



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
Desert Southwest Customer Service Region
P.O. Box 6457
Phoenix, AZ 85005-6457

October 13, 2016

SUBJECT: Scoping Letter for an Environmental Assessment, Historic Properties Review, and Notice of Floodplain and Wetland Action for WAPA's Crossman Peak Communication Facility (DOE/EA-2023)

Dear Interested Party:

This letter invites you to be involved in and provide input on environmental issues associated with the above-mentioned Federal action, which is further described below.

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Desert Southwest Region is a Federal power-marketing administration within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) that distributes electricity generated at Federal hydropower dams located along the Colorado River. We operate a microwave communication network in the 2320-2345 megahertz band to safely and reliably accomplish our mission, and we are shifting to the 7125-8025 megahertz band to free up spectrum for licensed commercial use. WAPA proposes to own, construct, operate, and maintain a new communication facility located adjacent to an existing, privately-owned one near Crossman Peak, east of Lake Havasu City in Mohave County, Arizona. This action is needed in order to bypass terrain that blocks equipment operating in the new band between our existing facilities.

The proposed action consists of three components:

- **Communication Facility.** WAPA plans to construct a communication facility composed of a 100-foot-tall, self-supporting tower with attachments such as microwave dishes, a prefabricated equipment shelter, a backup generator, a propane tank, and associated concrete slab foundations on a 0.1-acre parcel.
- **Access Road to Communication Facility.** WAPA plans to use an existing six-mile-long dirt access road across Arizona State Land Department, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lake Havasu Field Office, and private lands on the west side of Crossman Peak. On private land, WAPA plans to widen the road's switchback turns for safety.
- **Distribution Line and Access Road.** WAPA plans to contract with UniSource Energy Services (UNS) to provide electrical service to the communication facility. UNS would construct an approximately 14-mile-long, distribution line using 43-foot-tall steel or wood structures

across private and BLM land on the east side of Crossman Peak. It would connect to their existing Franconia Substation near Interstate 40. UNS would use existing roads to the extent possible and construct new dirt roads as needed.

WAPA will address the following planning requirements before construction starts:

- **Aesthetics:** WAPA will assess impacts to visual resources and ensure compliance with BLM's Resource Management Plan.
- **Clean Water Act:** WAPA will assess the proposed action's impacts, if any, to floodplains and wetlands and comply with the requirements of applicable U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits.
- **Endangered Species Act:** WAPA will evaluate threatened, endangered and other special status species and their habitat potentially affected by the proposed action and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as needed. WAPA plans to conduct a biological survey. We seek your observations about the occurrence of these species near the proposed action and suggestions to avoid or minimize adverse effects.
- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** WAPA will serve as lead Federal Agency in the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action. BLM will be a Cooperating Agency.
- **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA):** WAPA will serve as lead federal agency for Section 106 consultations with Indian tribes, State Historic Preservation Officers, and other parties. We plan to conduct an archaeological survey. WAPA invites you to be a consulting party and seeks your suggestions about available sources of cultural resource information and applicable types of identification efforts.

We anticipate that construction activities could begin as early as October 2017, provided the above-mentioned tasks are completed and no significant environmental effects are identified. Project information is available online:

<https://www.wapa.gov/regions/DSW/Environment/Pages/Crossman-Peak-Communications-Facility-Project.aspx>

We would like to know of any issues, concerns, and suggestions you may have regarding the proposed action. Your scoping comments will help define environmental issues and alternatives for consideration in the review processes. Comments can be provided in writing, by phone, or in person at the public scoping meeting (information below).

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WAPA will host an open-house style meeting to allow the public and interested parties an opportunity to learn about the proposed action, the NEPA process, the NHPA consultation process, and ask questions. The meeting will be held:

Tuesday, November 1, 2016, 5:00 – 7:00 pm
ASU Colleges at Lake Havasu City Gymnasium
100 University Way
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403

WAPA prefers to receive your scoping comments by November 15, 2016, and we will also accept comments after this date. We intend to use your scoping comments to prepare a draft EA, which we expect to complete by February 17, 2017. After that, we will seek public comment on the analyses presented in the draft EA.

We look forward to receiving your comments and hope that you will attend the public scoping meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Marianito". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda Marianito
Environmental Manager

enclosure (map)