

Welcome

Programmatic Environmental Assessment for
Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP)
Operations and Maintenance and
Implementation of an Integrated Vegetation
Management Program

DOE/EA-2008

Scoping Meeting

May 3 and 4, 2016



Please Sign In

Western Area Power Administration

Western Area Power Administration (Western) markets and delivers reliable, cost-based, hydroelectric power and related services within a 15-state region that includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

Western is one of four power marketing administrations within the U.S. Department of Energy whose role is to market and transmit electricity.

Most power sold by Western is generated from power plants operated at Hoover, Parker, and Davis Dams; from hydroelectric projects in the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Lower Colorado Region, and the federal portion of power generated at the Navajo Generating Station near Page, Arizona.

Western's DSW operates and maintains more than 80 substations and 3,500 miles (5,633 kilometers) of transmission line to market and deliver power to its customers.

What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969:

- Requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions
- Ensures federal agencies act in good faith during federal undertakings
- Provides the interested public and agencies the opportunity to provide input, identify issues, and offer solutions early in the planning process

As the lead federal agency, Western is responsible for analyzing the potential environmental impacts associated with federal action.

Western has determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to analyze the potential environmental effects of the federal action. Environmental resources that could be considered in the EA include:

Air Quality/Climate Change,
Cultural and Paleontological
Resources,
Environmental Justice,
Farm Lands – Prime or Unique,
Floodplains,
Fuels/Fire Management,
Intentional Destructive Acts,
Land Use,
Migratory Birds,
Minerals,

Native American Religious
Concerns,
Noise and Sensitive Receptors,
Recreation,
Public Health and Safety,
Rangelands,
Recreation,
Socioeconomics,
Soils,
Threatened or Endangered
Species,
Travel Management,

Vegetation,
Visual Resources,
Wastes – Hazardous or Solid,
Water Quality – Drinking or
Ground,
Weeds – Invasive and Non-
native,
Wetlands/Riparian Zones,
Wild and Scenic Rivers,
Wild Horses/Burros,
Wilderness,
Wildlife

Purpose and Need

Western's objectives are to maintain its transmission system to:

- Protect against operational hazards;
- Provide access for maintenance;
- Protect facilities from fire;
- Control the spread of noxious weeds and protect environmental quality;
- Adhere to principles of Western's Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) Program;
- Establish and maintain stable, low-growing plant communities under the right-of-way (ROW);
- Protect public and worker safety;
- Maintain sound relationships with landowners and managers; and
- Streamline regulatory permitting activities.

The need for the Proposed Action is to streamline the environmental permitting processes required to:

- Eliminate the threat for vegetation to interfere with the lines and towers;
- Control vegetation cost effectively to benefit the public and natural ecosystems;
- Maintain the transmission lines, access roads, and other ROWs to facilitate safe and year-round access to transmission-line structures and associated facilities;
- Comply with FERC Order 785 and NERC Electric Reliability Standards FAC-003 (Vegetation Management) and PRC-005-1 (Protection System Maintenance).

Purpose and Need

For the portion of the project located on Coconino National Forest there is a need for a site specific amendment to the Coconino National Forest Plan.

- The amendment is needed in order to maintain vegetation in the right-of-way consistent with the most up-to-date recovery plan for the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) in MSO Protected Activity Center (PAC) areas.
- In order to meet the national electric reliability standards, removal of trees meeting the definition of “danger trees” may occur up to 60 feet on either side of the 300-foot transmission line right-of-way. The Coconino National Forest Plan specifically limits the cutting of conifer trees to less than 9-inches diameter at breast height in MSO PACs. This Coconino National Forest Plan language will need to be amended to allow the cutting of potential danger trees greater than 9-inches in MSO PACs.
- In addition, the Coconino National Forest Plan, was amended in 1996 to include language from the 1995 MSO Recovery Plan. The Recovery Plan was revised in 2012 with more updated recommendations for managing MSO habitat. To manage vegetation within the right-of-way according to the updated MSO Recovery Plan a site-specific amendment to the existing Coconino National Forest Plan is necessary.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would streamline the regulatory process for O&M and IVM activities by proactively identifying the sensitive resources that occur in the CRSP Transmission System ROWs and access roads through this NEPA process. Western currently completes these O&M and IVM activities as need-driven allowable interim activities.

O&M activities include:

- Aerial and ground patrols to locate and correct problems
- Regular and preventive maintenance, inspections and repairs to protect against operational hazards and,
- Road repair to provide access for maintenance and emergencies.

