

**ESTES TO FLATIRON TRANSMISSION LINES REBUILD  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT**

**For Scoping Period November 29, 2011 through January 31, 2012**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Scoping Summary Report summarizes the public involvement activities conducted as part of the Environmental Assessment (EA) scoping process for the proposed project, and details public comments that were received during the EA scoping period.

## **2.0 EA SCOPING ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1. EA Notification and Public Outreach**

Western's determination to prepare an EA for the proposed Estes-Flatiron transmission lines rebuild project was issued on August 23, 2011. Western notified landowners, the public, and state and Federal agencies about its intent to prepare an EA and conduct EA scoping meetings by letter dated November 15, 2011, by postcard, and display ads placed in the Estes Park Trail Gazette (see Attachments I, II, and III). A public comment period until January 2, 2012 was initially offered, but the scoping period was extended until January 31, 2012, based on public and stakeholder requests (see Attachment V for extension notification). Additional comments were received through May 2012 and are reflected in this report.

### **2.2. EA Public Scoping Meetings**

Scoping meetings were held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. in Estes Park, Colorado on November 29, 2011, and Loveland, Colorado on November 30, 2011. Forty-five signed the attendance sheets for the Estes Park scoping meeting and 14 signed the attendance sheet for the Loveland meeting.

The meeting format for both meetings was Open House with approximately 15 posters describing the NEPA process and the project description (posters attached). Western representatives were in attendance at both meetings, however not all representatives attended both meeting.

Issues identified at the meetings through written comments received are shown in the following bullets.

#### **Estes Park Meeting**

- Need different scoping meeting format with questions and answers/open discussion.
- Prefer Corten® color vs. galvanized steel for poles.
- Would like better visual representation of what transmission line would look like.
- Need third alternative.
- Prefer Crocker Ranch, but agree with combining line and rebuild.
- Would like line closer to Pole Hill.

#### **Loveland Meeting**

- Prefer various colors of poles to suit environment.
- Keep Pole Hill Road private and locked.

- Minimize impact on roads and environment by constructing when least damage would be done.
- Appreciated contact and updates and poster displays.

### 2.3. Meadowdale Hills Property Owners Association Meeting

Western representatives attended a meeting with the Meadowdale Hills Property Owners Association on December 13, 2011, at the Ravenscrest Bible School and Conference Center. The meeting was held between 5:30 and 7 p.m. About 70 people attended the meeting. A question and answer session was moderated by Pam Shaddock, Senator Udall’s Regional Director. Comments received from members of the Meadowdale Hills Property Owners Association are reflected in this scoping summary report.

### 3.0 EA WRITTEN SCOPING COMMENTS

There were 361 comment letters (or emails) received as of May 15, 2012. Of those 361 letters, 192 (53 percent) were form letters, emails, or petitions and 169 (47 percent) individual letters. There were 596 unique comments contained in the 361 scoping letters. Comments were categorized by topic (17 topics as shown in Figure A-1) and issues. Comments received during the EA scoping period, and from February 1 through May 15, 2012, are provided in Attachment VI, EA Scoping Comments, and summarized below.

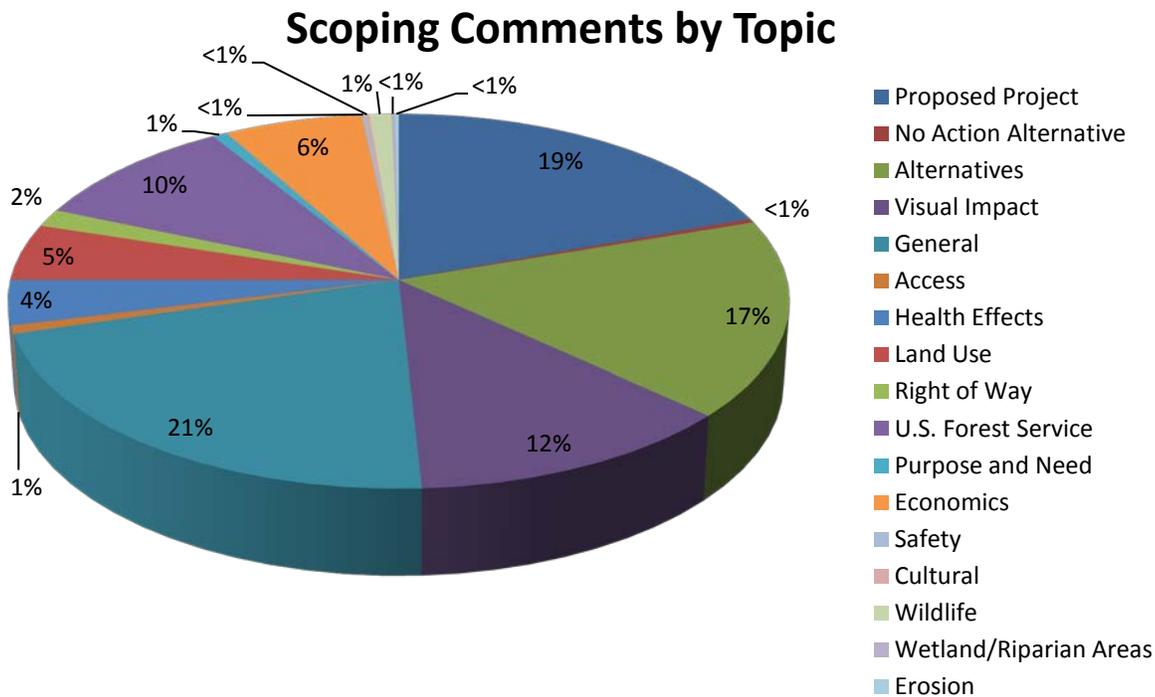


Figure A-1: Scoping Comments by Topic

Table A-1 lists the issues for each major topic described in Figure A-1, Scoping Comments by Topic. There were 83 individual issues raised during the EA scoping process.

Key issues raised during the EA public scoping process include:

- Potential effects to visual resources and rural aesthetics;
- Alternative routing options;
- Issuance of special use permit through USFS;
- Adherence to USFS Land and Resource Management Plan;
- Effects on property values;
- Effects on social and economic conditions in the tourist economy of Estes Park;
- Human health effects and electromagnetic field effects;
- Pole height, pole placement, type of poles used, and undergrounding options;
- Effects on access roads and construction standards;
- Vegetation management;
- Effects on biological and ecological environments;
- Cost comparison of alternatives and project costs.

**Table A-1 Topics and Issues for Estes-Flatirons EA Public Scoping**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Issue Description</b>
Proposed Project	Support Proposed Project
Proposed Project	Petition -Support Proposed Project
Proposed Project	Do not Support Proposed Project
Proposed Project	Need details of project
Proposed Project	Pole height
Proposed Project	Poles across causeway
Proposed Project	Transmission line losses for longer line?
Proposed Project	Increased capacity
Proposed Project	Transmission lines do not benefit Estes Valley
Proposed Project	Move Transmission poles on property?
Proposed Project	Keep poles?
Proposed Project	Why choose longer route?
Proposed Project	Rugged Terrain across Crocker Ranch
Proposed Project	Use Weathered Steel Poles
Proposed Project	Use wood poles
Proposed Project	Analyze tower failure and fall pattern for existing and new ROW
Proposed Project	Construction
Proposed Project	Security risks
Proposed Project	Do no support Pole Hill Reroute
Proposed Project	Add fiber-optic capacity
No Action Alternative	Support No Action Alternative
No Action Alternative	Do not support No Action Alternative

**Table A-1 Topics and Issues for Estes-Flatirons EA Public Scoping**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Issue Description</b>
Alternatives	Request and support "Crocker Ranch" /Northern Route Alternative
Alternatives	Northern route does not meet objectives in Purpose and Need
Alternatives	Request underground transmission
Alternatives	Request removal/burial of steel lattice structures
Alternatives	Don't use industrial steel poles
Alternatives	Pole Hill Section unnecessary
Visual Impact	Concerns about Visual Impact to homes
Visual Impact	Concerns about Visual Impact from Highway 36
Visual Impact	Visual impact from Estes Valley
Visual Impact	FAA markers because of tower heights
Visual Impact	Proposed Project detrimental to general public
Visual Impact	Concerns about Visual Impact to Pole Hill Road
Visual Impact	Consider and Model Negative and Positive Visual Impacts
Visual Impact	Correct misleading information
General	Request copy of EA and inclusion on mailing list
General	Why EA not EIS
General	Flawed process
General	Analyze additional alternatives
General	Public calling for action against Western Proposal
General	Request Information
General	Don't like open house format of meeting/"short notice"
General	Property owners were not notified
General	Money wasted on EA
General	No impact analysis or cost analysis available at scoping meeting
General	NEPA analysis
General	Concern about inaccuracies of the Environmental Assessment Determination
General	Extend Scoping Period
General	EA unnecessary/ abuse of special permit process
General	Excluding public from process
General	Conspiracy to benefit one land owner
General	WAPA violating Federal regulations
General	WAPA cease and desist any pre-decisional actions

General	Want elected officials to take action to represent constituency
Access	Swapping land
Access	Retiring Easements
Access	Locking gates on Pole Hill Road
Access	Impacts to local, county, private roads from construction
Health Effects	Increasing EMF
Land Use	Impact on property values
Land Use	Clear cutting under ROW
Land Use	Degrade backcountry experience along FR 122
Right of Way	ROW questions and information
U.S. Forest Service	Use Categorical Exclusion in existing utility corridor
U.S. Forest Service	Use existing Utility Corridor
U.S. Forest Service	Existing Utility Corridor is a Red Herring
U.S. Forest Service	Special Use Permit
Purpose and Need	Analysis of Purpose and Need available?
Purpose and Need	Purpose and Need should include Access and Cost- effectiveness as objectives
Economics	Cost of using underground alternative
Economics	Implement surcharge for burying the line
Economics	Adverse impact to tourism economy
Economics	Compare Costs of Alternatives
Economics	Money wasted on unnecessary rebuild
Economics	Analyze economic and social impact of new towers
Economics	Disconnect between federal policies and local execution
Safety	Security of energy supply
Wildlife	Raptor nests
Wildlife	Impact to threatened or endangered species
Wildlife	General wildlife concerns
Wetland/Riparian Areas	Pole Hill Section would impact riparian areas
Erosion	Environmental damage to grasslands and impact to Little Thompson River

**Attachment I**  
**EA Notification Letter**



**Department of Energy**  
Western Area Power Administration  
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region  
P.O. Box 3700  
Loveland, CO 80539-3003

**NOV 15 2011**

Dear Interested Party:

Western Area Power Administration (Western) invites your involvement in the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project in Larimer County, Colorado. Western is proposing to remove three existing transmission line segments as shown on the enclosed maps and replace them with a single 115-kilovolt (kV) double-circuit transmission line using some of the land where the three lines are currently situated. Following the requirements in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Western will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) on its proposal, which includes opportunities for you to provide comments.

For this project, Western would renovate 31.8 miles of three transmission line segments from the city of Estes Park to Flatiron Reservoir in Larimer County, Colorado. The proposed action would increase system capacity for future public needs, improve access, replace old and deteriorating structures, and bring the facility up to current National Electrical Safety Codes (NESC). The renovation would reduce maintenance costs and eliminate about 16 miles of transmission line and rights-of-way (ROW) by combining the three separate 115-kV transmission line segments into a single ROW.

The existing three lines are the Estes-Lyons (E-LS), Estes-Pole Hill (E-PH), and Flatiron-Pole Hill (F-PH) segments. These transmission line structures are 60 to 72 years old, deteriorating, and need to be upgraded to current NESC. The rebuilt transmission line would require widening and realigning one existing ROW, new galvanized-steel monopoles for the lines, and possible changes in access points for construction and other infrastructure. In addition to the double-circuit transmission lines on these structures, two fiber-optic communication lines would be added to the top of the structures. Photos of the proposed structures are enclosed. There are no proposed new substations, or changes to existing substations at this time.

Townships crossed by the existing ROW include T5N, R70W; T5N, R71W; and T5N, R72W in Larimer County. The Project would be constructed on private and public lands. A website is available for you to obtain further information about the project at: <http://ww2.wapa.gov/sites/western/transmission/infrastructure/Pages/Estes-Flatiron.aspx>. You may submit comments on the project by e-mail to [EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov](mailto:EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov).

Western wants to ensure that you have many opportunities to learn about the project and provide comments and concerns. During the environmental review, Western will conduct public meetings in the town of Estes Park and city of Loveland, Colorado. Public meetings are tentatively scheduled for November 29 and 30, 2011. Please see the above website for more details.

We look forward to your response. If you would like to meet with Western, have questions, or require additional information, please contact Mr. Tim Snowden at the addresses below.

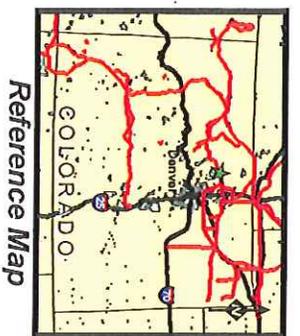
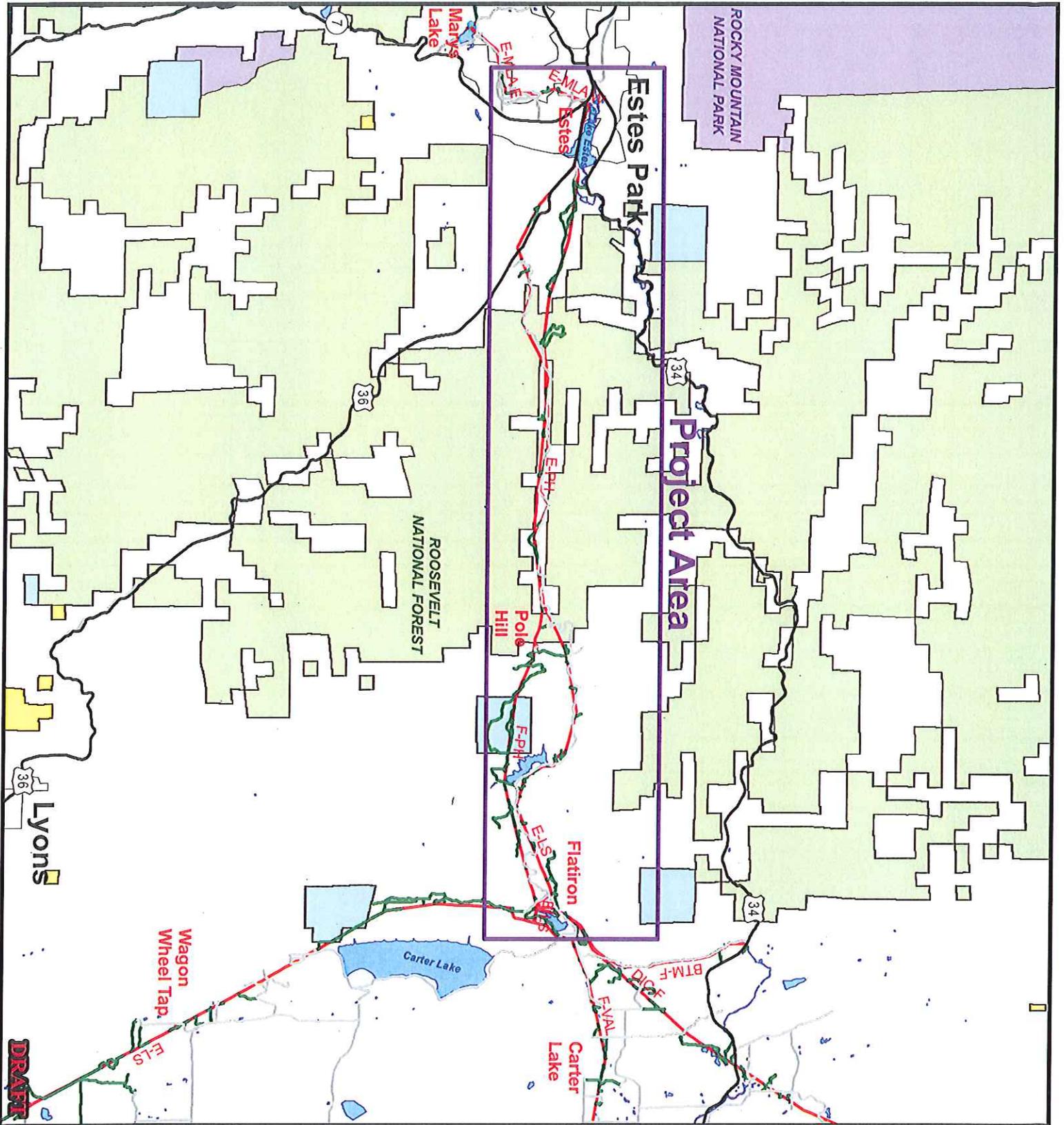
Tim Snowden  
Environmental Specialist  
Western Area Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3700  
Loveland, CO 80539  
970-461-7287  
tsnowden@wapa.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gene Iley, Jr.".

