting and are documented in the Objectives, Procedures, and Results technical report.

The Twin Falls workshop meeting was attended by 20 people. The primary concerns expressed involved the location of towers on agricultural lands and visual impacts to the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument. On agricultural lands the concern was the potential for conflicts between tower locations and farm machinery, crop irrigation systems, and aerial spraying operations. Generally, people expressed a preference that the proposed project use existing transmission line corridors.

In Wells, the workshop meeting was attended by a few local ranchers. The primary concern was the potential visual effects of the project and conflicts with ranching operations in Goshute Valley. Route A was considered unacceptable by the ranchers because of its proximity to their homes. The ranchers preferred Route E, because it would be located farther from their property.

Eighteen people attended the Ely workshop meeting including representatives from the BLM, NPS, White Pine Power Project (WPPP), Farm Bureau, Soil Conservation Service, Nellis Air Force Base (AFB), and Mt. Wheeler Power Cooperative. The primary concerns expressed at this meeting were the cost of the project, and which route would bring the

county the most benefit while also being environmentally acceptable. The length of the Southern Route was considered unreasonable and the least desirable route. The 230kV Corridor Route was considered the preferred route because it best met their cost criteria and it would use an existing transmission line corridor.

The Delta workshop meeting was attended by 13 people that included representatives from the NPS, the Utah Fish and Game Department, the Wildlife Federation, Nellis AFB, and Millard County. General consensus at the workshop was that no more transmission lines should be built in the area. The Cutoff Route was generally the preferred route because it was remote (i.e., out of view), away from the views encountered by tourists, and bypassed Great Basin National Park. The Delta Direct Route was the least favored route because it would not cross Millard County (i.e., tax benefits), it would not use an existing utility corridor, could cause potential conflicts with military aircraft operations in the restricted area, and could cause impacts to the Leland-Harris spring complex. The 230kV Corridor Route was preferred by Millard County because it would use an existing transmission line corridor. However, it was opposed by other people because the corridor is closest to Great Basin National Park. Millard County was strongly opposed to the southern substation site near Sevier Lake. The site at Intermountain Generating Station was favored because of its proximity to existing facilities. The Southern route was opposed because it would cross prime antelope and elk habitat and much undisturbed area.

The workshop meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, was conducted as an open house. Some questions/comments brought up concerned the military flying operations, desert tortoise habitat, exclusion areas for land uses, and the Aerojet land exchange. No route preferences were recorded at this meeting.

The workshop meeting in Caliente, Nevada, was attended by several local people including representatives from Lincoln County Cooperative and Sierra Pacific Power Company. The primary concerns expressed were for visual impacts and tax revenues to the county.

Agency Contacts

Agencies and organizations having jurisdiction and/or specific project interest within the study area were contacted to inform them of the SWIP, to verify the status and availability of existing environmental data, and to solicit their input to the study process. Concerns and recommendations for potential transmission line corridor locations were discussed and documented.

In addition to contacts by principal resource investigators, management-level contacts were made with key offices of the BLM, FS, BOR, NPS, some state agencies, and the potentially affected counties throughout the three states. Suggestions for modifications to the alternative corridors were incorporated into the studies.

Agency scoping meetings were also held with agency management resource specialists at each involved agency office prior to initial public scoping meetings in March 1989 and the additional scoping meetings held in June 1990. The purpose of these briefing meetings was:

- to inform BLM representatives with different areas of expertise about the project and respond to their questions. A related objective was to limit the need for agency representatives to attend the public meeting so that the meeting could focus on local residents
- to identify potential local concerns so that each evening's presentation could be responsive to key issues

Documentation of each of the scoping briefing meetings can be found in the SWIP project files, the Scoping Document, and the Objectives, Procedures, and Results technical report. In addition, a summary of all agencies contacted is documented in the Objectives, Procedures, and Results Technical Report.

Meetings with County Commissioners

Members of the project team from IPCo and Dames & Moore met with the county commissioners of each of the potentially affected counties. The purpose of the meetings was to disseminate information regarding the project, including issues and the location of alternative routes and substation, and to discuss any county permitting requirements. The following meetings were held:

- Idaho** Jerome County, Idaho - March 13, 1989
Twin Falls County, Idaho - March 28, 1989
Cassia County, Idaho - July 24, 1989
Gooding County, Idaho - July 26, 1989
Lincoln County, Idaho - August 7, 1989
- Nevada** Elko County, Nevada - March 15, 1989
White Pine County, Nevada - March 22, 1989 and August 22, 1990
Lincoln County, Nevada - August 20, 1990
Nye County, Nevada - September 5, 1990
- Utah** Millard County, Utah - May 2, 1989
Juab County, Utah - January 16, 1990

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was established at the outset of the project studies to guide Dames & Moore through the EIS preparation and to review data and decision criteria. The Steering Committee was comprised of representatives of:

- Bureau of Land Management
 - Burley District (Idaho)
 - Boise District (Idaho)
 - Shoshone District (Idaho)
 - Elko District (Nevada)
 - Ely District (Nevada)
 - Las Vegas District (Nevada)
 - Richfield District (Utah)
- Forest Service
 - Humboldt National Forest (Nevada)
- National Park Service
 - Great Basin National Park (Nevada)
- Dames & Moore
- IPCo
- LADWP

The first Steering Committee meeting was held on February 6, 1989. This initial meeting outlined the coordination needed for the project, the Federal Register notice for the public scoping meetings, and established that BLM would be the federal lead agency, with the FS and the BOR as cooperating agencies. It was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be signed by the BLM, FS, and IPCo.