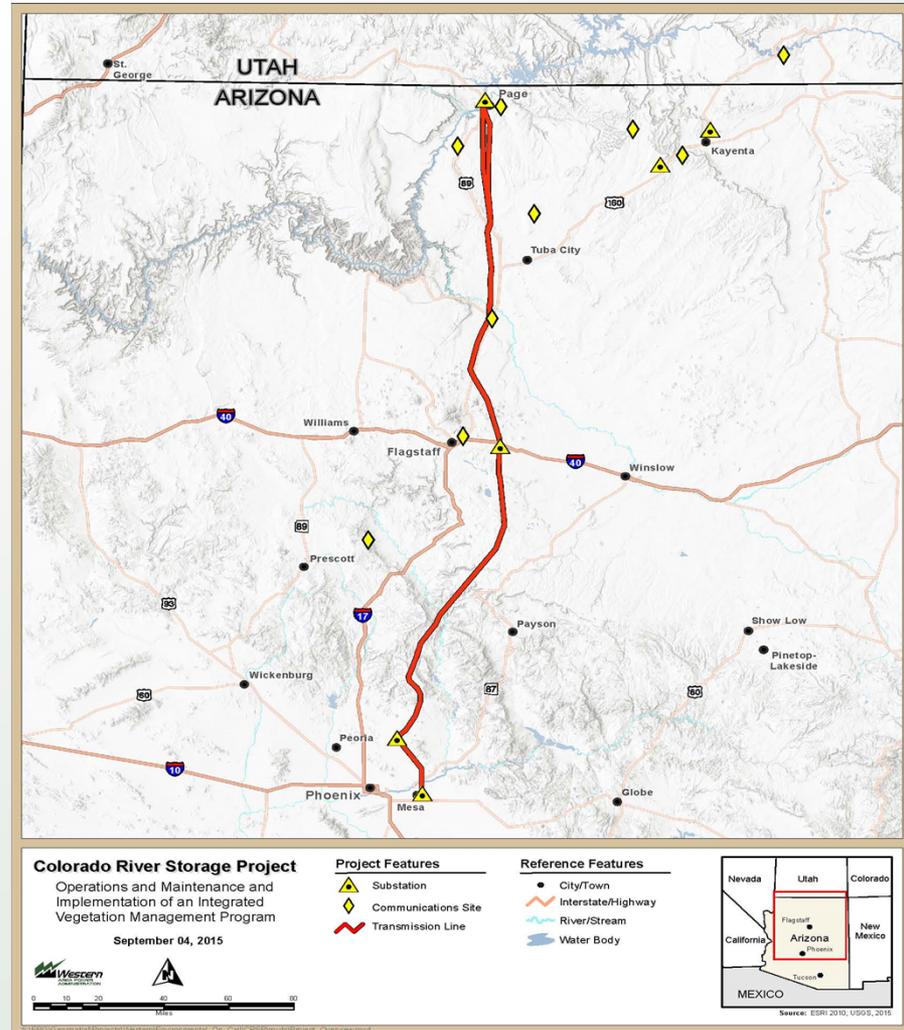
The IVM activities manage vegetation to:

- Protect facilities from fire
- Control the spread of noxious weeds to protect environmental quality
- Establish and maintain stable, low-growing plant communities in the ROW for fault protection and,
- Protect public and worker safety around transmission lines and other facilities.

Colorado River Storage Project

The portions of the CRSP Transmission System proposed for treatment include:

- **Six** substations
- Nine communication sites and,
- Approximately **262** miles of transmission line including:
 - Glen Canyon to Flagstaff 345-kV line
 - Flagstaff to Pinnacle Peak 345-kV line and,
 - **Pinnacle** Peak to Rogers 230-kV line



Typical Existing and Desired Conditions



Vegetation along Flagstaff – Pinnacle Peak 345kV Transmission Line

Western would remove nearly all vegetation (except grasses, forbs, and some small shrubs) within the ROWs to safely and reliably operate the transmission facilities.