Gene Iley, Jr.  
Environmental Manager

Enclosures:  
Project Location Map  
Photo of Pole Structure



### LEGEND

- USBC MAJOR ROADS
- PUBLIC ROADS (GPS)
- ACCESS ROADS (GPS)
- TRANSMISSION LINE

**Federal Lands Layer**  
Source: BLM (SMA)

BLM
NPS
STATE
USFS

- LAKES
- SUBSTATIONS
- CITIES/TOWNS

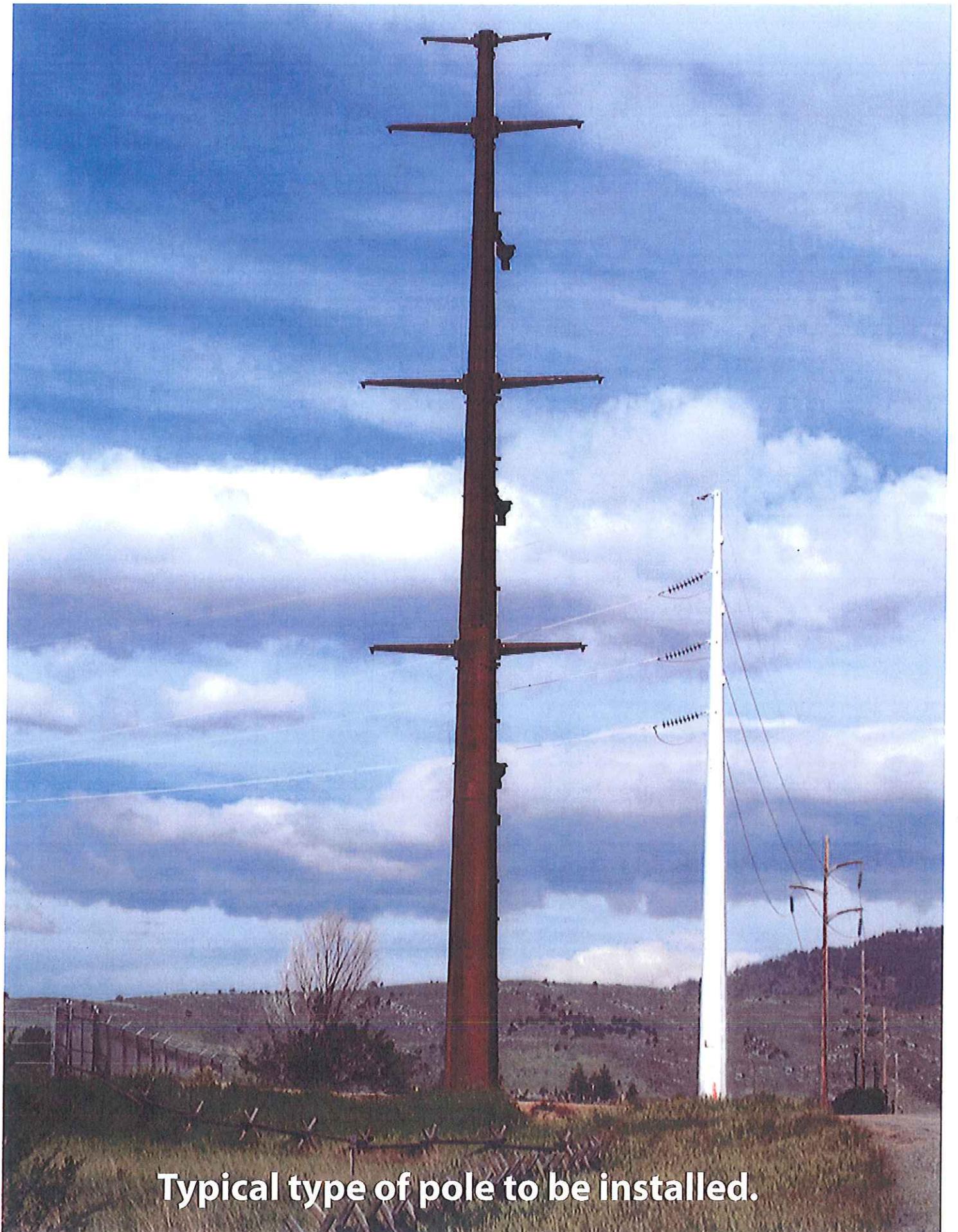


This cartographic product and GIS data were prepared in accordance with the standards of the National Map Accuracy Standards (NMAS) to ensure that the data is accurate and reliable. Although efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of these conditions and data, the user assumes all responsibility for the appropriate use of this map. The data on this map is for reference use only. This map and data are the property of WAPA/DOE and are intended for planning and analysis only. No reproduction or copying of this product is allowed without the written consent of WAPA/DOE.

**WESTERN AREA POWER AND TRANSPORTATION**  
ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FOREST  
ESTES-LYONS  
COLORADO  
115KV RE-BUILD PROJECT

Designed: \_\_\_\_\_  
November 10, 2011  
E-LS  
1 of 1

**DRAFT**



**Typical type of pole to be installed.**

**Attachment II**  
**EA Scoping Meeting Notification Postcard**

## Open House Public Meetings Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project



**W**estern Area Power Administration invites you to learn more about the Estes to Flatiron transmission line rebuild project. Western owns and operates approximately 32 miles of transmission line between Estes Park and Flatiron Reservoir in Larimer County, CO. This proposal would remove 16 miles of transmission line, and rebuild 16 miles to double circuit 115-kV transmission line. The project

would use existing transmission line routes. The project crosses private lands and parcels administered by the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest.

Representatives from Western and the U.S. Forest Service will be available to answer your questions about the proposed project and take your comments at the informal meetings.

### Open House Meetings

Open House meetings will be held from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., at two locations:

- ▶ **November 29, 2011**  
Estes Park Museum,  
200 Fourth St.,  
Estes Park, CO 80517
- ▶ **November 30, 2011**  
Police Institute/LPD  
810 E. 10th St.  
Loveland, CO 80537  
(Enter east side of bldg.)



### Need more information?

- ▶ **Please visit our website at:**  
<http://ww2.wapa.gov/sites/western/transmission/infrastructure/Pages/Estes-Flatiron.aspx>
- ▶ **Contact:**  
Tim Snowden  
Western Area Power Administration  
5555 E. Crossroads Blvd.  
P.O. Box 3700  
Loveland, CO 80539-3003
- ▶ **Email:** [EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov](mailto:EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov)

## Open House Public Meetings Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project



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Tim Snowden  
Rocky Mountain Region  
5555 E. Crossroads Blvd.  
P.O. Box 3700  
Loveland, CO 80539-3003



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**Attachment III**  
**EA Scoping Meetings Notification Display Ad**

# Open House Public Meetings

## Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project

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Representatives from Western and the U.S. Forest Service will be available to answer your questions about the proposed project and take your comments at the informal meetings.

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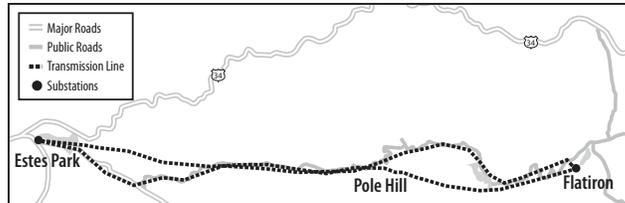
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- ▶ **Email:** EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov

### ▶ Please visit our website at:

<http://ww2.wapa.gov/sites/western/transmission/infrastructure/Pages/Estes-Flatiron.aspx>



**Attachment IV**  
**EA Scoping Meeting Materials**



# *Welcome!*

---

## **The Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project**

Open House  
4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

*November 29, 2011*  
Estes Park Museum  
200 Fourth Street  
Estes Park, CO 80517

*November 30, 2011*  
Police Institute/LPD  
810 E. 10th St.  
Loveland, CO 80537





# *How to Participate*

- ▶ Sign in and join the project mailing list in order to stay informed on the project's progress.
- ▶ Visit stations and read materials.
- ▶ Ask questions and give comments to Western and Forest Service staff.
- ▶ Write suggestions on the comment sheet.
- ▶ Comment online at:  
**[EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov](mailto:EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov)**





# *The National Environmental Policy Act Process*

Western will prepare an Environmental Assessment.

Key steps include:

- ▶ Identify issues
  - Conduct public scoping meetings
  - Coordinate with other agencies and tribes
- ▶ Conduct biological, recreation, visual, and other environmental studies.
- ▶ Analyze impacts and identify mitigation measures.
- ▶ Prepare EA Document.
- ▶ Public review of EA.
- ▶ Western and the US Forest Service issue separate decisions
- ▶ There is a 45-day appeal period for the USFS decision.





# *What is the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project?*

---

Western owns approximately 32 miles of transmission line between Estes Park and Flatiron Reservoir in Larimer County, CO.

The proposal would remove 16 miles of 115-kV transmission line and rebuild 16 miles of line to double circuit 115-kV transmission line. The project would use existing transmission line ROWs. The project crosses private and public lands and Roosevelt National Forest land.





# *Who is involved?*

---

**Western Area Power Administration** owns both 115-kV transmission lines.

- ▶ Western is the lead agency for this EA and has the primary responsibility for conducting the environmental review and preparing the Environmental Assessment.

**United States Forest Service** is a cooperating agency on the EA

- ▶ The two transmission lines cross Roosevelt National Forest Lands. Approximately 1.65 miles of transmission line and ROW will be removed and 2.16 miles of transmission line will be rebuilt.





# *Western Purpose and Need*

- 
- ▶ Western must ensure its facilities are up to current safety standards, accessible for maintenance and emergencies, protected from wildfire, and cost effective for its customers.





# *USFS*

## *Purpose and Need*

- 
- ▶ To issue a special use authorization for use and maintenance of this transmission line crossing National Forest System lands and to minimize environmental impacts on these lands.





# *Existing situation*

- ▶ The existing transmission line wood pole structures are 60 to 73 years old and in deteriorating condition.
- ▶ Portions of these lines are marginally accessible for routine maintenance.
- ▶ Maintaining two separate right of ways is more costly and has a larger environmental footprint than maintaining a single right of way.
- ▶ The structures are vulnerable to wildfire threats.





# *Proposed project*

The Proposed Project combines 32 miles of two transmission line rights of way on to one 16 mile ROW using a single pole, double circuit design.

The project includes rebuilding the transmission line, changes in ROW alignment and width, and improved access along the ROW.

No new proposed substations or changes to substations are proposed.

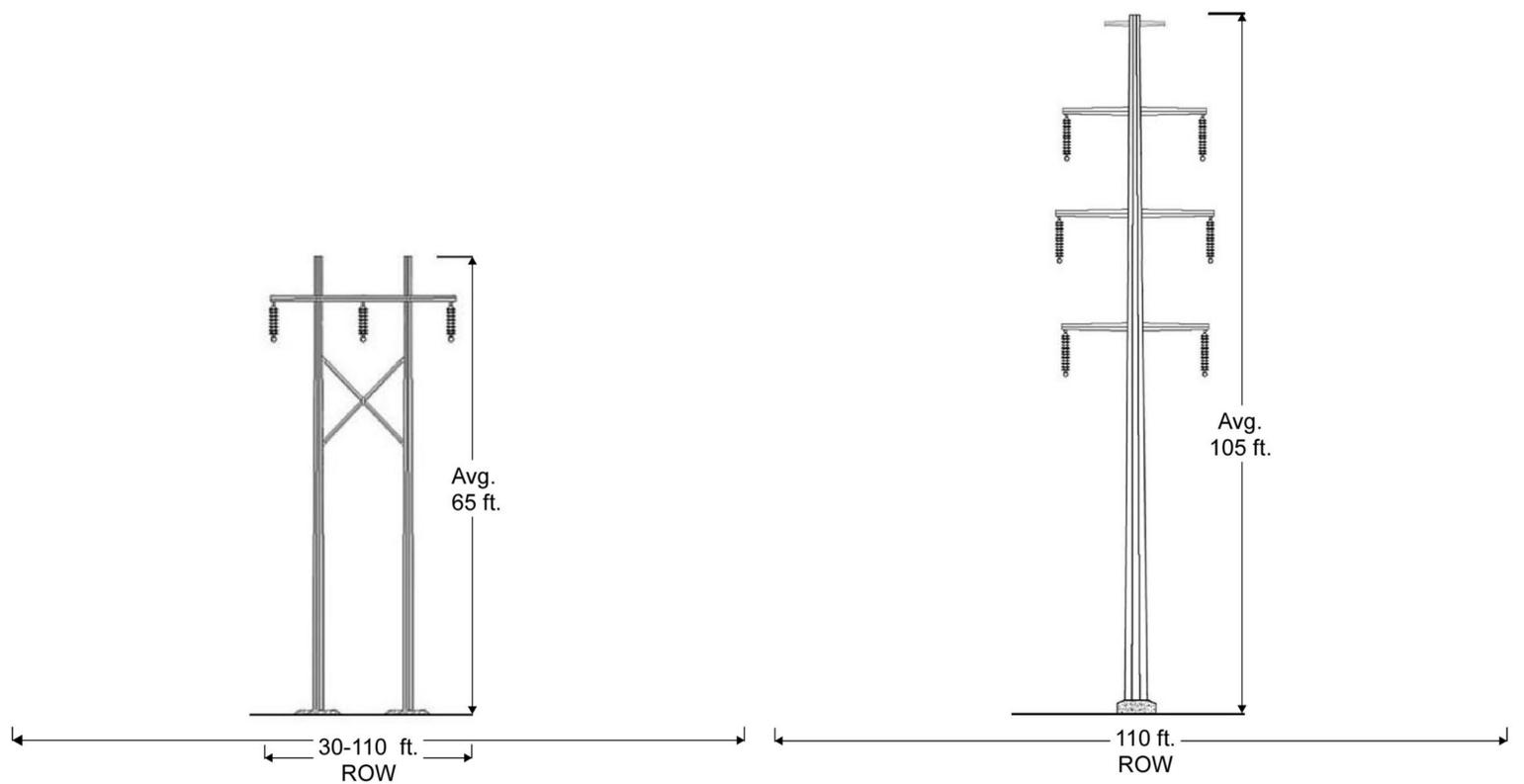
Changes included in the rebuild are:

- ▶ H-frame wood pole structures to single pole steel structures
- ▶ Structure height (changes from 70 to 105 feet)
- ▶ ROW width increases to 110 feet
- ▶ Conductor size (397.5 ACSR to 795 ACSR)
- ▶ Two reroutes are planned
- ▶ One ROW would be abandoned





# Existing and proposed structures



No Action Alternative  
115-kV Wood Pole H-Frame  
Structures

Proposed Project 115-kV  
Double Circuit  
Single Pole Steel Structures





# *Project schedule (Tentative)*

---

Issues Development

*July through November 2011*

---

Public Scoping Meetings

*November 2011*

---

Data Collection, Analysis,  
and Preparation of Draft EA

*July 2011 through March 2012*

---

Public and Agency Review  
of Draft EA

*April through May 2012*

---

Final EA

*June 2012*

---

USFS 45-day appeal period

*August 2012*

---

Design and Land Acquisition

*2012*

---

Contract Procurement

*2013*

---

Construction

*2013 – 2014*

---

In Service Date

*2014*

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# *Preliminary issues*

- ▶ Visual Effects
- ▶ Impacts on Recreation
- ▶ Power Supply and Public Safety
- ▶ Effects on Wildlife, Fish and Plant Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species and other Species of Concern
- ▶ Access
- ▶ Vegetation Management





# *Additional issues*

---

Please participate by suggesting other issues:





# *No-Action alternative*

- ▶ Under the No-Action alternative, the two transmission lines would continue to operate on the existing ROWs.
- ▶ Records indicate that 70 to 80 percent of the 32 miles of transmission lines would require replacement within the near future. This would require replacing transmission line structures along both existing ROWs.
- ▶ Access to the transmission lines is limited and replacement of structures would require additional or improved access on both ROWs.
- ▶ Additional NEPA analysis would be required for structure replacement.
- ▶ 30' ROW will need to be widened on Estes-Lyons line.





# *Need more information?*

► **Visit our website at:**

<http://ww2.wapa.gov/sites/western/transmission/infrastruct/Pages/Estes-Flatiron.aspx>

► **Or Contact:**

Tim Snowden

Western Area Power Administration

5555 E. Crossroads Blvd.

P.O. Box 3700

Loveland, CO 80539-3003

► **Email:** [EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov](mailto:EstesFlatironEA@wapa.gov)



**Attachment V**  
**EA Scoping Period Extension Notification Postcard**

## Scoping Period Extended For Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project

**A**fter receiving several requests from the public to extend the scoping comment period for the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Environmental Assessment, Western Area Power Administration is now accepting comments through January 31, 2012. Comments received or postmarked after January 31, 2012 will be considered to the extent practicable.

