U.S. Department of Energy
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Submit by E-mail

Proposed Action Title: Replace Cross arms on Structure 18/3 on the Gila Knob 161-kV Transmission Line

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration/ Desert Southwest Region

Location(s) (City/County/State): near Winterhaven, Imperial County, California

Proposed Action Description:

Western plans to replace in kind the cross arms on wood H-Frame Structure 18/3 on the Gila Knob 161-kV Transmission Line located on the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation, seven miles west of Winterhaven in Imperial County, California. The work area and access road occur in Sections 13, 14 & 15, Township 16 South Range 21 East on the San Bernardino Baseline & Meridian. The existing cross arms are cracked, and this work is needed to maintain the reliability and safety of the bulk electric system.

Western may conduct the replacement one of two ways depending on safety. If it is safe for workers to climb the wood poles, they will drive 3 crew trucks on the dirt access road between Knob Substation and the structure, and attach a capstan's hoist to one of the structure's poles. The hoist will be used to raise and lower the cross arms. If it is unsafe for workers to climb the poles, they will drive a bucket truck and 2 crew trucks on the dirt access road to the structure and use the bucket truck's boom to raise and lower the cross arms. Workers will turn the bucket truck around at a flat spot along the access road between Structures 18/3 & 18/4 where the road bends outside the transmission line right-of-way. The bucket truck, with its long wheel base, will leave the existing road prism, and other tire tread marks are present in this location. They will drive the bucket truck in reverse on the access road that leads to the structure's base. The bucket truck's outriggers will be extended and set on the ground for safe operation of the boom. During either method, the conductors will be temporarily unclipped and the two outer ones will touch the ground surface within 10 feet of the structure based on topography. Western will use a bulldozer or track loader to blade the existing access road adjacent to two dry wash crossings located on either side of Structure 19/6. This improvement is needed so that work vehicles can safely cross the wash. All fill moved during this roadwork will come from the existing road prism. (See Continuation Sheet)

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B4.6 - Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

☑ The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

☑ There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

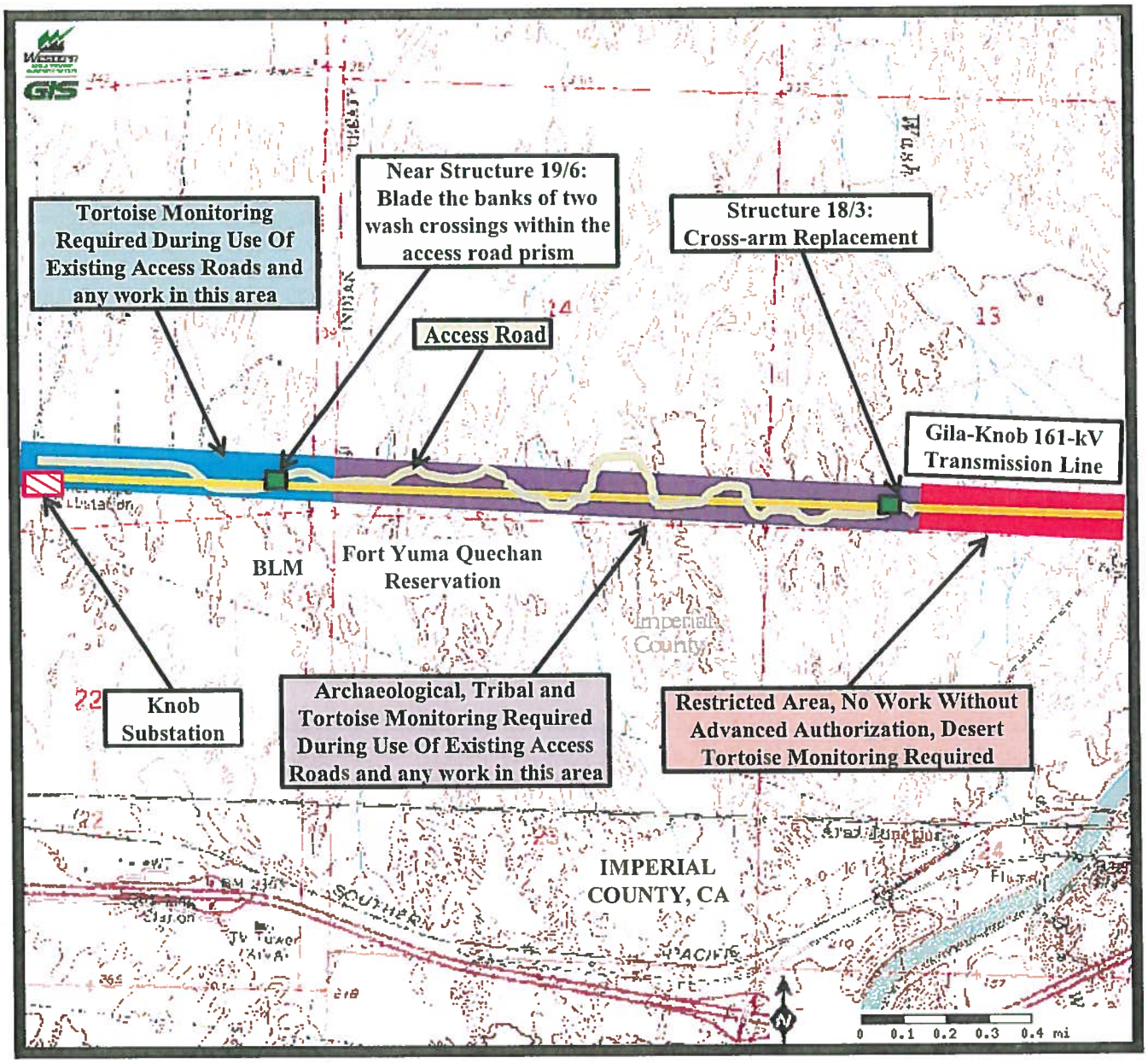
☑ The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Lonnie Mariant Date Determined: 6·3·13

