

Estes-to-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project

Environmental Impact Statement Newsletter

Western Area Power Administration

September 2012, Volume 2

Next Steps: Alternatives Development Workshops

Western will be hosting public workshops to develop alternatives from October 2-4, 2012:

- **Bison Visitor Center**
1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland, CO
Tuesday October 2, 4:00 - 6:00 pm
- **Estes Park Museum**
200 Fourth Street, Estes Park, CO
Wednesday October 3, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Thursday October 4, 2:00 to 7:00 pm

Drop in anytime during workshop hours to learn about and suggest route and design options.

Contact

For more information, contact Tim Snowden, Western Area Power Administration, 5555 E. Crossroads Blvd., P.O. Box 3700, Loveland, CO 80539-3003, fax (970) 461-7213 or e-mail, RMR_estesflatironeis@wapa.gov. Or, if you would like someone to contact you, please leave a voicemail at (720) 962-7213.

Additional Information

For more information on the project, visit <http://go.usa.gov/rvtP>

To learn more about NEPA's environmental processes, visit: <http://energy.gov/nepa/office-nepa-policy-and-compliance>

Public Scoping Period Extended

Western initiated a 90-day public scoping period for the Estes-to-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project with publication of a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* (77 FR 22774) on April 17, 2012. The scoping period was subsequently extended to August 31, 2012 to allow the public an opportunity to provide comment following scoping meetings held on August 6 and 7 in Loveland and Estes Park, CO, respectively. Western has now extended the scoping period through October 19, 2012 to allow the public an opportunity to provide input on the alternatives for the draft EIS.

Alternatives Development Workshops

Public alternatives development workshops will be held at the Estes Park Museum, the Bison Visitor Center near Flatiron Reservoir, and other satellite locations over three days to identify route options and design features to be considered during the alternatives screening process.

The purpose of the satellite workshops is to provide a more convenient, local location for small groups of attendees to meet with the project team. The locations, dates, and times for the satellite sessions will be announced prior to the workshops on Western's website at <http://go.usa.gov/rvtP>.

The same information and activities available at Estes Park Museum will also be presented at the satellite workshops. The Estes Park Museum will serve as the repository for all information collected during the three days of public workshops. This will allow attendees to stop by the Estes Park Museum on October 3rd and 4th, 2012 to brainstorm route options and review information gathered from the satellite locations.

Objectives for Alternatives Workshops

Objectives of the alternatives development workshops are to:

- Present opportunities, constraints, and other considerations that may influence potential transmission line routes.
- Suggest, review, and refine route options and design features.
- Provide a forum for the public to comment on or ask questions about the alternatives screening process.

In preparation for alternatives workshops, Western has compiled map data related to key siting considerations in the project area. Mapped resource data will be available for public review and comment at the alternatives workshops and the public will be invited to propose route options that are responsive to these siting considerations. Input on transmission line design features such as structure type and finish, and method of construction, will also be requested.

Following the alternatives workshops, Western will complete its alternatives analysis to determine which alternative routes will be carried forward for full analysis in the draft EIS. The alternatives analysis will also address which alternative design treatment and constructions methods will be carried forward for segments of the alternatives routes where siting sensitivities have been identified.

What is being proposed?

Western proposes to rebuild the electric transmission lines between Estes Park and Flatiron Reservoir. The transmission line rebuild is needed to:

- **Ensure reliable and cost-effective electricity** is provided to Estes Park, Loveland and other Front Range communities.
- **Improve transmission safety** by updating facilities and rebuilding 60-70+ year-old transmission lines to be compliant with current standards.
- **Improve emergency and maintenance access** to the lines.

No decisions on alternatives have been made.



How will EIS Alternatives be Developed?

Route options identified by the public, Forest Service, and Western will be screened to identify those options that best meet the project purpose and need while minimizing adverse project effects. The alternatives screening analysis will consider project requirements, environmental effects, and input from the public received during scoping.