Also discussed was the progress of the regional environmental studies and the selection of alternative transmission line corridors. The committee felt that several of the alternative corridors should be presented in the public scoping meetings as being recommended for elimination from further consideration.

The committee felt it important to coordinate with governor's clearinghouses for regulatory compliance as well as with the individual counties in the three states involved in the project. Scoping meeting agendas and dates were discussed along with fact sheets and comment forms, mailing lists, EIS format and content, and plan amendment.

The second Steering Committee meeting was held on May 10, 1989. The public scoping meetings were reviewed as well as some of the responses and letters received on the first fact sheet.

Specific concerns discussed during this meeting included:

- the Minidoka Relocation Center historic preservation site on BOR land near Hunt, Idaho
- populated areas and rural agriculture areas near Hagerman, Idaho and Contact, Nevada
- the O'Neil Basin alternative (the farthest western route near the Nevada-Idaho border)

An alternative around the Great Basin National Park and a Nevada State Highway 6/50 alternative east to King's Canyon were also discussed. In addition, the committee also discussed possible revisions to the preparation plan.

Wildlife was the major topic of discussion at this meeting, including sage grouse, eagles, ferruginous hawks, and wild horses and burros. Other issues covered were Native Americans, cultural resources, microwave sites, substation locations, and the BLM land report.

The third Steering Committee meeting was held on August 23, 1989. The focus of this meeting was the discussion and review of BLM actions on the SWIP including administrative record requirements, right-of-way applications, and plan amendments. Also discussed were tower heights in regard to air flight testing and training in the Air Forces operations areas. Comments were reviewed on the scoping report for the regional study. Other issues included a discussion of DEIS data, progress on inventory and impact assessment, the mitigation plan and specific measures to reduce impacts, and location of substations.

The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee was held November 4, 1989. Agenda items included status of the National Park Service (NPS) as a cooperating agency, alternatives addressing FS concerns in Cooper Canyon, the mitigation for the Minidoka Relocation Center, a new alternative route between North Steptoe area to the Delta Direct Route, Hill Air Force Base conflicts, the project schedule, an inventory update, and the impact assessment/mitigation planning process.

The fifth Steering Committee meeting was held on April 19, 1990. Topics of discussion included the SWIP scope expansion, right-of-way application amendments, the Federal Register notice, review and discussion of the draft purpose and need statement, and mapping of the WPPP corridor. Dames & Moore presented and discussed the substation site selection process, the subroute analysis process, and GIS processing for resource impacts.

The sixth Steering Committee meeting was held on June 20th, 1990. The meeting began with a discussion of the steering committee's comments on the draft purpose and need statement. The committee also discussed the announcement of dates for scoping meetings, the results of the GIS impact assessment modeling, the subroute analysis process, and the feasibility of expanding the SWIP south of Ely.

The seventh Steering Committee meeting was held on September 6, 1990. The opening discussion at this meeting was Clark County's desert tortoise Habitat Conservation Plan. The plan outlines portions of several desert tortoise habitat categories (Category I, II, or III) that may be proposed to be set aside as preservation areas. The steering committee discussed how this plan should be addressed in the SWIP studies and how the "no net loss" of habitat policy would affect the development of transmission lines into the Las Vegas area. The steering committee also discussed the use of utility corridors through the Apex industrial area, the route selection process, an updated project schedule, the Dry Lake alternatives, the Sunrise Mountain EA, and mitigation commitments by the utilities.

The eighth Steering Committee meeting was the first of a series of meetings held over a three day period, December 11-13th 1990. The steering committee discussed the DEIS/DPA outline, the purpose and need statement, and effects of the impact assessment results on routing alternatives. The steering committee also discussed possible alternatives in the vicinity of the Moapa Indian Reservation. The Las Vegas District of the BLM requested that several alternatives to the WPPP corridor be added to the studies. The committee agreed that the desert tortoise issue in Arrow Canyon warranted the evaluation of the Moapa alternatives. This decision initiated a feasibility study to determine if there were reasonable and feasible alternatives. In addition, there was continuing discussion of the Sunrise Mountain EA, the status of mitigation commitments from the project proponents, the cumulative effects of the SWIP, and the visual effects to Great Basin National Park and Interstate 84.