Western is proposing to consolidate two 16-mile transmission lines between Flatiron Reservoir and Estes Park in Larimer County, CO, onto one existing transmission line. Sixteen miles of transmission line in the area will be eliminated. The project crosses private lands and the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

### To submit a comment:

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Western Area Power Administration  
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P.O. Box 3700  
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**Attachment VI**  
**EA Scoping Comments**

Comment
<p>I received a call from a land owner along Pole Hill Road. He called at 0942 today to discuss the Flatiron - Estes project. He received a meeting notice and would like to find out what 16 miles of transmission line would be eliminated. I told him that I could not address his question and you could respond when you returned to the office.</p>
<p>Why is an Environmental Assessment needed instead of the more comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement? Thank you.</p>
<p>Has the Environmental Assessment for the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line been done? If so, please let me know how I may obtain a copy. If not, please let me know the anticipated date for completion.</p>
<p>We have had some communications before about the easements on our property on Pole Hill Road. It is in the gated area west of the Pole Hill Canal. I understand that some changes are being planned for the transmission lines on the two easements across our property and others. Can you tell me what we do know? I understand they are doing some surveying and planning but just thought there may be some decisions already made. I understand that there will be one line instead of two. Do we know where that will be? Will the lines be combined into one or the other and do we know which easement that will be? I am making plans and trying to visually take the transmissions lines into play. I assume even if the lines are combined, you will still own the easement and we couldn't build there but visually it may make a difference. Thanks.</p>
<p>I was looking at the Estes -Flatiron Transmission Line map for the removal and rebuild plans. Is WAPA interested in swapping access between 8-1 and 8-2 (on the green line) for land along the road? As can be seen, moving the access slightly to the north moves the access along the road. I don't know but the other owners along 8-2, 8-3, and 8-4 may be willing to do the same allowing for the power lines to be more accessible and less obtrusive to the land being used. In certain areas the power lines cut up the land into and make it less useable. Any chance of this happening? Thanks.</p>
<p>Thanks Carey. I know there will be many things to consider but it does seem that placing the lines near the road up here would be more efficient. One of the lines tend to be closer to the road and one does go way off into the forest. I would be interested in case that ever comes up. Perhaps in someplace, it would make sense to swap land for the ROW as where the two lines separate. Thanks for the info. We will look forward to seeing how it develops. Take care.</p>
<p>I just received a call from an aid to Congressman Cory Gardner and he said that the congressman's office received a call from a landowner from the HOA at Meadow Dale subdivision in Estes Park. He wanted more information about the project, which I gave him and said that the caller's concern was the taller structures, health effects from higher voltage, blasting effecting the water table, clear cutting, and road damage. He also said the landowner said that there were other alternatives that we were not considering and also mentioned that one alternative would be to put it "somewhere else with half the watts".</p>
<p>I received a call at 10: 20 am from a homeowner asking the height of the proposed steel structures.</p>
<p>I am sure Western Area Power Administration can justify consolidation of the high-voltage electrical transmission line segments from the city of Estes Park to Flatiron Reservoir on new galvanized-steel monopoles. My understanding is that the height of these monopoles will vary from 70 to 110 feet depending on topography requirements. However I question the route selected by WAPA, especially in view of current National Electrical Safety Codes which mandates clear cutting within their 100-foot right-of-way. The selected Estes-Pole Hill route with new monopoles would follow the existing transmission line up Highway 36 from Mall Road to a point below the Mount Olympus turn-out. A new line would then be built around the turn-out and then parallel the highway up to near County Road 122 or Pole Hill Road. There it would continue up through Ravencrest Heights and Meadowdale Hills subdivision into Roosevelt National Forest to Flatiron Reservoir. The end result would be a clear cut 100-foot right-of-way with brown steel poles with corresponding increase in electromagnetic radiation for those living nearby.</p>
<p>The alternate route not currently selected starts at Highway 36 and Mall Road then runs across Crocker Ranch, Roosevelt National Forest to Flatiron Reservoir. A shorter route! Less Expensive! A clear cut right-of-way already exists and avoids two residential neighborhoods. And most important for Estes Park, less visual impact for visiting tourist! I urge WAPA to reconsider the current Estes Park-Flatiron rebuild transmission proposal. Along with the current environmental review, I certainly recommend a cost-benefit analysis regarding the two possible transmission line routes before making a final decision!</p>
<p>The Crocker Ranch route would be just as accessible and impact far fewer properties. It also would not have a negative effect on the views along Hiway 36 entering Estes Park. The current power poles across the lake causeway are an eyesore and the proposed route down Hiway 36 would only exacerbate the visual pollution. Estes Park relies on tourism and this will affect the beautiful views we all cherish &amp; why we choose to live in this area. We support the Crocker Ranch route for the new power poles. We have contacted both Senator Udall's office and Rep. Gardener's office with our concerns.</p>
<p>We own property along Pole Hill Road. My wife has talked with you on the phone about our concerns. Meadowdale Hills is a residential neighborhood that would be greatly impacted by the new poles and especially our property. The poles are much taller than the existing ones and the clearing of 100 feet or more would completely ruin the value of our property. It also greatly impacts our building envelope. We had planned to start building our retirement home next year, 2012. We do not believe there is enough space between the new power poles and Pole Hill Road to be able to do this.</p>

It seems to us that the alternative route, through mostly uninhabited Crocker Ranch, will be much less visible and less detrimental to not only the residents but to tourism, upon which the Town and Rocky Mountain National Park rely for financial support. In addition, the proposed route may further diminish property values which have already suffered greatly in recent years. We don't believe that prospective home buyers will purchase property overshadowed by high voltage towers and transmission lines. The clear-cutting of all trees within 100 feet of the lines will only emphasize the overall ugliness along the proposed site. In addition, we would expect that an environmental impact study would have been required in connection with this proposal but we have no indication that such a study has been done. With all due respect for the work that has been done to enhance the power system in the Estes Park area, we urge WAPA to reconsider the alternatives to the proposed route

Gentlemen, my wife and I own a home in Meadowdale Hills . We have received a letter outlining a proposed high voltage transmission tower line along highway 36 and through Meadowdale Hills and we have studied the map showing the proposed new construction and rebuild of the towers and lines. We are out of town during the public comment meeting so will make our observations and views in this email. A major factor which drew us to Meadowdale Hills was the pristine nature of this area. The views are spectacular and uncluttered with man- made obstructions. The proposed construction of high voltage transmission lines along highway 36 and through Meadowdale Hills will significantly diminish the pristine and scenic nature of the entire Estes Valley. Highway 36 is the gateway to the town of Estes Park and to Hermit Park, and provides a first impression to the thousands of visitors who travel there to escape the undesirable characteristics of urban living. The proposed route of the towers and transmission lines will move those undesirable characteristics from the big cities to Estes Park.

I sent homeowner the website address. Answered a couple of questions. His mother lives on the Mall Road and wanted more information. I told him about the public meetings and he said he would come.

He asked questions about economics and engineering design of the proposed route, like if the line is longer would the transmission losses be greater and were they accounted for in the cost analyses between the Crocker Ranch and Meadowdale Hills options. I told him did not know the answers to his questions but Engineers scheduled to be at the meeting could better answer his questions.

I got a call from homeowner this afternoon. He was vague, did not leave his phone number, and plans to attend the Estes Park meeting. He is an engineer and had several economic and operational questions about the project. He also questioned the Open House format. He stated that he believes he would get more detailed technical answers to his questions in a formal meeting setting.

We are property owners in the Meadowdale Hills Subdivision and several days ago received a letter informing us of the proposed powerline expansion set forth by the Western Area Power Administration. We are out of the state and due to the short notice of the November 29th, 2011, meeting at the Estes Park Museum are unable to get to Estes Park in time to attend the meeting to voice our concerns. The long term impact on the Estes Park area needs to be looked at thoroughly and with input from those most affected by those decisions. In the past we had a situation with a "right of imminent domain" issue and found that although it was a difficult circumstance to go through, we were treated with respect and consideration and the outcome was a conclusion everyone could be satisfied with. We are optimistic that this can also have that result if moved ahead thoughtfully and thoroughly. We are in favor of modifying the proposal to use the alternate line.

We would like to go on record to say that we strongly oppose the increase of power lines on Pole Hill. The damage to Pole Hill as well as the increase of electromagnetic radiation would greatly reduce our property values as well as adversely affect the residents who live on Pole Hill. In a time where property values are hard to protect it would seem needless to do this project if there is another way, which our homeowners' association has said that there is. Please do what is best for the residents on Pole Hill and run the power lines through the less populated area of Crocker Ranch.

In short, we support a reconstruction of the powerline along the currently existing Crocker Ranch section.

I am writing to express our concerns with the proposed power line expansion plan for the reconstruction of the lines between Estes Park and the Flatiron substation. My wife and I live in Texas, and will be unable to attend the public comment meeting tomorrow. However, we would like to tell you that we do not support the proposed route. We recently purchased our house in the Meadowdale Hills Subdivision to use as a vacation home and to retire to in a few years. One of the main reasons we chose the property was for the pristine view. Imagine our concern when we receive notice that the view will be negatively impacted by taller power lines and clearcutting of a new right-of-way.

We live at xxxxx Loveland and we have 2 sets of pole on our property. 3 poles next to the house and 2 a distance from the house. We were walking the property today and are wondering if it would be possible to move the set of 3 poles a distance from the house. It would actually be a straighter line and a shorter distance if it was moved to the south a hill or 2 and it would be nice if we were not underneath the lines.

Also the wood poles that would be taken down would they belong to us? We have quite a landscaping project we could use them for!

Question about the steel structures across the Estes Park dam. Will those be replaced or just the wooden structures?

I am writing to you as I understand that you are the WAPA contact people for the proposed high voltage power transmission upgrade that is to travel from Estes Park east along U.S. 36, in front of the scenic overlook, up Mount Pispah, and through Meadowdale Hills before heading for the front range. I am very concerned about this proposal and the threats it poses to Estes Park, Meadowdale Hills, and my family.

Let me comment first on your choice of a public comment period for Estes Park residents. Your notice to the Meadowdale Hills Property Owners Association was apparently mailed Tuesday, November 15th, and received Friday, November 18th. The announced meeting time was today, November 29th. Of the thirteen days between your mailing of notice and the meeting day, three were consumed by mail time, four were weekend days, and five were Thanksgiving week, one of the busiest travel times of the year. That leaves one week day – the day before the meeting. Your choice of comment period does not seem to be a thoughtful, practical, and sincere attempt to gather community input.

The project as currently proposed poses a threat to the economy of Estes Park and the Estes Valley. Estes Park's main industry is tourism. Colorado visitors come to Estes, rather than perhaps the ski towns, to see the mountains in their natural state, to observe wild animals in their natural habitat, and to camp in or walk the trails of the national park.

The scenic overlook on U.S. 36 offers one of the most majestic views in America and is rarely empty during daylight hours from May to October, as people stop to get their first panoramic view of the Rocky Mountains. Putting hundred foot metal towers with power lines in front of the scenic overlook then along the highway that is the primary entry point into the town could hardly be more antithetical to the experience for which people come to Estes. This loss of "experience", as nearly any marketing professional would tell you, will very likely result in a loss of tourism thus threatening the economy of Estes Park and the Estes Valley.

The project as currently proposed poses a threat to owners and residents of the approximately 165 homes of Meadowdale Hills. By dramatically increasing the number and size of power lines that will pass through Meadowdale, clear cutting trees to accommodate those power lines, and replacing the current poles with metal towers twice their height, the community will lose value.

Homes will decline in value because the project will damage the natural beauty that people move to communities like Meadowdale to enjoy.

This will, of course, be exacerbated if the Federal Aviation Administration deems it necessary to put lights on the towers or aerial marker balls on the wires to increase the visibility from the air.

Some homes and property will lose value as Federal Housing Administration would not insure new mortgages or the refinancing of existing mortgages near the power lines. Homes and property will lose value because some people would understandably be reluctant to move near power lines that the Department of Housing and Urban Development categorizes as a hazard to human health and safety.

Homeowners will lose value due to construction and maintenance equipment damage to roads, some of which are maintained at community expense. Homeowners who are dependent on wells may lose value due to disruption of the fragile underground water flows from blasting and drilling that will be necessary during the erection of towers.

For all these reasons, Meadowdale Hills would certainly sustain substantial damage and its residents sustain significant losses if the project proceeds as currently conceived. The project as currently proposed poses a threat to my family. As residents of Meadowdale Hills, our property value would almost certainly decline along with the property values of all of Meadowdale Hills and along with the economic decline of Estes Park. Having spent a decade paying for and maintaining a small retirement home in Meadowdale to which I will move in a few months, I was distressed to hear that I might well have power lines and power towers obstructing my views of the mountains for which I have paid through property prices and taxes.

I intentionally purchased property that is commonly visited by deer, elk, bobcats, eagles, marmots, and the like. The power lines and clear cutting will likely disrupt the paths that these animals take.

I had hoped to have my grandchildren visit, play with other kids in the neighborhood, and ride bikes down the road. But, does anyone really want their children or grandchildren playing under a high voltage power line?

Will driving from town along a highway lined with power towers then turn up Pole Hill Road and repeatedly drive under power lines really be the natural experience we have worked to afford during retirement? With the proposed power lines and concomitant clear cutting crossing three of the four major roads, Meadowdale Hills and my home simply will no longer have the characteristics that made it attractive and valuable when I bought it.

As professionals in this area, I am confident that you have heard all of these arguments before. I imagine that you are not looking forward to this afternoon's public comment period at which people who are able to come despite insufficient notice will restate these arguments and state others. We all understand that your goal is to provide power to distant communities while minimizing the impact on the people and properties where the power is generated and transmitted. But given that, there are some things we don't understand. Since I am unable to attend given the short notice,

I ask these questions of you in writing and would ask a written response. 1. Your public statement on this project says that you wish to "[r]educe the number of linear miles of transmission corridors ...." Why have you chosen the Meadowdale Hills route when it is longer than the Crocker Ranch route thus increasing the number of miles, lines, towers, and associated maintenance costs?

2. Your public statement on this project says that you wish to "[r]educe ... the associated environmental footprint" of this project. Why have you chosen the Meadowdale Hills route which requires significant clear cutting, much of which occurs on relatively virgin land, when the alternative Crocker Ranch approach is already clear cut and has power lines running down it?

3. Assuming that part of your goal is minimizing the negative impacts on people as well as on the environment, why have you chosen the Meadowdale Hills route which imposes losses on hundreds of people rather than the Crocker Ranch route which crosses only one person's property?

4. In anticipation of a response that the Meadowdale Hills route is cheaper due to reduced costs such as using existing roads for construction and service, I ask the following: Are there really reduced costs or is it the case that there are reduced costs for the Department of Energy because they are externalizing significant costs and forcing those on the citizens of the Estes Valley and especially on the residents of Meadowdale Hills? If all the costs of the two routes were factored in, wouldn't the Crocker Ranch route be cheaper?

In summary, I am very opposed to the high voltage transmission line project that goes up Highway 36, in front of the scenic overlook, and through the community of Meadowdale Hills. The unusual value of the Estes Valley is recognized throughout the United States and around the world as evidenced by the people who pay thousands of dollars to visit. The Estes Valley is a landscape asset and visual asset of its residents and the residents of the United States. Choosing the Meadowdale Hills route for the new power line would damage that asset and impose losses on us all.

I ask that you consider the total costs of the project and re-route it through another location (perhaps the existing Crocker Ranch power corridor.)

The alternate Crocker Ranch route does not have the significant view corridors that Meadowdale Hills has, it is not as heavily populated, there is an existing clear cut easement and it would not create as much of a blight on one of the primary entrance corridors (Highway 36) into the Estes Valley. The Crocker Ranch route would be shorter, requiring fewer towers and lessening future maintenance costs. I urge you to reconsider this proposal and make the better decision for the community.

I am a property owner in Meadowdale Hills subdivision - just off Pole Hill Road. I am adamantly opposed to your proposal to increase the number, size and height of new lines and towers through my neighborhood. This is a residential area developed primarily for the outstanding alpine views toward the continental divide. Your proposal would be detrimental to the property value of every owner in our subdivision and ruin the views that many of us have prized for years.