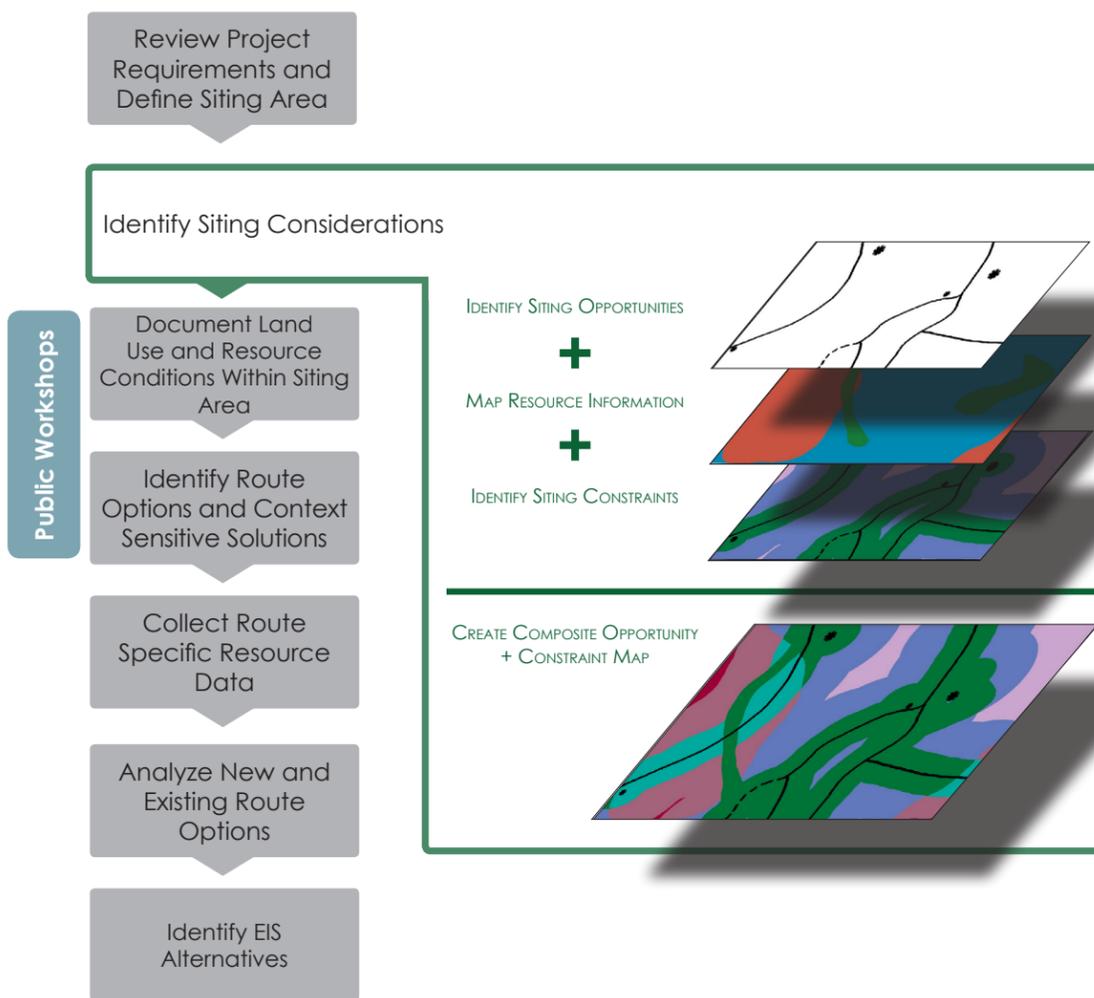
Comparative matrices will be used to rank route options with regard to:

- Whether the route option meets the project purpose and need.
- Environmental effects of each route option on key resources.
- Engineering considerations such as total length, number of structures, topography, and access.
- Relationship to Western's existing rights-of-way.
- Technical and financial feasibility of the route option.

Results of this comparative analysis will be used to determine whether each route option should be analyzed in detail as an alternative in the EIS or be eliminated from further consideration. Public input on design treatments including structure type and finishes will also be addressed in the comparative analysis and alternative development process.

How to Participate

Western is now soliciting input about alternative transmission routes and structure options from the public; interested Federal, state, and local agencies; and Native American tribes. You can suggest route and design options by participating in an upcoming Alternatives Development Workshop or by sending your comments in writing. Public input received by October 19, 2012 will help Western and cooperating agencies identify alternatives to be analyzed in the draft EIS.