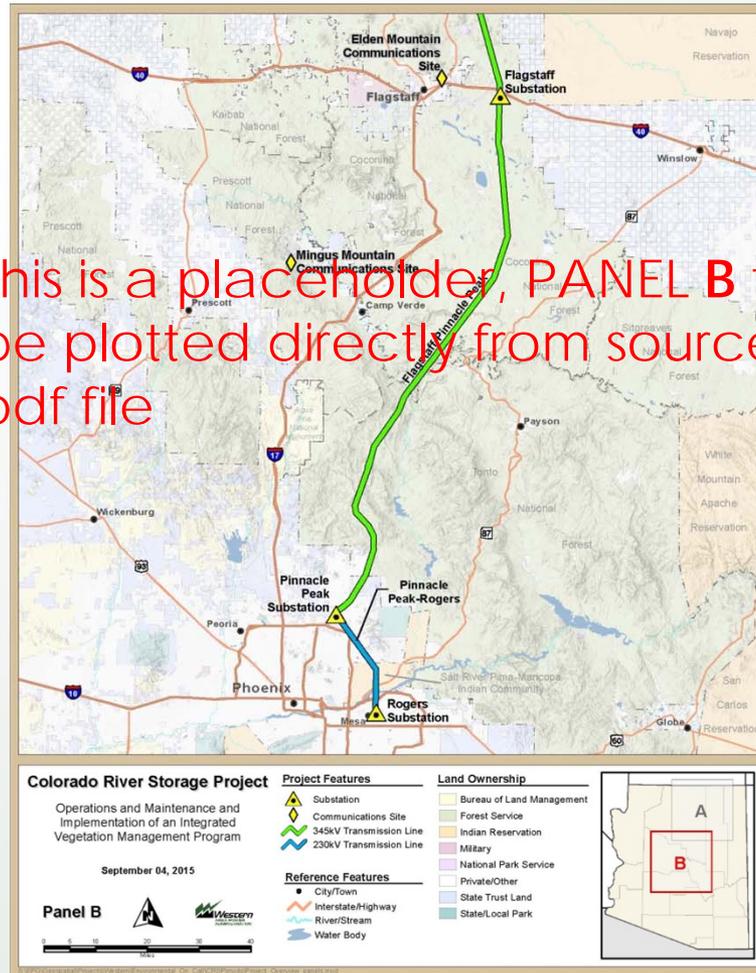


Typical ROW after vegetation clearance

In addition to vegetation removal within the limits of the ROWs, danger trees outside of the ROW would also be removed. Removal of danger trees outside of the ROW may require modification to the existing ROW agreement or authorization from the land owner or land managing agency.

Project Area

This is a placeholder, PANEL B to be plotted directly from source pdf file



What is Scoping?

The public comment period allows the public and governments (local, state, federal, tribal) an opportunity to advise Western on the scope and content of the issues to be addressed in the environmental document.

Your comments can help Western:

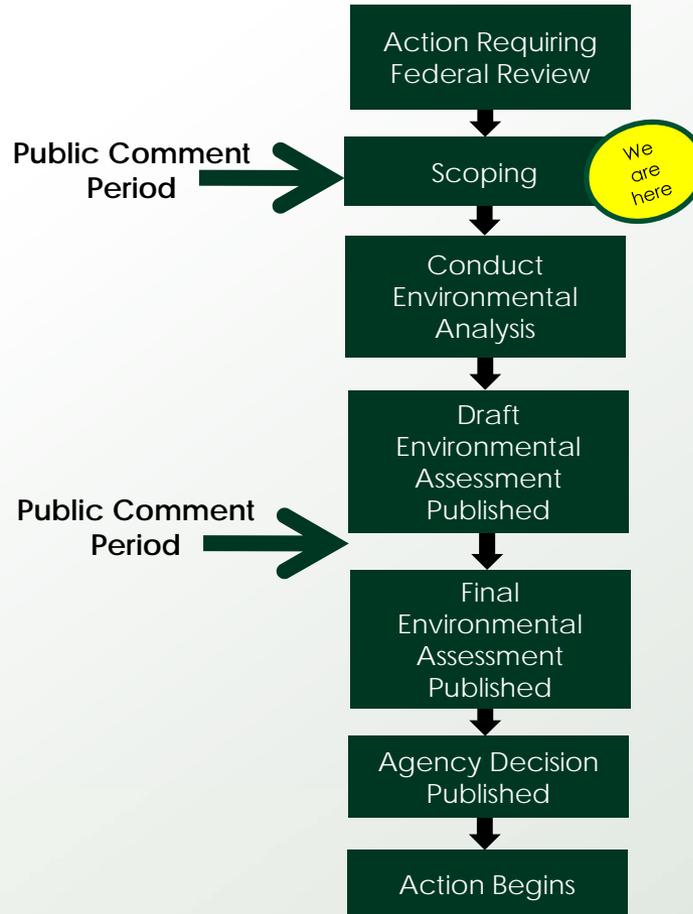
- Identify the people and organizations interested in the project
- Identify the issues to be analyzed in the environmental document
- Identify gaps in data and information needs

Scoping is required to satisfy the NEPA for federal actions and is intended to ensure that relevant issues and concerns are identified early and properly studied as part of the NEPA process.

The NEPA scoping process triggers the start of the environmental review process and provides the public an opportunity to become involved early in the process.

The scoping period for this Project is open until June 3, 2016.

NEPA Process for an Environmental Assessment (EA)



Opportunity for Comment

The scoping period for the Colorado River Storage Project is open until June 3, 2016.

Comments can be provided to Western in writing or by phone, fax, or email at the contact below. Or, fill out a comment form and submit it in person at the public scoping meeting tonight.

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Desert Southwest Region

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Website: https://www.wapa.gov/regions/DSW/Environment/Pages/Rogers-GlenCanyon_EA.aspx