Thanks for taking my call today. This is to formally request a 30 minute block of time during the public comment meeting at the Estes Park Museum on November 29 in which to air our concerns and make comments about your proposed transmission line project. This would be a combined presentation Between Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest. Together we represent over 170 property owners and a Bible school which hosts year-round boarding of a number of students. As this represents the vast majority of the affected property owners along your proposed route (at least on the Estes Park side, which presumably is the intent of this meeting), we feel it is an important use of the three-hour open house time. Estes Park Museum has stated that they are happy and able to accommodate this request, but as it is your meeting, would like your approval.

Yes, please let us know when you will be scheduling a public meeting where the 90% of the public along your power line is allowed to comment. I understand that you are having a marketing meeting where you are presenting your proposal, and I also understand that you are offering us a private meeting. However, what I asked you was when you are going to have a public comment meeting.

Good evening and thank you for this meeting to discuss the planned expansion of the Western Area Power Administration transmission lines. As one of the owners of Crocker Ranch, I would like to comment on the proposed relocation. In this time of economic uncertainty, with everyone perpetually reaching into taxpayers pockets looking for money, I believe it is for the good of All of the residents of Estes Park that the most economically prudent option be given special weight. Power lines have been run through the Crocker Ranch for years and even in this latest proposal, contrary to what has been published in the Trail Gazette, they are still going to be run through the ranch. Towers are visible and will continue to be visible. The rerouting path takes the most direct route feasible which has the benefit of having less towers not more. Yes the new towers will be steel instead of wood but that makes fire damage less of a major concern. Most important. the overall cost of this project, which, let's be frank, will be passed on to the consumers here in Larimer county, is reduced considerably. In my opinion, doing something for the good of all in a spirit of cooperation and agreement is something that we could use a lot more of (not the least in Washington). Thank you for your time.

Thank you for the notice regarding the Public Meetings to be held on November 29th and November 30th to discuss the "Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project". As you are aware, the owners of Crocker Ranch have worked with Western Power in their study to upgrade the power line. Our Ranch Manger, Tom Adams, has spent considerable time accompanying the Western Power representatives on the property to study the current lines with the understanding that the new monopoles will require vehicle access. Due to the rugged terrain of the current right-of-way an alternative path was suggested for the transmission line that will allow the project to be more cost effective and accessible by vehicle for the entirety of the new easement. Thank you for your consideration.

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Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest Heights sit at the Gateway to the Estes Valley. Meadowdale Hills is a residential community of 166 property owners. Ravencrest includes property owners and a Bible School / Retreat Center. Together, this population represents a vital, thriving component of the Estes Valley. We are business owners, employers and students. This is where we live, work, shop and play. Considering that we received notification from WAPA just 10 days before the public comment meeting, and 6 of those 10 days have either been weekends or Thanksgiving holidays, our community members have had very little opportunity to gain a good understanding of the project. Many of us know so little, we don't even know what questions to ask. So the Board of Directors has taken upon itself to study these issues and present these concerns in a clear, concise manner, on behalf of our community members. The following discussion outlines the key concerns of our community.

There is a substantial body of research connecting residential exposure to high voltage power lines and higher rates of cancer. In 1990, the EPA prepared a report suggesting a causal link between the vicinity to power lines and higher rates of "leukemia, lymphoma, and cancer of the nervous system". In 2001, the World Health Organization's international agency for Research on Cancer assembled a panel of over twenty-five world- renowned researchers who unanimously concluded that power-frequency magnetic fields are Class 2B possible carcinogens. They observed a "consistent statistical association between childhood leukemia and power- frequency residential magnetic field(s)". We understand that heated debate on the subject is currently ongoing and highly political. The proposal by Western to route industrial-scale high voltage transmission lines and towers through populated residential neighborhoods is inappropriate and potentially detrimental to the health of the families who live here, especially when they already have a more direct and less populated route. We suggest Western adopts a policy of "Prudent Avoidance" and runs the line away from populated areas.

Clear-cutting trees through the heart of Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest Heights, widening the easement area, and more than doubling the number of lines and the height of the towers next to and over residences will result in significant damage to our property values. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) identifies high voltage transmission towers and lines as a hazard, and they list them along side other human hazards such as flood zones, avalanche zones, oil and gas wells, and lava zones. Furthermore, the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) guidelines prohibit the approval of loans for mortgages or re-finances for homes located in the "Fall Zone" of high voltage transmission lines. If Western goes through with this proposal, it will essentially be the equivalent to government seizure of private property. We strongly urge Western to avoid the installation of any industrial scale power infrastructure through the Populated Route, and rather site it through the Direct Route.

Western's proposed route for the transmission line and towers affects more than just property owners in the right of way. Businesses throughout the Estes Valley rely on the rural character, the majestic views, and the overall natural beauty of the area to thrive. The town of Estes Park has grown into a landscape economy, whereby it depends heavily on tourism from businesses such as hotels, bed and breakfasts, retreats, local shops, restaurants, guiding services, and rental properties.

Likewise, the real estate industry is an important part of the overall economy in Estes Park, and maintaining the integrity of the view sheds and sense of openness is critical to its success. Any further industrialization of this valley will affect the livelihood of everyone who lives and works here.

Millions of people visit Rocky Mountain National Park every year, and US Highway 36 serves as the gateway to Estes Valley with some of the most spectacular scenic views in the nation. Western is proposing to install transmission lines and towers at the very location where visitors catch their first glimpses of the Continental Divide with massive steel towers and a web of transmission lines.

Western already has available a direct route through the sparsely populated Estes-Lyons Tap. The Estes-Lyons Tap is 1S shorter, and using it would save money while eliminating the need to devastate our land and property values. Both routes currently in the discussion (Estes-lyons Tap and Estes-Pole Hill Tap) traverse through the Crocker Ranch property, and the Estes Lyons Tap is already clear-cut and in use through the North fork of the Crocker Ranch. The less direct, populated route runs through the South Fork of the Crocker Ranch Property in direct view from Highway 36 and the scenic turn-out, and it would involve establishing an entirely new section of Right of Way. The Direct Route already has a buried gas line easement, sits on relatively easier terrain, and would minimize the visual impact for visitors entering Estes Valley. In the process of upgrading transmission lines, we have before us a unique opportunity.

Now is the time to consider the removal of towers across Lake Estes and over populated residential areas. Alternative solutions such as buried lines or surface conduits need to be considered in order to minimize the extent of the industrialization of the Estes Valley. The decisions being made today will have an enormous impact on future generations in the area, and will directly affect their quality of life and the experience of visitors from around the world.

I like to "Cor Ten" poles better than galv. Steel poles.

Option presented for how to achieve a doable third option rather than proposed and no action.

More visual representation of how this project would actually look.

Another Meeting with Q & A

You need to upgrade your lines. I understand that. I think combining the two lines into one is a good idea. I feel the move on Crocker Ranch is the best alternative so you can maintain it.

Need open discussion in a meeting with all parties to be arranged ASAP.

Good meeting. We will be circulating the below petition. "As residents on or near Mall Road, Estes Park, CO, we strongly support the attached Department of Energy proposal, which would remove the existing three transmission lines from this area.

This would eliminate the potential health hazards with which we have contended since 1938 from electromagnetic fields (EMFs), as well as visual pollution. Further, we are strongly opposed to the recommendation from a nearby property owners association that would double our existing three transmission lines to six lines. We believe their objections to the proposal may relate primarily to their esthetic concerns rather than any serious health concerns (their existing transmission poles would increase by 30 feet). With our close proximity to existing lines, doubling the exposure to EMFs would conflict with the stated WAPA policy to "reduce the public exposure to EMFs, particularly when the siting of the facilities may occur in populated areas".

It was difficult to carry on a conversation or ask questions at the open house hosted by WAPA last night in Estes Park. I would hope you would follow through on my suggestion to hold a more formal meeting with an open Q & A session! The high school or YMCA both have facilities to meet this type of a meeting.

I am sure Western Area Power Administration can justify consolidation of the high-voltage electrical transmission line segments from the city of Estes Park to Flatiron Reservoir on new galvanized-steel monopoles. My understanding is that the height of these monopoles will vary from 70 to 110 feet depending on topography requirements. However I question the route selected by WAPA, especially in view of current National Electrical Safety Codes which mandates clear cutting within their 100-foot right-of-way. The selected Estes-Pole Hill route with new monopoles would follow the existing transmission line up Highway 36 from Mall Road to a point below the Mount Olympus turn-out. A new line would then be built around the turn-out and then parallel the highway up to near County Road 122 or Pole Hill Road. There it would continue up through Ravencrest Heights and Meadowdale Hills subdivision into Roosevelt National Forest to Flatiron Reservoir. The end result would be a clear cut 100-foot right-of-way with brown steel poles with corresponding increase in electromagnetic radiation for those living nearby.

The alternate route not currently selected starts at Highway 36 and Mall Road then runs across Crocker Ranch, Roosevelt National Forest to Flatiron Reservoir. A shorter route! Less Expensive! A clear cut right-of-way already exists and avoids two residential neighborhoods. And most important for Estes Park, less visual impact for visiting tourist! I urge WAPA to reconsider the current Estes Park-Flatiron rebuild transmission proposal. Along with the current environmental review, I certainly recommend a cost-benefit analysis regarding the two possible transmission line routes before making a final decision!

We would prefer to see oxidized poles rather than gray "galvanized" poles. We believe they blend into the environment better over all. While no pole at the top of a hill backed by blue sky looks great, the oxidized overall looks more natural

Work to be done when least destruction to environment (no work during spring thaw)

All my questions were answered. The information boards were also very helpful. The existing poles on our property will be removed with the proposed plan. All we ask is that WAPA work to minimize their physical impact on the area. We will probably choose to just have the pole cut down at ground level and left to rot. Minimum truck traffic is desired. We have a horse and 6 alpaca that stay in a barn and pens just 200 feet north of the power line. We would prefer not to need to move them during your activities.

Keep road (Pole Hill) private, locking gates when entering and keeping locked until ready to leave.

Color of poles, varied depending on landscape

This brief email is to ask your consideration for the WAPA project to reconstruct the power transmission lines between Estes Park and the Flatiron substation. I am in favor of the powerline being reconstructed along the currently existing Crocker Ranch section and OPPOSED to the reconstruction being located through Ravencrest Heights and the western portion of Meadowdale Hills.

I (and my family) respectfully ask you to Please consider the following when making the final decision. a. The Crocker Ranch route is shorter and would reduce the number of transmission towers and maintenance expenses. b. The Crocker Ranch section is lightly populated as compared with the school at Ravencrest and homes in Meadowdale Hills.

c. A clearcut already exists around the Crocker Ranch Line. There would be an extreme negative impact to clear cut a new route in and around Ravencrest Heights and Meadowdale Hills.

d. There would be an extreme visual impact to the beautiful scene of Mt. Olympus and the Estes Valley from the Estes sign on the Hiway 36 turnout if the Ravencrest Heights route is selected. This will impact ALL visitors and residents alike. In contrast, the Crocker Ranch line would show much less visual impact and thereby be the preferred route to keep the Estes Valley and views a welcomed sight for everyone. Please consider our comments when making your final decision. It will greatly impact our family and our property. We again respectfully request that WAPA would locate the reconstruction of power transmission lines along the Crocker Ranch line and NOT through Ravencrest Heights and Meadowdale Hills subdivision. Thank you,

I am a property owner in Meadowdale Hills subdivision, just off Pole Hill Road. I am adamantly opposed to your proposal to increase the number, size and height of new lines and towers through my neighborhood. This is a residential area developed primarily for the outstanding alpine views toward the continental divide. Your proposal would be detrimental to the property value of every owner in our subdivision and ruin the views that many of us have prized for years. The alternate Crocker Ranch route does not have the significant view corridors that Meadowdale Hills has, it is not as heavily populated, there is an existing clear cut easement and it would not create as much of a blight on one of the primary entrance corridors (Highway 36) into the Estes Valley. The Crocker Ranch route would be shorter, requiring fewer towers and lessening future maintenance costs. I urge you to reconsider this proposal and make the better decision for the community.

Thanks for your reply. I have reviewed the information available on the project website but fail to see any compelling argument that the Pole Hill route is superior to the Crocker Ranch route. While you state the desire to address concerns to the environment, the Pole Hill route further pollutes one of the major entrance corridors to the Estes Valley. Meadowdale Hills subdivision was developed long ago (my cabin was built in the 1960's) to maximize the view corridors to the continental divide. Again, I urge Western Area Power to reconsider this preliminary decision for the betterment of the entire Estes Valley population and the thousands of visitors to the area.

After reading the article in the on-line version of the EP Trail Gazette I decided to offer some comments via email, as I will be unable to attend any of the public meetings. Let me say at the outset that the information I am able to read tells me that the power company appears to be conducting business in a manner in which they are demonstrating a measure of indifference to the opinions of the affected property owners and other entities.

My study of the proposed route tells me that the power of eminent domain seems to trump the interests of the people over whose property the lines will pass, with the attendant adverse impact upon their property values. I daresay there is not a single property owner who would have purchased their land if the proposed power lines were already in place, traversing the land on which they have built houses, where they intend to build them. The affected property owners are harmed in such transactions as are being planned, and at the very least deserve compensation for their losses at fair market value.

The motive of the power company in seeking the route on the map seems to be one of ease in vehicular access, which at the least will result in reduced construction costs, and reduced maintenance costs for the future. But, the careful observer can readily discover power lines that have been constructed in almost impossible to reach locations, so if the company is willing to pay for them, their lines can be placed almost anywhere. I hope that the power company and the concerned entities to which I am sending this message can come together to agree upon a route that best meets the needs and preferences of all of those concerned.

As a sort of postscript, I believe the claim that the electromagnetic radiation from the power line can cause cancer is not supported by careful scientific study, and I believe that issue can probably be taken off the table.

My home is located less than 200-feet from the center-line of the existing WAPA right-of-way. I understand that you plan to replace the existing line with a double circuit 115-kV transmission line. A 230-kV transmission line can generate a magnetic field of 1.8 milliGauss (mG) depending on response to changing current load at 200-feet. The magnetic field safety standard set by the EPA is 1 milliGauss (mG). Will WAPA guarantee that my family is not exposed to electric and magnetic field levels that are not above standards set by the EPA?

Secondly I am concerned as to the loss of my property value. A rather large triangle of my lot sits within WAPA's right-of-way. As we are planning on selling in 2012 my realtor has already indicated that any appraisal will have to be revised downward if the current WAPA transmission line project prevails.

I went to your meeting on November 29th and discussed the project with various members of your team. My property line is at the Pole 3-3 location. It is not clear from the meeting whether the pole 3-3 location will still be utilized in your rebuild project. Please advise. I share the views of William Woodburn in the attached Estes Park News article. Due to the impact on the residents of Meadowdale Hills, I strongly urge that the project be routed along the alternate less expensive route as identified in the attached article.

As suggested at your meeting, I request that the residents of Meadow Hills be offered another meeting where a Q&A can be established for benefit of all the residents. I would like to hear each resident's concerns as well as your responses rather than an open one to one forum like you had on the 29th of November. In your letter to us on November 15th, you indicated that we could call you with our questions. I did call but received no response. I will appreciate your response.

Although I will be unable to attend the upcoming meeting at Ravencrest on December 13, 2011, I feel that I am adequately knowledgeable about the direct effects of the proximity of power line easements on the market value of residential properties. I have been exclusively involved in the appraisal of residential and commercial real estate for 39 years and have testified over these years as to the effects of property values on power line easements. My appraisal company has represented both property owners and power line companies in acquisitions and also in proximity damages to surrounding properties. There is no question that residential property values have been shown to be adversely affected by the perception of potential health affects on adjoining property owners and also the adverse affects on the visual issues involved in view obstruction, etc. That aside, I have attached an in depth study that describes these potential adverse value effects from high power transmission lines. Please take this into careful consideration in your decisions to relocate this power line as there are numerous property owners in the Meadowdale Hills Subdivision that will be directly impacted by these consequences, along with many others, like myself, that will be indirectly impacted due to the obtrusive view of power lines as I come and go along Pole Hill Road from my home.

PDF copy of article entitled "Properties Near Power Lines and Valuation Issues: Condemnation or Inverse Condemnation?" Attachment to email 36

You will notice from the two articles that, article 1 does not go into the extensive research on "perceived" effects from EMF's and the appraiser's duty to investigate and report in his appraisal these perceptions from the market that Article 2 conclusively reports are detrimental to real estate values both to adjacent properties and those nearby.

We live 500 ft East of the current transmission line in the Meadowdale Hills subdivision. The recent forum held in Estes Park at the museum was not appropriate for public comment. We look forward to the meeting scheduled for December 13th where we anticipate that we will be able to ask questions and make comments which all can hear and comment upon.