GILA-KNOB 161-kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Structure and Access Road Maintenance



Legal Description		
Section	Township	Range
14	16 S	21 E

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix A or B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerting alternate uses of available resources		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B. :	NO	YES	UNKNOWN
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	X		
(2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;	X		
(3) Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases;	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statue, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:	X		
(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance	X		

	designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;			
(ii)	Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally- proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii)	Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: "Definitions," or its successor);	X		
(iv)	Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v)	Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions,‖ or its successor;	X		
(vi)	Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii)	Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests.; or	X		
(5)	Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.	X		

Categorical Exclusion Determination Form - Continuation Sheet

Project Description:

Western plans to conduct this maintenance action June 4, 2013, or as soon as an outage can be obtained. It is expected to take two days to complete the work; one day for roadwork (if needed) and one day for cross arm replacement.

Special Conditions:

A: As per the negotiated conditions listed in Western's email dated 6/3/2013 from Jill Jensen to Frank Jozwiak and others.

1. Western and Quechan archaeological monitors will inspect the site for potential areas of affect prior to project implementation. The pre-work inspection will take place on Monday June 3, 2013 at 5pm and include the area around structure 18/3, any areas where the conductor may touch the ground, the optional turn-around area identified by Western, and the optional road/wash area that might need to be graded/filled for access. Photo points will be established via GPS and direction of view will be documented. Any sensitive areas will be flagged. Western will compensate two tribal monitors @ $25.00/Hr for this task. Western will provide memory cards for any cameras or video machines used in this task.

2. Western and Quechan archaeological monitors will monitor all activity associated with the cross-arm replacement work at structure 18/3. In compliance with internal safety standards monitors will be located outside the ROW once the line crew arrives. To ensure the crew is not distracted during project implementation no photography or videography will take place while the crew is working. Monitors will remain as unobtrusive as possible to further ensure the line crew is not unduly distracted by their presence. Western will compensate two tribal monitors @ $25.00/Hr for this task.

3. Western will perform the cross arm replacement on Tuesday June 4, 2013. Western will meet Quechan Tribal Monitors/THPO at Fort Yuma on Tuesday June 4, 2013 at 5:30 am. The group will then caravan to the site.

4. All Western and Quechan vehicles and personnel, or representatives thereof, will at all times remain on the access road and in the approved work area.