The remaining meetings in December focused on determining the routing alternatives to be compared in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Initially, resource specialists determined the routing alternative preferred by their resource area (e.g., biology, visual, land use, cultural, and earth). These "resource" preferred routing alternatives were reviewed by an interdisciplinary team to determine preliminary routing alternatives for the DEIS/DPA.

These meetings were facilitated using a consensus building (modified delphi) process to assist resource specialists and agency representatives in determining the relative importance or significance of different impacts types and levels between resources. The discussions at these meetings explored what impacts or types of impacts to which resources are more or less important to consider than others when selecting an environmentally preferred route.

A preliminary DEIS/DPA was submitted to the Steering Committee at the ninth meeting on July 25, 1991 for review. The steering committee discussed the addition of several new routing alternatives to the east of Arrow Canyon Range that might avoid potential conflicts with desert tortoise habitat in Coyote Spring Valley and Hidden Valley. The issue of potential visual impacts to WSAs was also discussed. The environmentally preferred alternative was presented and discussed followed by some discussion of the utility and agency preferred alternatives.

The tenth Steering Committee meeting was held on March 12, 1992 to discuss the results of studies in the Coyote Spring Valley and across the Moapa River Indian Reservation, complete a final review of comments on the preliminary DEIS/DPA, and to discuss the

Stateline Resource Area of BLM's Draft RMP and ongoing desert tortoise consultation and Habitat Conservation Plan.

Public Review of DEIS/DPA

Public review of the DEIS/DPA will be completed during a 90-day comment period and through formal public meetings to be held in August, 1992. The Regional Forester and the State Directors of Idaho, Nevada, and Utah will file the FEIS and proposed plan amendment with the CEQ of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) following the 90-day review period.

The governors of the states of Idaho, Nevada, and Utah will have a 60-day consistency review on the FEIS to determine if the final recommended action is consistent with state and local government plans and policies. IPCo will be required to comply with applicable requirements of the states of Idaho, Nevada, and Utah, as well as county and local regulations in affected areas.

The Regional Forester will issue a Record of Decision for FS lands with the EIS/PPA. The State Directors of the BLM will jointly publish the Record of Decision for public lands crossed by the selected alternative. The BLM Record of Decision will be filed 30 days after closing of the public comment period on the FEIS/PPA. The BOR will also issue a Record of Decision if their lands are crossed by the selected alternative.

Formal Consultation with Federal Agencies

Biological Resources

To comply with the Endangered Species Act (1973) as amended and the implementing regulations for Section 7 consultation, species lists were requested from the United States Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) at the beginning of the EIS process (also refer to the Biological Resources technical report). The following FWS offices were contacted during this process:

- Boise Field Office, Idaho - species list 1-4-89-SP-355 was provided from the Boise field office on August 10, 1989
- Salt Lake City, Utah - species list 1-4-89-SP-355 was provided on August 10, 1989
- Reno, Nevada - species list 1-5-89-SP-143 was provided on July 12, 1989 and species list 1-5-90-SP-308 was provided on July 19, 1990

On July 18, 1991 these same offices were again contacted to supply any updates to the species lists because of the time that had passed since the original requests. Formal

Section 7 consultation with the FWS will begin with submittal of a biological assessment for desert tortoise, ferruginous hawk, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon.

Additional information regarding consultation and coordination of biological resources and threatened and endangered species is found in the Biological Resources technical report and the SWIP project files.

Cultural Resources

Compliance for cultural resources stems from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) as amended. The regulations implementing Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800) require that the lead federal agency of any federally funded or licensed action must take into account the effects of the agency's undertaking on properties included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The general thrust of the legislation is to establish a process for identifying impacts of development upon cultural resources and create opportunities for adopting measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate, or accept impacts.

Contacts with the State Historical Preservation Officers (SHPOs) from Idaho, Nevada, and Utah were first begun in 1987 during an environmental resources inventory, and has continued throughout the SWIP EIS process. In May 1989 a contact letter and a project map for the SWIP was distributed to agency cultural resource coordinators and Indian Tribes throughout the three states. These contacts included BLM cultural resource specialists and FS cultural resource coordinators.

The contacts made with the Indian tribes in each of the three states and several in adjoining states were to identify sensitive ethnographic sites or areas (also refer to Cultural Resources Technical Report). Initial contacts with these Native Americans were made in 1987 during an environmental resources inventory completed by Dames & Moore. The letters were followed by phone calls and additional letters, and several meetings were attended, as the contact program progressed. Also, over 50 environmental documents, cultural resources overviews, and key ethnographic and ethnohistoric sources were consulted.

In June 1990 the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation accepted a Programmatic Agreement regarding the treatment of cultural resources for the SWIP. The agreement was established between the BLM (federal lead agency for the EIS preparation), the BOR (cooperating agency), the Humboldt National Forest (cooperating agency), the Idaho SHPO, the Nevada SHPO, the Utah SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. IPCo, as permitting agent for the SWIP, is a concurring party to the agreement.

Additional information regarding consultation and coordination of cultural resources is found in the Cultural Resources technical report and the SWIP project files.