Our position is that the power line should not run through the Meadowdale Hills subdivision. There are approximately 180 lots and approximately 140 homes in the subdivision. This is not a good place for the upgraded transmission line to be placed. There are many parameters to consider in this upgrade (cost, environment, access, and people). It is the people living in the vicinity of the power line aspect which we ask you to respect. The decisions which we make now will affect those who live in this subdivision for the next 60 to 100 years. Let's make the right decision.

Our understanding is that the Meadowdale Hills Property Owners Association have submitted a proposal which would place the line North of the subdivision. We could support that proposal.

I am the owner of a home in Meadowdale. It was my mother's home for 25 years and, since her death, we have spent summers and falls there. I am currently out of state. It is not possible for me to attend the meeting on such short notice so I would like to know as much as possible about how the new transmission lines will affect me. I went to the web site but was unable to tell exactly where the new lines would go. I have a beautiful view of the mountains right now and, of course, would like to know if that will be affected.

This is an email that I sent earlier but got no response. Of course, my concern is that I don't want a large power pole on my property and would like to know where the proposed lines will go. I am not able to attend the meetings in December but will be out there in January.

Thanks you for your quick response. I had looked at the map before but I still can't tell exactly where the line will go and how it affects my property. The map is not detailed enough. Any additional information would be appreciated.

That helps, I think. My home is actually right off Pole Hill road, on the corner of Pole Hill and Timber lane. I technically am in the Ravencrest area, though my next door neighbor is in Meadowdale.

Please help me understand how WAPA and the US Forest Service view your obligations regarding the established utility corridor in the Roosevelt National Forest. The USFS has a designated Utility Corridor that passes through a portion of Crocker Ranch. It is defined in the Elk Ridge Geographic Area Management Plan. I asked Sue Greenley, about the significance of the existing utility corridor. She said she doesn't think it is significant, because it was "an oversight in the management plan" that an additional utility corridor was not created for the Estes – Pole Hill line, and that they are working on making a correction to the management plan. I would not think it would be appropriate to use administrative, internal processes to make changes to an established forest management plan. How does she know that the Management Plan didn't intend to try to keep all future lines within the established corridor? What she's saying is that they're going to claim "clerical error" in order to establish an additional 45 acres of the Roosevelt National Forest as a new utility corridor, when one already exists along the original Estes – Flatiron line; and that corridor also has a natural gas line. So, it will not be a matter of "moving the corridor", because the original corridor cannot be abandoned. This will be a new corridor.

It is also very concerning that WAPA has already applied for a special use permit with the USFS for your proposed route. It seems contradictory to what you told us last night ("this is not a decision, it's a recommendation, and we're only in the scoping phase"). If you're only scoping, why would you already start taking official actions towards your desired solution?

I was able to see a more detailed map and I realized that the power line will go right by my house. Of course, this concerns me, as far as health and my view go.

I will be writing a comment but would like to be kept informed on the process. Letting me know about a public hearing a week before is difficult, particularly since I live in New Jersey in the winter.

Speaking of New Jersey, we have been without power several times this year due to storms. This has never happened to me in Estes Park so the 50 year old poles seem to be holding up.

We have had our home in Meadow Dales Hills on Pine Tree Drive for 20 years and from our westerly facing deck have a view that includes the existing power line path through Meadow Dale Hills. Our comments regarding the EP-Flatiron project are in the following bullet format for brevity and clarity, but a summary statement is that we are extremely concerned and disappointed with the content of the proposed project. It would not only have a disastrous impact on the Meadow Dale Hills and Ravencrest areas but it will also do irreparable damage to the visual approach to Estes Park via Highway 36. We are shocked that a balanced concern is absent regarding the environmental impact along with the objectives of increasing power transmission capacity and bringing the lines up to modern safety codes. The following are brief statements about some of the major concerns:

1. Environmental Impact Process: I believe this is the foundational problem with the whole project process. It is extremely flawed to have the same organization whose primary responsibility is to engineer and manage some of the federal power transmission systems do its own environmental impact determination of its own primary mission. The organization's primary mission will always be the priority!

2. Transparency of all project objectives: The project objective of increased transmission system capacity for future use has not been obvious in any of the WAPA posters or other information I have seen with the exception of the conductor size increase in one of the posters. This is obviously a very important point for those close to any new transmission line. By not addressing it openly, it potentially prevents any constructive evaluation of alternative transmission line components or routes that would have less environmental impact. It also reduces the possibility of open discussion about any possibility of there ever being any new or additional power sources available to WAPA to transmit over any new "spare" capacity.

3. Visual Impact: This is huge beyond reasonable description with the western end of the proposed transmission line. It would essentially destroy the beautiful view from Highway 36 from the Pole Hill Road turnoff to the Mall Road intersection. What a transition that would be from the open space and Hermit Park to the south into a transmission line dominated view!

4. Safety and Health Impact: With the combining of the two lines and the increased capacity of the conductors and towers, the amount of transmitted power capacity of the line going through the highly populated area looks like it will be somewhere around 4 times or more of the current transmission level. It also opens the question about 230KV transmission line voltage being in any future plans.

5. Financial Impact: The impact on all people having property anywhere near the proposed line will be significant. Those of us that have a view of the current line will have significant financial loss if our property is ever sold. Those under or close to the line will experience devastating or total financial loss! This brings up the issue of potential litigation and compensation.

6. Alternative Design: To the point – this is extremely lacking in the current process! Rather than look at how to solve or mitigate the issues of a low environmental impact alternate route, the process is cranking on with the high population density and extreme negative visual impact route.

Also it seems that the difficulties of the proposed route are not addressed, only the advantages. A specific example of a neglected issue that has potential importance is the operating losses (in annual \$'s) of the line losses of the extra mileage needed for the proposed new route over the Estes/Lyons route mileage.

Thanks for opening up the opportunity to express our personal concerns directly to WAPA. I am convinced that if these and other's concerns are sincerely looked at – there will be a significant change in WAPA perspective about the best design of the transmission line facility and that it will not go through the high visibility approach to Estes Park nor through the highly populated area of Meadow Dale Hills.

I understand the initial engineering review of the captioned project might suggest that constructing a new line of towers along the existing Right Of Way through Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest Heights presents less of a problem securing additional ROW width. However, there is an existing ROW presently in use running through Crocker Ranch which presents a shorter and much less topographically difficult route; in any case additional ROW would need to be obtained through Crocker Ranch regardless of the route selected.

At the initial meeting with WAPA on November 29, 2011 no Environmental Impact Studies or cost analysis were available; these two studies, at least, should be completed and made public.

I would ask Western Area Power Authority to consider, along with everything else, the negative impact on two residential neighborhoods before making a final decision to construct a new line of transmission towers.

I appreciate the opportunity to communicate directly with the WAPA concerning the proposed selection of an updated electrical delivery corridor. I read your 23 Aug 2011 with great interest and this document raised several questions. I will list them in the order that they appeared in your letter. 1. Para 3, "The purpose and need for the proposed action is to increase system capacity for future public needs and bring the facility up to modern safety codes." Is the WAPA design for meeting increased public needs based upon subjective or objective analysis? Is this data available for public review? Is the current electrical delivery system in violation of Safety Codes? Even if no action is taken can the current electrical delivery system be brought into compliance with current codes?

2. Para 3 line 5, "...acquire new ROW as necessary." Why does WAPA seek to acquire more private property when you already possess ROW that is currently being used to hold your electrical power lines? What objective criteria was used to determine that the current ROW was inadequate? Is this analysis available for public review? If your proposed plan to acquire new ROW parallel to Hwy 36 is acted upon what is the cost to the taxpayers to acquire this private property?

3. Para 3 line 12/13, "Western anticipates the proposal will decrease long-term impacts on wildlife habitat, viewscape, and fire hazard." These are certainly noble goals that residents of the Rocky Mountains would like to endorse; however, were there objective criteria applied to these three measurement areas? Is this analysis available to the public? Thank you for providing a forum so that interested and concerned citizens may participate in the decision making process to provide modern and responsible electricity between Estes Park and Flatiron Reservoir.

The Western Area Power Administration Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project proposes to remove the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line (also labeled as the Estes-Lyons Tap) through Crocker Ranch to the east of Estes Park, and to create a new 110 foot Right of Way that parallels US Highway 36 and continues through the Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest Heights subdivisions. I entirely oppose this option, and ask that Western uses its route along the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line for the following reasons:

1) Routing industrial-scale transmission towers and lines up the Highway 36 travel corridor out of Estes Park and into Roosevelt National Forest will create significant visual impact for residents and visitors to the area and Rocky Mountain National Park.

The visual impact for residents in the Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest subdivisions would cause real property value loss, a financial burden that should not be placed on residents when a preferable route via the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line is available. This amounts to a significant impact on the human environment.

2) The visual impact of the line will be a detriment to the local tourism economy. Guides, jeep tours, hunters, hikers, bikers, and horseback riders will all be affected by the inappropriate industrial-scale towers on their way up to the Pole Hill trailhead and along the Forest Service Roads. The placement of the line in this area is incompatible to the Visual Quality Objectives of the Roosevelt National Forest for recreation, where this area is designated as Category 4.2 Scenic, and would be detrimental to the foreground views of all trailhead visitors. Likewise, Highway 36 is a heavily used scenic travel corridor with some of the most spectacular views of Rocky Mountain National Park, and the rural character of the area should be maintained for future visitors.

3) The existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line is a shorter, more direct route that avoids the populated subdivisions and follows the only Designated Utility Corridor in the current Roosevelt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. This corridor has been designated for transmission lines, oil and gas lines, and telephone lines. Establishing a new Utility Corridor via Pole Hill Road would cause undue expense to taxpayers and would be incompatible with the current Management Area designation of Scenic. I suggest that using the existing Designated Utility Corridor through the northern portion of the Crocker Ranch property is the most prudent solution.

4) There is ongoing debate about the adverse health effects of electro-magnetic fields from high-voltage power lines, however the World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded that power-frequency magnetic fields are Class 2B possible carcinogens. The US Environmental Protection Agency prepared a report suggesting a causal link between the vicinity to power lines and higher rates of leukemia, lymphoma, and cancer of the nervous system. I suggest Western adopts a policy of Prudent Avoidance and runs the line away from populated areas, along the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line to the north. Thank you for taking these comments into consideration. I am confident that you have the interest of the American public in mind, and will protect the natural heritage of the Estes Valley and its residents.

One of the most beautiful sights on the planet is the first glimpses of the front range as a traveler crests the pass at Pole Hill and enters the Estes Valley on US 36. Emerging from the trees at the bottom of the hill presents an incomparable vista of the snow capped peaks and beautiful Estes Park nestled in this high mountain valley. Marring this view, however, is the industrial appearance of the 1940's vintage electrical transmission lines that accompany US 36 as it crosses Lake Estes.

The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA; an agency of DOE) is proposing replacing existing electrical power transmission lines from the Estes Park Power Plant to the flat lands to the east to provide higher transmission capacity and to upgrade aging electric poles. (<http://ww2.wapa.gov/sites/western/transmission/infrastruct/Pages/Estes-Flatiron.aspx>) This is an incredible opportunity for WAPA to vastly improve the vista of the Estes Valley by burying these lines along US 36 as they cross Lake Estes and head up Pole Hill. Since much of US 36 in this section lies on man-made causeway (loose fill), burying lines should be relatively inexpensive relative to the entire project. Removal of these massive steel, erector-set towers would return the view of the valley to a more picturesque, natural and beautiful sight.

The proposed new route also involves 100' wide clear cut sections along US Highway 36 as it leaves the Estes Valley and through the Pole Hill housing areas. The project will require the installation of new 100' tall poles in these areas. The resulting scars to the landscape will be shockingly visible to travelers on Highway 36 as they enter and leave the Estes Valley.

I urge you to carefully consider the aesthetics of this project and 1. Bury or conceal the lines in the Estes Valley and

2. Use existing right-of-way for poles 1-1 through 4-7 between Mount Olympus and Mount Pisgah.

I am still concerned regarding the existence of a 230 kV transmission line in a residential neighborhood! Your Electric and Magnetic fields Facts folder on page 6 indicates a 1.8 mG reading for a 230 kV voltage line at 200 feet. 0.8 mG at 300 feet. The EPA recommends a safety standard of 1 mG. The problem I have is that your folder provides a "typical" mG number. If you increase the amount of current through these lines then the milligauss (mG) number will increase. It will be interesting to see if in your environmental assessment (EA) there is an exhibit showing the residential homes within 200 to 300-foot of these transmission lines with an overlay showing "typical" and potential maximum 60Hz electric and magnetic field levels

The U.S. 36 corridor to Estes Park should not be used as a corridor for tall steel utility poles. The view corridor is much more valuable than the savings generated by consolidating the power lines. The new utility line adjacent to U.S. 285 through South Park, which appears to be similar to the proposed line, is very detrimental to the ambiance and views in South Park.

Please log one more local resident as opposed to your proposed changes.

A brief review of your project map allows me to see that by maintaining your transmission lines on what appears to be termed the Estes - Lyons tap and not disturbing the US 36/Pole Hill area makes strong sense.

Working in conjunction with the USFS and other stakeholders to put in place a wildfire protection plan for the route makes great sense. Utilizing ever taller monstrous steel superstructures to support the utility is not fitting, warranted or wanted. Build a plan that affords protection for the transmission lines without use of these towers for elevation. Mitigation and cooperation will ensure protection in most cases. Our Colorado landscape is not available for the WAPA to scar without careful planning and consideration. Over 3 million visitors each year visit the Estes Valley. Let's show that we have not harnessed the West but that we respect it, treasure it and will guard our landscapes and resources will all our might.

NO!!! Absolute NO!!!!

Are you people so incentive to the surroundings, that you can't see that by putting up steel polls along 34 would destroy the scenery?? Can't you think of anything better way to do this? Does it have to be ugly steel pulls?

Can't it be something else? Why not replace them with another wooden pull that can last sometime? That trip up to Estes is beautiful and I for one DO NOT WANT TO SEE STEEL POLLS along that stretch! HELL NO! Go back and rethink this, before you make any more people mad and upset!!!!

I agree spend the money to burry the lines, it might be costly but you know something? Like we have it here in Fort Collins, burring the lines would pay off in the long run, and it would be a very good idea to do that. Not only well it preserve the way things look now along Hwy 34, but it would get rid of the polls along that route. I am sure a lot of people would agree to burry the lines spend the money!! NO STEEL POLLS!

As a resident of the highway 36 route from Lyons to Estes I am appalled that consideration is being given to ruin an untarnished veiw of the Rocky Mountains that is rare in this day and age. When tourists come to visit one of the fisrt comments I usually hear is the beautiful scenery of the area and the almost complete lack of billboards and power limes that are a fixture at the entrance to so many other natural treasures and National Parks. Please do not ruin our rural area. Once you blight our beautiful area we will no longer be such a unique gem in the endless commercialization and industrialization that our entire country settles for in the name of progress. You have the chance now to construct with appreciaition for and reverence of the natural beauty of our area. Please dont settle for status quo and find an alternative to this blight of steel high poles that would inevitably ruin our natural scenic gift of the skyline unobstructed by manmade spoils.

The Estes Valley stakeholders respectfully request an extension to the public comment period for scoping in the Environmental Assessment. Until now, Western has initiated the minimum required outreach efforts. The various groups and interested entities in the Estes Valley have not had an opportunity to compare notes and ensure that all concerns HELL been voiced.

We would like to have more time so that we can hold meetings with the Town of Estes Park, the Estes Valley Planning Commission, the Estes Park Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Estes Area Lodging Association, various hiking and 4-wheeler clubs, etc. These are not meetings that we would expect Western to participate in. These are intended to be meetings in which we can determine whether there are concerns that have not yet been expressed to Western.

Due to the public comment schedule that Western has chosen to follow (Thanksgiving through New Year's), there has not been adequate opportunity for these stakeholders to meet and compare notes. Considering the interruption of the holidays and the seasonal patterns of Estes Park residents (they're a lot like Elk), we need at least 60 days after the holidays. We respectfully request that the Public Comment period be extended until March 15, 2012, to enable this dialog to occur.

From the very outset, we have felt that Western has avoided communication with MHPOA. The process has been inadequate and many in our community feel that it is underhanded. Your attendance at our MHPOA meeting on December 13, 2011, was very much appreciated and it is a firm step in the right direction. We request that Western demonstrate their desire to work with the community in this process by extending the public comment period and to actively solicit concerns and alternative suggestions during this extended period.

In conclusion, we ask that you honestly evaluate and choose the solution that is best for the Estes Valley. We understand that there are conflicting interests to be considered. But we are certain that a holistic evaluation of all factors will result in the shorter, more direct route, using existing utility corridors, avoiding populated areas and minimizing the impact on the majestic scenery of the Estes Valley.

Duplicate Letter (See 45.) Wants answers now.