5. Should the site be impacted during project implementation the monitors can request that work be temporarily halted to allow for documentation of potential damage(s). At the safest and soonest point the line crew will halt work, secure the work site, and allow the monitors into the ROW to document potential damage(s). Due to the time constraints associated with the outage, this documentation will take no more than 15 minutes per occurrence. After the documentation window has passed the

monitors will leave the ROW, the line crew will secure the work site and resume repair work.

6. Upon completion of repairs, Western will remove all debris, damaged items, tools or supplies from the site. After all debris, damaged items, tools, supplies and vehicles have been removed from the site Western and Quechan archaeological monitors will inspect the area around structure 18/3, any areas where the conductor may have touched the ground, the optional turn-around area identified by Western, and the optional road/wash area that might need to be graded/filled for access. Using only the photo points established in Task 1, post-work documentation will be completed in the same manner as pre-work documentation. All flagging that may have been placed around sensitive areas will be removed. Western will compensate two tribal monitors @ $25.00/Hr for this task. Western will provide memory cards for any cameras or video machines used in this task.

7. If a bucket truck is required, the wash will be graded/filled using existing road material. No fill materials will be taken, from either side of the wash. Bucket truck will remain on the road and only turn around in the specified area.

B: Per the Biological Evaluation Short Form dated 5/28/13 for the Gila-Knob 161-kV Transmission Line, Cross Arm Replacement at Structure 18/3

1. A qualified biologist will be present during all project activities and serve as the project's Biological Monitor. A "qualified biologist" is defined as a person with appropriate education, training, and experience to conduct desert tortoise surveys, monitor project activities, provide worker education programs, and supervise or perform other implementing actions. The person selected to be the qualified biologist will be approved by the USFWS, and must demonstrate an acceptable knowledge of tortoise biology, habitat requirements, sign identification techniques, and survey procedures. Evidence of such knowledge may include experience as a compliance monitor on a project in desert tortoise habitat, work on a desert tortoise trend plot or transect surveys, or other previous research or field work on the desert tortoise. The Biological Monitor will be authorized by Western to temporarily halt construction activity if needed to prevent harm to desert tortoise. The Biological Monitor's responsibilities will include, but will not be limited to the following:

    a. Inspection of locations of any tortoise burrows or sign that were located during the pre-construction survey (#2, below);

    b. Monitoring activity of these species on or near the project alignment;

    c. Regular inspection of the work areas, including access routes and other areas related to project activities, for desert tortoise;

    d. Regular inspection beneath vehicles and equipment to ensure that they do not present potential hazards to wildlife, including desert tortoises.

2. No more than 2 days prior to project construction at any location, a qualified biologist will survey the project alignment, including transmission line access road and associated work sites (e.g., turnout areas) for desert tortoise, tortoise burrows or other sign.

3. No construction activities will take place in the vicinity of a desert tortoise. If a desert tortoise is observed, it will be left to move away from the work site on its own. The Biological Monitor and all workers shall regularly observe the work areas for desert tortoise. At any time a desert tortoise is seen within or near any work area (including access road, turnouts, etc.), the Biological Monitor and project supervisor will be immediately notified. No desert tortoises will be handled during this project; only an Authorized Biologist (as authorized by USFWS) may handle a desert tortoise.

4. The Biological Monitor will conduct employee training to ensure that all workers on the project site (including contractors) are aware of all applicable avoidance measures for biological resources. Specifically, workers will be required to (1) limit all activities to approved work areas; (2) check beneath and around vehicles and equipment before moving them; (3) report any desert tortoise observation in the project area and access routes, to the supervisor or biological monitor; (4) avoid contact with any wildlife that may approach a work area; (5) pick up and properly dispose of any food, trash or construction refuse; and (6) report any spilled materials (oil, fuel, solvent, engine coolant, raw concrete, or other material potentially hazardous to wildlife), to the supervisor or biological monitor. In addition, all workers will be informed of civil and criminal penalties for violations of the federal ESA and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

5. Vehicles will not exceed 20 miles per hour on access roads. The Biological Monitor will ensure compliance with speed limits during project activities.

6. No pets will be permitted in any project areas.