FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Parker-Davis Transmission System Routine Operation and Maintenance Project and Proposed Integrated Vegetation Management Plan
Arizona, California, Nevada
DOE/EA-1982

AGENCY: **U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration**

ACTION: **Finding of No Significant Impact and Floodplain Statement of Findings**

BACKGROUND: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to implement a programmatic operations and maintenance (O&M) process, which includes an Integrated Vegetation Management program, along the Parker-Davis Transmission System. The Proposed Action would streamline the regulatory process for O&M activities along the Parker-Davis Transmission System and balance environmental protection with system reliability and compliance with the National Electric Safety Code, Western Electricity Coordinating Council requirements, North American Electric Reliability Council reliability standards, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers standards, and Western directives for maintaining system reliability and protection of human safety. The Proposed Action also includes the implementation of an Integrated Vegetation Management program along the Parker-Davis Transmission System to ensure the following: (1) reliable, uninterrupted service to customers; (2) safe transmission and distribution of power along existing transmission lines; and (3) protection against wildfires that could result from vegetation and trees coming into contact with or arcing to the transmission lines.

Western prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the Proposed Action and a No Action Alternative. The Parker-Davis Transmission System passes through three states and lands managed by the U.S. Department of Interior [i.e., Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, and National Park Service], U.S. Department of Agriculture [i.e., Forest Service], U.S. Department of Defense, seven Indian reservations, and Arizona State Trust lands. Under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Coronado National Forest were cooperating agencies in preparing the EA. The EA is titled "Parker-Davis Transmission System Routine Operation and Maintenance Project and Proposed Integrated Vegetation Management Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment (DOE/EA-1982)" and dated August 2015. Western incorporates this EA by reference.

Western determined that the Proposed Action would have minor effects to species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Consultation was completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 21, 2015. Western consulted with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and respective Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. On July 10, 2013, the Arizona SHPO and THPOs entered into a programmatic agreement with Western to ensure maintenance activities result in no adverse effect to cultural resources.

Western also holds similar programmatic agreements with the Nevada SHPO (dated July 29, 2014) and the California SHPO (dated January 20, 2010). These agreements identify which activities require cultural resources studies and which activities are exempt.

FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS: This is a Floodplain Statement of Findings prepared in accordance with 10 CFR part 1022 and provides a summary and the results of the Floodplain and Wetland Assessment, which is incorporated into the EA.

Western proposes to implement an O&M process as well as an Integrated Vegetation Management Program for its existing Parker-Davis Transmission System, including transmission line infrastructure, rights-of-way, communication facilities, and access roads. The project area crosses several major rivers, including the Colorado, San Pedro, Gila, Salt, Agua Fria, and the Santa Cruz Rivers, and their associated floodplains. Because the proposed action involves existing infrastructure, Western did not consider locations outside of floodplains. The proposed action would not result in substantive modifications to the floodplain that would alter the capacity of the floodplain to convey and dissipate the volume and energy of peak flows. The proposed action has no adverse effects on floodplains, flood hazards, or floodplain management, because of the incorporation of Project Conservation Measures and Standard Operating Procedures that reduce risk factors including, but not limited to the following: erosion control; buffer distances for work outside of wetlands, streams, and riparian areas; and minimization of disturbance to riparian and wetland vegetation. The proposed action conforms to all applicable state and local floodplain and wetland protection standards to the extent applicable to Federal projects.

DETERMINATION: Based on the analysis contained in DOE/EA-1982, Western determined that the Proposed Action to implement a programmatic O&M process, including implementation of an Integrated Vegetation Management Program along the Parker-Davis Transmission System does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Additional information and copies of the EA and FONSI are available to all interested parties and the public from the following contact:

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The EA and FONSI can be downloaded from Western's website or the U.S. Department of Energy's website at:

https://www.wapa.gov/regions/DSW/Environment/Pages/parker-davis-vegetation-management.aspx

http://energy.gov/nepa/ea-1982-parker-davis-transmission-system-routine-operation-and-maintenance-project-and-proposed

For further information on the DOE NEPA process, contact:

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