Thanks everyone for working together on getting input into this process. Tim, what is the email that you would like us to use to send input that we receive from our constituents? Will look forward to continuing conversations with all.

Tim, I noticed in the EA for the Lovell-Yellowtail Rebuild Project that you provided more than 6 weeks of advance notice to the stakeholders before holding public comment meetings. You sent letters to stakeholders on 5/23/08. The first open house meeting was 7/8/08. Why was LV-YT project given so much more time than our project?

we certainly don't know details of what is being proposed for lines going into Estes Park, but are extremely upser about the purported addition of additional high steel lines that would severely further degrade the entire area. The existing high steel poles that line highway 36 going into town by the lake have been a terrible eye sore for years. Please give us more information about what is being propose and by whom? Thank you.

<p>The city of Estes Park has buried lines along Fish Creek this past couple of years. They apparently seem convinced that buried lines pay for themselves by never having to repair lines that are blown down or fall from snow and ice. Please bury these lines instead of putting up high poles.</p>
<p>Come on, there is no way you can place those power poles in the manner you have presented and be a proud American, period. I am a Veteran and know that it is a privilege to serve my country, and you know that you have the same responsibility in your job. Why don't you just construct them right up the middle of highway 34? Less environmental impact, less cost, easy access.... Bury them.</p>
<p>I request the name of the specific individual who is responsible for writing this proposal. I request the name of the specific individual who has the final say, the "decider" for this proposal.</p>
<p>Forget the poles Bury the wires!</p>
<p>Please consider an alternative for the power lines between Estes Park and Flatiron Reservoir that does not use the taller, steel poles as currently under consideration. This route is a gateway into the mountains for Coloradoans as well as visitors from all over the world. The existing overhead line is already unsightly; the proposal under consideration would make it much more visible and unsightly. Additionally, installation of larger overhead poles would require the removal of multiple trees. This proposal is inconsistent to all the values that we Coloradoans hold. Please find an alternative that is LESS intrusive, not more intrusive.</p>
<p>I am writing to strongly recommend the northern route for the Estes-Flatirons rebuild Project.</p>
<p>I also recommend burying the part of the line near Lake Estes,</p>
<p>and, if necessary, burying the line through part of Crocker Ranch.</p>
<p>My recommendation is not based primarily on concerns of Meadow Hills residents, though they should be considered along with other factors. I recognize that the northern route will require additional road construction and right-of-way acquisition, which can be expensive. I also recognize that consumers, such as myself, will ultimately pay the costs. However, tall steel power lines along the scenic Highway 36 would adversely affect the tourist economy of the Estes Park area and gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. These should weigh very heavily in the final decision on the project. Thank you for your consideration of these factors.</p>
<p>I have tried several times to submit comments but am not sure if any of them reached you, so forgive me if I am redundant. I own a home at the corner of Pole Hill road and Timber Lane and have an easement on which there are several power poles. I received a Fedex with your proposal the week before Thanksgiving informing me that there was to be a meeting the week after Thanksgiving. Since I live in New Jersey, it was impossible for me to attend.</p>
<p>The proposal as I understand it will have a significant impact on the views that we have of the mountains and the beauty of the region.</p>
<p>Even more important to me, however, is the impact that such transmission lines will have on our health. No one is sure of the risks of living so close to these lines and I think it is taking a risk that is unacceptable in the long run. I have lived with the poles that are there and accept that we need power but I think that there must be an alternative to your proposal.</p>
<p>As an aside, I live in Northern New Jersey and have lost power several times this year ( a total of about two weeks) due to extreme weather events. This has never happened to me in Estes Park, and we know how strong the wind can be. If the poles are 50 years old, you must be doing something right and I question whether we need anything bigger.</p>
<p>Please keep me informed. If I am given enough advance notice, I can attend meetings. I will be out there all summer, also.</p>
<p>Mr. Snowden, Your response addressed none of my questions. I have already read the information at the web site that you referenced. Specifically, the 23 Aug 2011 letter that I quote in my questions comes from that web site. Please answer my questions. Your refusal to answer any of my questions makes me question you and your agencies willingness to be forthcoming. Again, answer my questions.</p>
<p>Thanks for sending me the same response twice, I only needed one response but thanks the same. Seriously, use the money to bury the power lines, the result would be that you wouldn't have to replace poles or the lines and it would save this company time and money and man power on replacing the lines when ever they break or during a storm. That is what Fort Collins did in the past and it has solved so many issues and the chances of power going out in some part of the city is slim and since this is in the mountains, I would think you would want to spend the extra \$\$ to bury the cable anyways. So think about that, it is a win, win situation for you and everyone else.</p>
<p>Estes Valley, as a whole, need to be involved. Business, Resident, National Park, etc. and all news services, national and local. Sir: Good meeting at Ravencrest.</p>
<p>Preliminary Questions:Cost of: In ground cables – Compare ??????(can't read) of the buried cables and on poles cables(?????? At least 50 years) Crocker Ranch Route -Pole Hill Route(considering all aspects)</p>
<p>2)These lines will visually affect 100% the following: a: Residence going in and out of our subdivision, b:Tourists going in and out of our subdivision, Campers going in and out of our subdivision, Ravencrest Students going in and out of our subdivision, c: Families of above, d: People from around the world. 3) Next meeting supply map of visual comparison of present poles (wood) to new poles 100 ' high, metal</p>

4 ) In 30's and 50's population was probably 75% less than today – please comment My computer died and haven't bought a replacement yet. Have access to a computer though. Thirty year ago, in KC, KS, I was involved in a similar situation with General Motors wanting to build a factory in our residential area. About >5 home owners was involved. We prevailed. No factory was built. So I have been through this before. Please respond to all of the above, and send a copy to Meadowdale Hills homeowners Assoc. Good to have some of our state local officials at above meeting.

I don't want to see anymore eyesores going up our beautiful scenic town. There has to be a better solution

The owners of Crocker Ranch as caring stewards of this valley for well over 100 years would like to encourage Western Area Power Administration to pursue the proposed southern easement across Crocker Ranch for the power line upgrade.

The proposed southern route will actually be less visible from the Estes Park Valley; has fewer hazards for construction and maintenance and as a result, would be much more cost effective. In addition, the impact both visually and environmentally on Crocker Ranch and visitors to the Estes Valley would be lessened considerably.

The proposed northern routh would require action to widen the easement which would almost certainly be met with resistance. In addition, the terrain is much less construction friendly due to a deep valley, steep boulder filled terrain and possible landslide hazard.

Again, we would strongly recommend Western Area Power Administration to consider the southern route along Highway 36 for this project.

I am opposed to the proposed route for the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line.

The proposed route interfears with the views of the Estes Valley by residents and 3.5 million visitors a year.

The alternative route would be through the already designated USFS utility corridor affecting very few people with the exception of an inconvenience for the Crocker Ranch.

I realize that the folks at the Crocker Ranch have a lot of money and political pull but surely the votes of the majority of Estes Park residents and of 3.5 million visitors has some sway. View corridors are everything in our neck of the woods.

WAPA has expressed their intent to rebuild their 115 kv power lines between Estes Park and Carter Lake (actually Flatiron Substation near Carter Lake). They have looked at the economics of this line replacement and have selected the low cost alternative. I cannot fault them for wanting to save cost on this rebuild. In usual circumstances I would do the same. But, Estes Park is not a usual sort of place.

I suggest that WAPA consider a partial redefinition of the project to include undergrounding the portion of the lines from the Estes Park Substation (pole 0-1 to the north edge of Meadow Hills Subdivision (pole 3-5). This modification will increase the expense of the project significantly (perhaps \$38 M), but will provide significant advantages and perhaps even some cost offsets. Undergrounding of power transmission lines is a mixed bag of advantages and disadvantages, with the overriding decision usually being directed by the associated expense. Some advantages include: Less subject to damage due to sever weather or sabotage; Reduced EMF emissions due the shielding provided by the surrounding earth; Much narrower ROW requirements; and the biggie, No visually objectionable above ground poles and wires in visually sensitive areas.

The disadvantages of undergrounding are dominated by the expense of installation. Underground verses overhead line installation costs are typically accepted to be greater by about a factor of 10. Additionally, maintenance costs are increased. Repair times when there is damage or a break are typically longer, also. I am not in a position to analyze in detail the additional expense associated with undergrounding of the western 3.1/2 miles of this project, so I have taken the WAPA project total cost (\$19 M for 16 miles) and multiplied the per mile cost by the factor of 10 to get a cost of \$12M/mi. to underground the most sensitive section. This yields the additional cost of \$38 M to underground this section. I suspect that this is a "very safe" estimate, so now we can talk about how to pay for this.

\$38M is a huge number, right? If you look at it a bit differently, maybe it will look better. Three million people a year visit Rocky, equating to about \$14 per visitor if they were to pay for it in one year. If the life of the power line is estimated at 50 years, that is easily 150 million visitors, or 25 cents/visitor. Not too bad if you look at it that way. Or how about comparing this cost to WAPA's budget? If I am reading their budget numbers correctly, they have \$1,426 M in operating revenue and only \$1,178 M in operating expenses. That leaves \$248M in excess revenue. because WAPA has 50 year of benefit at the expense of my enjoyment of the beautiful mountain vistas.

I think that WAPA has an obligation here, because WAPA has 50 years of benefit at the expense of my enjoyment of the beautiful mountain vistas. I would also like to see the Town participate in the undergrounding of this section of the Transmission lines. Ideally, we customers of the T of EP Light and Power should put our money where our mouths are and support an undergrounding surcharge on our electric bills to help pay for the undergrounding costs. If we all work together I think we can leave this area in better shape than when we got here. It looks to me like we have a major opportunity here that only comes around once every fifty years. Let's not be so short sighted as to let this chance slip away.

To Mayor Pinkham and Decision Makers, I am a long-time Estes Park resident, with family ties in the Estes Valley dating back to the 1930's. We are blessed to live in a uniquely beautiful spot... and our town depends on the appeal of that beauty for its economic well-being. Hwy 36 is the primary entry into our picturesque valley. In my opinion, new, steel, bigger and taller poles along Hwy 36 will be an eyesore that ultimately will negatively impact our community.

I am an Estes Park homeowner writing to say that the power lines should be buried. Enough has taken place to destroy much of the natural beauty along Highway 36. Please do not place further blights on the environment. The considerations should be about more than economics: Nature is our source, our life. Treat Nature with reverence as a sacred duty....not a dollars and cents resource that can be purchased elsewhere.

I have read the report in the Trail Gazette about the public meeting that was held to discuss the power line replacement that will pass through Meadowdale Hills and along Highway 36 across Lake Estes. Although I was not able to attend, I would like to express my opinion. I understand the reasons why the Meadowdale Hills folks do not want the lines passing through their housing area and support their position. As an Estes Park homeowner in another area of town, my home would not be directly affected by this portion of the power line.

However, there is one part of the route that affects everyone in Estes Park and all who visit. This is the portion of the line that runs across Lake Estes. I have thought many times as I was entering Estes Park on this highway what a pity it is that the view of the valley is marred by these power lines.

I support burial of the lines—even if it were to require something like a bond election that would cost me money. Thank you for the right to comment.

Because of the Holidays, I request that you extend the public hearing deadline to at least January 31, 2011. We want to develop a win win solution with WAPA. However the time is too short to do that by Jan 2nd. This project affects more than Meadow Hills, it affects all of Estes Park.

I have read information presented by the Meadow Hills Property Owners Association (MHPOA) regarding the Western Area Power Administration(WAPA)plans to re-route and rebuild transmission lines carrying power generated in the Estes Valley to the southeast towards Lyons. The plan includes new,larger towers in two neighborhoods and clear cutting of a previously untouched forest adjacent to route 36. I believe the preservation and improvement of the Estes Valley Mountain scenery must be a highest priority issue in our community. Residents live in Estes Park and tourists visit our town to enjoy unobstructed views of the mountains. With the construction of the electrical generating facility several decades ago the primary vehicle approaches into our community took on the appearance of an industrial zone with metal towers spoiling views of the high peaks of Rocky Mountain National Park and the lower rock formations including the Twin Owls. I know of no other Colorado mountain community that aspires to be an attractive destination resort while presenting such a hideous face to those arriving. WAPA's current plan promises to make a bad situation worse.

WAPA has chosen a public comment period that spans the two major, cold-season holidays; a time when many people are focused on other concerns. Many non-resident property owners are not present at this time of year and, thus, have no knowledge of WAPA's plans. Many full time residents were not aware of the minimal, printed notification of the plan carried by local newspapers. Unfortunately, such passively deceptive strategies are commonly employed by corporation and utilities in efforts to hide controversial projects from public view until it is too late to legally intervene.

Implementation of the current WAPA plan will result in degradation of mountain scenery,loss of future tourist revenue and lowering of property values, particularly in neighborhoods along the proposed route. In the interest of esthetics and economics, all public and private lines carrying electricity,water and fuel into and out of Estes Park should be placed underground or, where appropriate, at ground level using low visual-impact building techniques.

I am told that such projects would cost hundreds of dollars per foot. Given what is at stake for current and future residents and business owners, that would be a bargain.

Officials of the Town of Estes Park,residents and business owners must stand shoulder to shoulder to act on our commitment to protect and improve the scenic treasures of this beautiful valley. Experienced legal counsel should be carefully selected for the purpose of bringing the WAPA steamroller to a grinding halt by whatever means necessary. More time and thought must be devoted to developing a plan that continues to provide peak power to the electrical grid of the western U.S. while improving the quality of life and the economic future of our town. The people of Estes Park have lived in the shadow of the WAPA electric generating facility for many years, asking nothing, making no demands. In this defining moment we ask for something in return. This is worth fighting for.

I strenuously oppose the alignment of the rebuilt power lines from the Lake Estes area to the Pole Hill area proposed under WAPA's Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project.

The proposed right of way to the north of US 36 could not have been calculated to be a greater blight on the visual environment. The relocated segment wraps around and crosses directly in front of the "Welcome to Estes Park" scenic turnout and will destroy the appeal of the spot for many thousands of tourists every year. The poles and wires will ultimately appear in, and despoil, millions of pictures of Estes Park -- in most cases, the very first picture of our bucolic valley taken by the new tourist. In the direction of the town, this line would be roughly 300 yards from the viewpoint and the tops of the towers would be approximately 50 feet below, and directly in line with the view to town. To the north, in the direction of Mt Olympus, the line would be about 200 yards from the viewpoint and the tops of the towers would be at its level, above the adjacent ridgeline, completely dominating the view. Cynically, I can only imagine that your website contains no artist's renditions of the scene because you know just how unacceptable it would be.

What is especially vexing is that WAPA already has a far superior ROW available to it now -- the northerly right of way through the Crocker Ranch property occupied by the current Estes-Lyons Tap. This right of way is virtually invisible from both main approaches to Estes Park (being shielded from US 34 to the north by Mt Olympus and from US 36 to the south by Mt Pisgah). Reconstruction of the line through this ROW would minimally change its visual impact from every publicly accessible point in the Estes Valley. Location of the consolidated line in this ROW would allow abandonment of the existing ROW adjacent to US 36 on the lower portions of Park Hill and eliminate two crossings of the highway, greatly improving esthetics in that area. It would also reduce the impact to the neighborhood along Pole Hill Road. Clearly, use of the northerly ROW is less convenient to WAPA in terms of access and, consequently, cost of construction and maintenance. My response to this issue can be summed up in a single word: Tough. In every other respect, it is superior to the proposed plan and represents the option with the greatest overall public benefit -- and WAPA is, after all is said and done, an agency founded by, and in the service of, the public. There is simply no tradeoff involved -- the use of the northerly ROW is a no-brainer.

I would like to encourage WAPA, the Department of Energy, and all interested parties concerning the Estes Flatiron Rebuild Proposal to step back and rethink the proposed route for this much needed rebuild.

I think we can all agree from recent studies that our nation's power grid is in great jeopardy security wise. It has also come to my attention that part of WAPA's mission statement concerns the security of our power grid. Hence, I feel the current proposal to place the Estes Flatiron Rebuild above ground and adjacent to Colorado State Highway 36 only increases the security risks to this proposed line. I would encourage all parties involved to form a working session to come up with viable options which would not only improve the security of the proposed rebuild but also address the concerns of Larimer County, The Town of Estes Park, the citizens of the Estes Valley, the residents of the Meadowdale Subdivision and Crocker Ranch which would be affected by the present proposal. Those also affected include 3.5 million visitors who visit Rocky Mountain National Park annually.

The proposed route is offensive visually as well as a security risk.