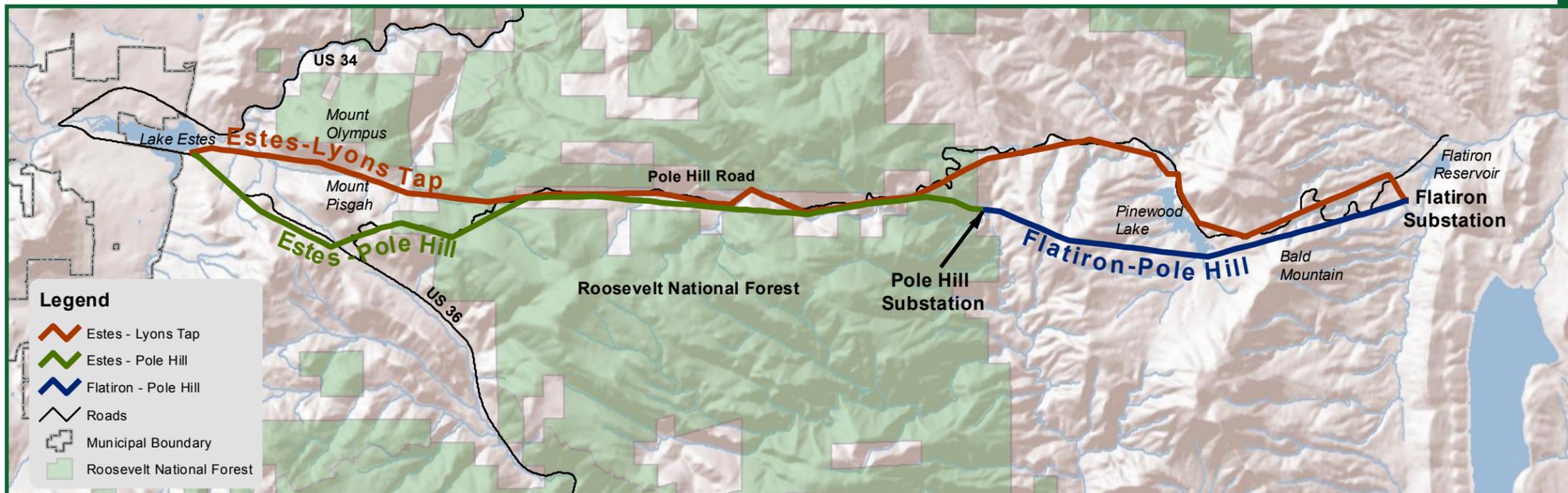


Technology Spotlight: Undergrounding

Common questions heard during scoping were: "Can the transmission line be placed underground? What are the environmental, engineering, and economic trade-offs of undergrounding?" Western's Alternative Development Process will address whether or not undergrounding portions of the proposed transmission lines rebuild would be technically and economically viable. Western's draft EIS will include the results of Western's analysis addressing the cost, construction and maintenance requirements for undergrounding portions of the proposed transmission lines rebuild. The Wisconsin Public Utilities Commission has prepared an overview that contains information about electric transmission lines which are installed underground, rather than overhead on poles or towers (see <http://psc.wi.gov/thelibrary/publications/electric/electric11.pdf>). A copy of this overview is available on Western's web page for the proposed Estes-to-Flatiron transmission lines rebuild.



Example of transmission lines installed in concrete-encased duct banks



Existing transmission lines proposed for rebuild for the Estes-to-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project

Focus on Design

Western is evaluating a range of transmission structure types to determine their suitability for the Estes-to-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project. Potential structure designs, profiles, heights, and finishes will be presented at alternatives workshops for public input. Structure selection will be limited to the family of structures that meet the engineering and electrical load requirements for Western's 115-kV transmission lines.

Submit Your Comments by:

- Email: RMR_estesflatironeis@wapa.gov
- Fax: (970) 461-7213
- At the public workshops: October 2, 3, and 4, 2012
- Mail:
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