The Western Area Power Administration Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project proposes to remove the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line (also labeled as the Estes-Lyons Tap) through Crocker Ranch to the east of Estes Park, and to create a new 110 foot Right of Way that parallels US Highway 36 and continues through the Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest Heights subdivisions. I entirely oppose this option,

and ask that Western uses its route along the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line for the following reasons:

1) Routing industrial-scale transmission towers and lines up the Highway 36 travel corridor out of Estes Park and into Roosevelt National Forest will create significant visual impact for residents and visitors to the area and Rocky Mountain National Park. The visual impact for residents in the Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest subdivisions would cause real property value loss, a financial burden that should not be placed on residents when a preferable route via the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line is available. This amounts to a significant impact on the human environment.

2) The visual impact of the line will be a detriment to the local tourism economy. Guides, jeep tours, hunters, hikers, bikers, and horseback riders will all be affected by the inappropriate industrial-scale towers on their way up to the Pole Hill trailhead and along the Forest Service Roads. The placement of the line in this area is incompatible to the Visual Quality Objectives of the Roosevelt National Forest for recreation, where this area is designated as Category 4.2 Scenic, and would be detrimental to the foreground views of all trailhead visitors. Likewise, Highway 36 is a heavily used scenic travel corridor with some of the most spectacular views of Rocky Mountain National Park, and the rural character of the area should be maintained for future visitors.

3) The existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line is a shorter, more direct route that avoids the populated subdivisions and follows the only Designated Utility Corridor in the current Roosevelt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. This corridor has been designated for transmission lines, oil and gas lines, and telephone lines. Establishing a new Utility Corridor via Pole Hill Road would cause undue expense to taxpayers and would be incompatible with the current Management Area designation of Scenic. I suggest that using the existing Designated Utility Corridor through the northern portion of the Crocker Ranch property is the most prudent solution.

4) There is ongoing debate about the adverse health effects of electro-magnetic fields from high-voltage power lines, however the World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded that power-frequency magnetic fields are Class 2B possible carcinogens. The US Environmental Protection Agency prepared a report suggesting a causal link between the vicinity to power lines and higher rates of leukemia, lymphoma, and cancer of the nervous system. I suggest Western adopts a policy of Prudent Avoidance and runs the line away from populated areas, along the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line to the north. Thank you for taking these comments into consideration. I am confident that you have the interest of the American public in mind, and will protect the natural heritage of the Estes Valley and its residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line. We are submitting comments as the fee owners of Chimney Hollow Open Space and the managing entity for recreation at Pinewood Reservoir County Park. Our primary concerns are related to the environmental, cultural, recreational and scenic impacts of the line. Chimney Hollow Open Space was acquired by Larimer County for its high natural and scenic resource values and with the intent to develop access for future public recreation. Specifically, we are concerned with the location and extent of permanent roads that may be proposed to be built on both these parcels in conjunction with the project. We request that any proposed access roads on these two parcels be minimized to the extent possible, not surfaced, and developed as 2-track roads where possible. We would like to walk the proposed road alignments with WAPA prior to construction to evaluate alignment options so as to minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources and future/current recreation amenities. We ask that WAPA adopt the existing Larimer County Department of Natural Resources Revegetation Standards for restoration of any non-permanent roads and other areas where ground disturbance takes place.

Currently, a comprehensive cultural resource evaluation has not been completed for Chimney Hollow Open Space and we would request that this be performed by WAPA in the powerline easement boundary as part of the EA for the project and that any cultural sites be avoided. Similarly, at Pinewood Reservoir County Park, there are known cultural sites in the general vicinity of the existing powerline as well as the Besant Point Trail and ask that these cultural sites be avoided and that poles not be placed any closer than the current distance of the wooden poles to the trail.

An osprey nest is also located at the southern end of Pinewood Reservoir, on a power pole and platform. This nest has been active for many years and produced three chicks in 2011. In order to protect this nest, we ask that access and construction activities of the F-PH segment through Pinewood Reservoir County Park occur only when the nest is inactive (July-December), unless we determine the nest to be inactive throughout the year.

Finally, since we manage these properties in part for their scenic value, we'd like to select poles that blend into the site and request the use of rust-colored poles in a forested viewshed and silver poles in a skyline viewshed. Please let us know when pole location is being finalized and provide us the opportunity for input.

Greetings from Estes Park! As one drives between Copper Mountain and Frisco the electrical transmission line, which I believe is in White River National Forest, and, paralleling Interstate 70, has a unique feature. The steel monopoles blend in with the forest! Something to think about besides the USFS Utility Corridor...these steel monopoles are "Forest Green".

Western Area Power Administration is proposing to remove three existing transmission line segments from the city of Estes Park to Flatiron Reservoir in Larimer County. Your letter of November 15, 2011 outlines the proposed action Western would take to replace these lines into a single 115-kilovolt (kV) double-circuit transmission line. This would be the Estes-Pole Hill (E-PH) segment with a new construction re-route. The Meadowdale Hills HOA has stated that the Estes-Lynon Tap (E-LS) along the existing USFS designated utility corridor is the preferred route.

My question is what is the real cost for both options? I realize that this question does not neatly fit within the scope of an environmental assessment. However considering that the (E-PH) segment impacts many individuals, there is a "human environment" involved. I am sure your people have prepared a cost-analysis for these two options. I would appreciate that this information be shared with all concerned  
I ALSO STRONGLY SUPPORT PLACING POWER LINES UNDER GROUND IN THE ESTES VALLEY, SPECIFICALLY ON HWY 36 ACROSS LAKE ESTES, BY ESTES PARK MEDICAL CENTER AND OVER PROSPECT MNT. WHEN MY FAMILY AND I MOVED HERE A YEAR AND A HALF AGO, THE LINES ACROSS THE LAKE STOOD OUT LIKE A TERRIBLE EYE SORE IN AN OTHERWISE BEAUTIFUL PLACE. IT IS LIKE UGLY BLACK GRAFFITI TAGGED ON A BEAUTIFULLY PAINTED MASTEPiece HANGING IN A MUSEUM. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS STRONG LANGUAGE, BUT IT IS A MEAR SHADOW OF THE VISCERAL EVENT THAT I EXPERIENCED THE FIRST TIME I DROVE ACROSS THE LAKE.

We pasture horses on the Crocker Ranch in Estes Park, where some power line consolidations are under consideration. There have been stories in our local newspapers, and on the Denver television stations, mostly negative with very negative responses. We would like to give you our views. The media stories are mostly concerned with the impact that the proposed new line would have on the views along highway 36. They are concerned that the new poles will impact the view coming into Estes on US hwy 36. Since we are familiar with the terrain that the proposed new route will take, we feel that the depth of the gulch will make the poles nearly invisible for most of the length along the road, and if the new poles are of the same kind that is being used in the Fort Collins area, much less visually intrusive than the "birdcages" currently used across Lake Estes.

Our concerns are more with the land itself. We are familiar with the route(s) that the current lines take, and understand that access for maintenance is required. The eastern end of the route currently in use would be next to impossible to build a road through, and if it could be built the impact to the land, and to the view east from Estes Park would be catastrophic. The impact to the wildlife habitat would be major as well. This area helps to support major populations of deer, elk, and wild turkeys, and we have observed bear and bobcat both when checking on the welfare of the horses. Since the area that the proposed new lines will take is already impacted by the highway 36 corridor, your use of this route would preserve an area which has received minimal impact so far.

Removal of the two existing lines would reduce the visual impact from the town to the east, both the existing clear cut across the Crocker ranch, and the ridgeline impact of the lines to Lyons.

The costs also would be much less using the proposed right-of-way, which should reduce the cost to those of us who use the power, and perhaps a portion of this savings could be used to replace the existing structures across the lake with the single pole variety. In conclusion, we feel that the proposed changes would be overall beneficial to the residents of Estes Park, and lend our support to this plan.

The proposed new alignment from Estes-Lyons 10-1 to Flatiron-Pole Hill 4-6 does not make sense. The route shown goes directly across my neighbor's property, and right on top of his home. It would make more sense to stay with the existing right-of-way next to the penstock, and deal with the steep grade, or, to follow the existing road that goes to Pole Hill power plant with that existing right-of-way.

When the construction contractor is working on the demolition of the existing portions of the transmission line that is going to be removed, the contract needs to hold them responsible for protection of the property owners livestock. A contact telephone number needs to be provided to the property owners for the construction contractor and the Government inspector prior to the work starting on the property. We have horses in a fenced area on the land where Estes-Lyons structure 10-3 is located. Fences need to be kept intact; gates need to be kept closed. When the structure is removed, the ground needs to be restored and compacted so that there are not holes or soft areas where the horses can injure their legs. All of the conductors, ground wiring, and structure guy wiring needs to be removed from the property so that there are no wires left to injure the horses. An inspection with the property owners should be scheduled when the construction contractor indicates that the work is completed.

Although I am not as fully informed as other local activists in this cause, I do recognize that an opportunity exists to make important decisions regarding the economic health of this community, region and state that may not come again for many more years. Because of this unique opportunity, the importance of making a decision that considers WAPA's bottom line as just a component of this decision, and not a primary factor is paramount.

As you have been told, I can assure you first hand that visitors come to Estes Park for the view. Most out of state visitors select Colorado because of Estes Park, because of the efforts of the community to present a world class destination to those travelers that have discretionary money, which is becoming more elusive. That community is the same one you serve, and whom you are responsible to, that you must listen to without bias: What is best for this community? Set aside internal restrictions that will prevent you from seeing what is best for this community in the long run, then identify what steps must be taken to reach that result. I'm sure the community will support that plan, and everyone will succeed in the end. Remember that this is a State, regional and local issue that will have a long lasting impact, beyond the time that you are in your current position, or in office and your wise forethought today will be reflected in this project whether it goes 10 stories above ground, or out of sight- but never out of mind for your constituents.

I am particularly interested in the concept of removing the visual impact of this project from the power substation in the 900 block of North St Vrain, East along the visual corridor and approach into Estes Park.

A Resolution to Consider Comments for Western Area Power Authority's Proposed Transmission Line for the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project. WHEREAS, the Town Board of Trustees of the Town of Estes Park became aware of a proposal by the Department of Energy's Western Area Power Administration to commence an environmental assessment for its proposed Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project; and WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Town of Estes Park strongly encourages and requests the Department of Energy consider alternatives to mitigate the following potential negative impacts of the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project to the greater Estes Valley:

1)Impacts of transmission lines and towers and their effect on property owners near the right-of-way; and

2)Impacts of the transmission lines and towers on the rural character, majestic views, and the overall natural beauty of the area; and 3) Impacts to the local economy in the Estes Valley that emphasizes natural attractions for lodging, retail and recreational activities; and

4) Impacts of the transmission lines and towers to the Estes Valley view sheds, corridors and aesthetic values that support a successful Estes Valley economic tourism base; and

5) Impacts of not undergrounding transmission lines which may leave above ground transmissions lines and towers vulnerable to terrorist threats; may result in tower failure and potential wildfire issues to an area already dealing with the impact of bark beetle infestation; and potential environmental damage from lightning and arcing of transmission lines; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recommends that the Department of Energy consider the negative impacts of the proposed project's encroachment into the greater Estes Valley Planning Area; and

landmark located on U.S. Highway 36 known as the "Estes Park" welcome sign where visitors routinely photograph their arrival to Estes Park; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees requests the Department of Energy consider undergrounding transmission lines now and in the future, specifically transmission lines and towers along the U.S. Highway 36 causeway when such projects are presented.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE TOWN OF ESTES PARK, COLORADO.** The Board of Trustees hereby expresses its fervent request to the Department of Energy to consider the issues presented concerning the Department of Energy's proposed Estes-Flatiron Rebuild project during the preparation of the project environmental assessment review.

I am writing in opposition to the proposed re-route and new ROW acquisition by Western Area Power Administration (Western) in the course of rebuilding the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line in Colorado. My wife and I own our summer home at 286 Pine Tree Drive which is immediately adjacent to the proposed route. While I fully support the re-build of our electrical infrastructure in order to bring reliable power from Estes Park to the Front Range cities, I believe it must be done in a manner which preserves the landscape, the Estes Valley, the populated communities, the foreground views of Rocky Mountain National Park, the highly travelled and scenic corridors such as US Highway 36, the foreground of the heavily visited and enjoyed Pole Hill trailhead into Roosevelt National Forest, and the publicly owned Roosevelt National Forest itself, for the benefit of the general public and for the good of future generations. What began as an un-controversial and timely recognition of the need for a re-build of the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line has turned into an unnecessary and costly re-route proposal of the new line up Highway 36 which will have significant visual, social, and environmental impacts for this and future generations.

The project traverses land and water owned by the Town of Estes Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, Larimer County, the US Department of the Interior, and local citizens. It crosses the private APC Crocker Ranch Limited Liability Corporation's large inholding at the east end of Estes Park and transitions into Federal land via a Designated Utility Corridor within the administrative boundary of the US Department of Agriculture's Roosevelt National Forest, eventually terminating at the Flatiron power station due east from Estes Park. The proposed re-route on the west end would be for the sole benefit of a single property holder, APC Crocker Ranch LLC, and would be a significant detriment to the general public.

It is critical that this Estes-Flatiron Rebuild project is sited along the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line (referred to by Western as the Estes Lyons Tap) as it was intended by the extensive planning and management documented in the Roosevelt National Forest Plan, along the Designated Utility Corridor for the good of the general public.

Western's newly proposed re-route of the transmission line out of the pre-existing utility corridor and away from the private residence on the APC Crocker Ranch LLC property will have overwhelming negative effects for visitors along the scenic US Highway 36 "Gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park". It will negatively impact highway scenic turnouts, populated residential neighborhoods, the foreground of one of the most popular National Forest access points in the Estes Valley where no utility corridor exists, only to re-route back into the Estes-Flatiron line and into the Designated Utility Corridor after making it conveniently beyond the view of the APC Crocker Ranch LLC property residences.

Through these actions, Western is effectively asking the Forest Service to circumvent the protections provided to the public in federal projects through an abuse of a special use permit process and an Environmental Assessment (EA) that is completely unnecessary.

While I support the re-build of the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Infrastructure itself, I entirely oppose Western's proposed re-route of this project. I ask that they instead rebuild the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line along its pre-existing, already clear-cut Estes-Flatiron footprint as it is sited within the USFS Designated Utility Corridor for the following reasons:

1) Excluding the public until after decisions have been made is contrary to the public good . The real scoping phase for this project started in the Spring of 2010, almost two years ago, yet Western representatives say we have just begun the scoping phase. The deliberate exclusion of the public from this process for almost two years serves to completely circumvent the protections set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In March of 2010, Western had already completed extensive survey maps which depicted the final-solution route they currently seek today. Western negotiated behind closed doors with APC Crocker Ranch LLC for at least six months to a year prior to informing the public of the project. Estes Park town officials knew of the project since May of 2010, yet excluded the public from the actual scoping phase. According to Western's spokeswoman, Western is actively pursuing land swaps and re-routed easements with APC Crocker Ranch LLC for the route they say is just a proposal. Western is wasting public funds to pursue a siting re-route solution most preferable to one influential land owner, to the exclusion and detriment of the general public. Western had the final-solution route map completed by January of 2011, just shy of a year prior to their first public scoping meeting. Western submitted this map and a detailed application for a Special Use Permit to the US Forest Service in April 2011, seven months prior to the first public scoping meeting. The public has been told that it is just the beginning of the process and nothing has been decided, yet Western has already submitted this application, not just for the rebuild project itself, but for the specific route they seek to construct. At the November 29, 2011 open house meeting in Estes Park, the public was told Western will not start construction until Spring of 2013, yet the permit application states a start date of Spring of 2012, just four short months away. Lastly, Western opted to start the public scoping phase spanning the holidays from Thanksgiving to New Years while many people are not even available to find out what is happening.

2) Circumvention of US Forest Service established policy is contrary to the public good . In 1938, the Bureau of Reclamation built the first transmission line out of Estes Valley where they determined to be the most practical location, the Estes-Flatiron transmission Line. In 1984, through an effort to consolidate large-scale utilities into corridors, the Roosevelt National Forest studied all existing transmission lines, gas lines, and phone lines and incorporated into their Forest Plan a new management area designation, 8.3 Utility Corridors. After a well-researched and lengthy EIS, the Forest Service determined the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line as the most practical choice to be the Designated Utility Corridor. Again, in 1997, the Forest revised their Forest plan, accomplished another comprehensive EIS, and reaffirmed the Estes-Flatiron line as the most practical location to be the Designated Utility Corridor.

Further, in 2006, Roosevelt National Forest published what is today their most recent Amendment 9 to the Forest Plan, which re-iterated a policy of preserving the scenic integrity of public lands for the good of the public, and "[p]rohibit management activities that are inconsistent with the scenic integrity objective". The Highway 34 and 36 travel corridors and the Forest Service Road #122 trailhead (Pole Hill) are categorized as "high" scenic integrity. By attempting to re-route the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Rebuild Project along the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line and within the Designated Utility Corridor, Western has unnecessarily disregarded seventy-four years of land-use precedent and two comprehensive Environmental Impact Studies which all point to preserving the scenic corridors along US Highway 36 and US Highway 34 and protecting the designated high scenic integrity in the foreground of the heavily used and enjoyed National Forest trailhead at the Pole Hill Road gate. This type of use is not compatible with the Scenic Integrity Objectives as defined by the current 1997 Revised Roosevelt National Forest Plan. As such, the proposal cannot be permitted unless the Forest Service alters the Forest Plan guidance to fit this project. Altering vetted National Forest policy and precedent that protects these natural areas in order to accommodate the re-routing of a power line away from one influential private residence is a waste of public funds and an affront to three-quarters of a century of National Forest policy and management. Further, siting an industrial scale project up a nationally recognized scenic highway and across the entry point of a scenic national forest access trailhead poses significant adverse impacts to the general public.

3) Significant adverse impact to the foreground views of RMNP . Highway 36 is a heavily used scenic travel corridor with some of the most spectacular views of Rocky Mountain National Park, and the rural character of the area should be maintained for future visitors. Re-routing the original Estes-Flatiron Transmission line and placing industrial scale towers and lines along this heavy use, Category 4.2 Scenic travel corridor will result in a degradation of the foreground views of Rocky Mountain National Park and the Continental Divide. Degrading the landscape of an area of such national interest will result in significant long-term impact on a national scale.

4) Significant adverse impact to one of the most popular National Forest trailheads in the Estes Valley. The National Forest trailhead off US Highway 36 and Pole Hill Road is used by thousands of people per year for hiking, camping, horse-back riding, Jeep, ATV and motorcycle access. It is one of the most heavily enjoyed recreational areas in the Roosevelt National Forest; and it is a major attraction drawing outdoor enthusiasts to Estes Park. Western's proposed re-route of the original Estes-Flatiron transmission Line and proposed construction of industrial-scale towers and lines through the foreground of this high use National Forest trailhead will result in significant adverse impact to the overall experience of the area by its many visitors. The placement of the line in this area is incompatible with the Scenic integrity Objectives of the Roosevelt National Forest for recreation, where this area is designated as Category 4.2 Scenic, and will significantly impact the foreground views of the trailhead and experience of all trailhead visitors. The scenic integrity of this National Forest access must be preserved for us all, today and for future generations.

5) Eliminating a non-renewable resource is contrary to the public good: Scenic highway lost forever. Routing industrial-scale transmission towers and lines up the Highway 36 travel corridor out of Estes Park and into Roosevelt National Forest will forever transform this scenic route into an industrial zone with 110 foot towers and a web of lines that will permanently break the sky-line and alter the landscape. Western proposes to site this project through the precise location where visitors catch their first glimpse of the Continental Divide and Rocky Mountain National Park. This promises to result in significant adverse visual impact to the enjoyment of the over three million visitors to the Estes Valley and Rocky Mountain National Park every year. No amount of non-reflective lines or rusted color towers will stop them from continuously breaking the sky-line or from dominating the view. This industrial transformation will be permanent, and it will result in significant, long-term, local, regional, and national adverse impacts to the general public. The scenic integrity of this federal scenic highway must be preserved for us all, just as the Roosevelt National Forest Plan ensured, today and for future generations.

6) Adverse impact to tourism economy. The visual impact of the proposed transmission line re-route will be a significant detriment to the local tourism economy. Among other forest users, guides, jeep tours, hunters, hikers, bikers, and horseback riders will all be affected by the inappropriate industrial-scale towers in the foreground of their views of Rocky Mountain National Park, along US Highway 36, on the way to the Pole Hill trailhead, at the gate, and along the recreational use trails and primitive campgrounds within Roosevelt National Forest. Since the APC Crocker Ranch LLC property blocks access to the Roosevelt National Forest on the eastern side of Estes Park, visitors use the Pole Hill trailhead exclusively to access this portion of the National Forest and would be highly affected by the proposed transmission line re-route.

7) Significant real property loss for residents. The visual impact for residents in populated areas along Western's proposed re-route would cause real property value loss, loss of quality of life, enjoyment of their homes, and possibly detrimental health effects. Such a significant financial burden should not be placed on residents when there has been a long-standing pattern of use along the existing Designated Utility Corridor.

8) Potential significant adverse health effects. There is ongoing debate about the adverse health effects of electro-magnetic fields from high-voltage power lines, however the World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded that power-frequency magnetic fields are Class 2B possible carcinogens. The US Environmental Protection Agency prepared a report suggesting a causal link between the vicinity to power lines and higher rates of leukemia, lymphoma, and cancer of the nervous system. In this particular case, the proposal by Western to route industrial-scale high voltage transmission lines and towers through populated residential neighborhoods is contrary to their stated policy: "Until conclusive or more specific research results are obtained, Western will continue to take prudent actions regarding EMFs...Western will continue to...pursue and implement alternative design and siting approaches for new and upgraded transmission facilities to reduce the public exposure to EMFs...". Western needs to apply their policy of Prudent Avoidance and keep the project away from populated areas, along the existing Designated Utility Corridor via the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line.

9) No understanding . Many affected people don't even know this proposed re-route is happening, and many of those that do have yet to fully understand the scale or long term impact of the project. Western had the route for this project picked out in early 2010, and worked with the private APC Crocker Ranch Limited Liability Corporation on re-routing this project outside the Designated Utility Corridor and to the south away from Crocker residences by rather sending it through a scenic travel corridor and populated areas, only to re-route the line back into the existing utility corridor beyond the APC Crocker Ranch LLC property. This re-route was coordinated with the APC Crocker Ranch LLC at least six months to a year prior to notifying the public. Western has omitted the fact that a Designated Utility Corridor exists along the current Estes-Flatiron Transmission line, leaving the general public with little understanding of the process or the impact. Omitting real options from the discourse from the beginning excludes the public from being able to actually comment and rules out reasonable options prior to the NEPA process being initiated.

10) No need. 36 CFR part 219 allows Categorical Exclusions for "Reconstructing a power line by replacing poles and wires." Rebuilding an aging infrastructure is clearly a good thing, but unnecessarily re-routing the project, taking new ROW corridor, and cutting new scars into the land when a utility corridor is already designated, clear-cut, and in use is a waste of taxpayer money to no benefit to the public. The Estes-Flatiron route was chosen as the most practical route in 1938, long before any other lines ran out of the Estes Valley, and it has been designated as the main utility route by the Roosevelt National Forest in their 1984 Forest Plan, in 1997 during their Forest Plan revision, and it was again re-affirmed in 2006. The Direct Route along the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line is already established, less populated, shorter, and is currently co-located with other large-scale utilities such as a gas line. It avoids the view corridors along Highway 36, high use trailheads, scenic overlooks, and populated areas.

11) No public benefit .Seeking to re-route and establish a new ROW on what is now only a "transmission facility" is contrary to a well established Forest Service policy of not issuing new utility corridors if there is no need and no benefit. The existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line is shorter and more direct. It avoids the heavily used, public National Forest access trailhead at the Pole Hill gate. It avoids the most populated subdivisions and follows the only Designated Utility Corridor in the current Roosevelt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for this area. The proposed re-route only benefits a single influential property owner, and is a detriment to the public.

The entire nation has a stake in this project because the re-route Western seeks to execute poses a significant adverse impact to the scenic byways, mountain landscapes, residential communities, and the preservation and public enjoyment of Rocky Mountain National Park and Roosevelt National Forest. Western has transformed a much-needed, Categorically Excluded re-build project into a costly, complicated, and convoluted re-route proposal. Western has omitted the most practical, most direct, already clear-cut, and established Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line which currently sits within the bounds of the USFS Designated Utility Corridor. By doing so, Western has unilaterally staged an unneeded and costly Environmental Assessment to circumvent genuine public involvement and the protections afforded to the public as set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For this, there is no need, no public benefit, and the process itself points to a single, pre-determined project end-goal re-route which serves to benefit a single influential private land-owner, to the exclusion and detriment of the general public. This project cannot be undone, and it will have long-term, significant adverse impacts on the landscape, on the Estes Valley, and on the enjoyment of our national public lands.

I fully support re-build of the Estes-Flatiron Transmission line where it currently sits, within the Designated Utility Corridor, and I oppose the additional cost and subsequent significant adverse impacts that a re-route would unnecessarily pose to the general public. Re-build. Do not re-route. This solution is a win-win for Western and for the citizens and many visitors of Estes Park, CO. Thank you for your prompt attention to these highly relevant issues. I am confident that you have the interest of the American public in mind, and will protect the landscape for the good of all members of the public and for generations to come.

Good afternoon, I was asked to contact you in regards to adding one of our employees to your list so that he could receive more information or notification regarding the "Transmission Line Rebuild Environmental Assessment." Our employee is Bradley D. Wind, P.E. | Deputy Manager, Operations Division. Please let me know what I can do to get Brad added, thank you. Thank you for adding Brad to your mailing.

When the demolition of the transmission line is completed and the contractors work is accepted by WAPA, will there be documentation provided to the land owners that releases the easement for the line and its maintenance (since it will no longer be necessary)?

Is the Estes -Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project ready for construction and will there be a package out to bid soon?

We are writing in opposition to the proposed re-route and new ROW acquisition by Western Area Power Administration (Western) in the course of rebuilding the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line in Colorado.

We should bury the lines through the Estes valley along the existing route and avoid the highway 36 corridor as they leave the valley. These structures will be in place for a very long time. It is very important to minimize the impact on the unique beauty of the Estes valley and on the tourism economy.

We believe these steps should be taken even if we, the residents of Estes valley, must bear the additional cost involved in burying and routing these lines. Thanks for considering our views,

I am writing in response to your proposed changes in the transmission power lines into Estes Park. You state that these lines need to be updated and modernized; therefore it would seem logical that you would consider the solution most advantageous to all of us who would be affected by these changes. Considering the tremendous damage done by the pine bark beetles resulting in dead trees (fuel for fires), the very high winds in the Estes valley and surrounding areas that can often cause line swinging and sparking, burying the lines in as many areas as possible would seem prudent.

In addition, so many people live in the area along Mall road and in Meadowdale Hills subdivision that putting in industrial poles without absolute proof (and I know it does not exist) that these lines will not affect the long term health of people does not seem responsible.

Then there is the very real possibility that placing these industrial power poles in residential area will definitely affect our property values--DOWNWARD--5-10% by your calculations. This is totally irresponsible of you in a down economy!

And of course, then there is the beauty of our valley to be considered. Tourism fuels our economy here and tourists do not come here expecting industrial blights--when it can be avoided.

You already have the north ROW available to use for this purpose and considering the impact of your other choices presented at Ravencrest Heights it absolutely does not seem sensible to even consider anything else than that north ROW. It is really a no-brainer when you consider the negative impact your other choices would have on residential areas and a town that depends to a large extent on tourism for its sustainment. As far as your comments that the north ROW would be more difficult, we are not talking about your convenience here. As witnessed by other electric projects going forward with updating and modernization, you have a variety of tools at your disposal for this purpose. Yes, they may be more expensive but they are worth the cost when you consider what your "convenient and cheaper" plan would cost those of us affected--both in residential areas and for our town. Please do give this matter your utmost thought and make a plan that will benefit all of us. We all want and need dependable power but the delivery of it needs to be in a way that is beneficial to all and not just "convenient" for a large utility entity. Thank you for your consideration,

I strenuously oppose the alignment of the rebuilt power lines from the Lake Estes area to the Pole Hill area proposed under WAPA's Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project. The proposed right of way to the north of US 36 could not have been calculated to be a greater blight on the visual environment as well as the economic viability of the area. This plan will not only affect those in the direct sight lines of these towers, but our entire community as well. Property owners and business owners will certainly suffer from reduced reputation, reduced tourism and reduced property values and quality of life.

I don't fault WAPA for wanting to save cost on this rebuild, but Estes Park is a unique situation, given that Estes Park is a magnet for over three million visitors a year to our town and Rocky Mountain National Park. A very high percentage of these visitors, along with all of our citizens utilize Highway 36 as the main corridor into and out of the area. This corridor presents breathtaking views of the Mummy Range and our valley entrance to every guest that approaches. The Estes Park entry sign is a landmark area for taking photographs for memories of these scenes. These views will be forever marred if WAPA erects these massive steel towers and replaces the existing (6) transmission poles with steel monopoles that will average 105-feet in height, each equivalent to a ten-story building. Guests come and residents live here for the beauty, remoteness and tranquility, not to be welcomed with the defacement of God's creation with high power transmission lines.

What is especially troublesome is that WAPA already has a far superior ROW available to it now -- the northerly right of way through the Crocker Ranch property occupied by the current Estes-Lyons Tap, a designated utility corridor which contains one of the existing transmission lines as well as an adjacent natural gas pipeline. In the initial proposal, this route was not even listed as an option, a puzzling omission considering that a utility corridor is a de facto preferred route for utilities such as transmission lines. Through the utility corridor, there is strong opportunity for cost-sharing with the gas company, since both they and WAPA require access along this route. Reconstruction of the line through this ROW would minimally impact every publicly accessible point in the Estes Valley. Location of the consolidated line in this ROW would allow abandonment of the existing ROW adjacent to US 36 on the lower portions of Park Hill and eliminate two crossings of the highway, greatly improving esthetics in that area. It would also reduce the impact to the neighborhood along Pole Hill Road. This route has the advantage of being 15 percent shorter (cheaper to build and maintain), as well as being significantly less detrimental to the viewscape. Clearly, use of the northerly ROW is less convenient to WAPA in terms of access and, consequently, cost of construction and maintenance. In every other respect, it is superior to the proposed plan and represents the option with the greatest overall public benefit -- and WAPA is, after all is said and done, an agency founded by, and in the service of, the public.

I also suggest that WAPA consider a partial redefinition of the project to include undergrounding the portion of the lines from the Estes Park Substation (pole 0-1) to the north edge of Meadow Hills Subdivision (pole 3-5). This modification will increase the expense of the project significantly (perhaps \$38M), but will provide significant advantages and perhaps even some cost offsets. Undergrounding of power transmission lines has advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages include: Less subject to damage due to severe weather or sabotage; reduced EMF emissions due to the shielding provided by the surrounding earth; Much narrower R.O.W. requirements; And significant to Estes Park, No visually objectionable above ground poles and wires in visually sensitive areas.

Regarding cost of undergrounding, If you take the WAPA project total cost (\$19M for 16 miles) and multiplied the per mile cost by the factor of 10 to get a cost \$12M/mi. to underground the most sensitive section. This yields the additional cost of \$38M to underground this section. I suspect that this is a "very safe" estimate. Three million people a year visit Rocky, equating to about \$14 per visitor if they were to pay for it in one year. If the life of the power line is estimated at 50 years, that is easily 150 million visitors, or 25 cents/visitor. It appears that we have a major opportunity that only comes around once every fifty years. Please do not be so short sighted as to let this chance slip by. Thank you for our consideration.

May we submit comments by e-mail regarding Estes-Flatiron transmission line rebuild project, or do they need to be submitted by mail? Thank you for your time.

My recommendation regarding the proposed project is simply that you put in plenty of fiber-optic capacity. Estes is relatively isolated in terms of high-speed backhaul and the fiber on the power line is very important.

We have lived in the Loveland / Estes Park area for the last 44 years, have been frequent users of Hermit Park all of that time, and have had our home, which is located close to WAPA's Estes Park to Loveland transmission line, in Meadowdale Hills on Pine Tree Drive for the last 20 years. I am writing to you with deep concerns about WAPA's currently proposed project for the Estes Park to Loveland transmission line. There are project objectives that need to be accomplished and I fully support those; However, I will summarize a view of some key issues in the following bullet format to hopefully clearly communicate legitimate and objective concerns and solicit your support to move WAPA in a direction that would eliminate these concerns:

1. My understanding of the project object is to increase transmission line capacity and update the line to modern safety code: I fully support the safety code update and believe it is essential. – I have seen failure of a single pole in an excessive ice storm in Oklahoma create an increase in adjacent pole loads which caused them to fail and the sequence of failures progressed for miles. I do not know what the needs are for increased system capacity – the details of that need have not been shared publicly as far as I know. The consequence of this normally good engineering practice is to increase the component size and hence visual impact, and would be needless if the system capacity is never needed. For transmission of extra capacity towards Loveland, it would require additional generation capacity which would require more water potential energy to be converted. Transmission towards Estes, if the system is configured that way, would probably not be an issue.

2. The proposed new routing of the replacement line would be parallel to Highway 36 on the entrance to Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park and would wipe out the progress made over recent years to preserve the natural beauty of the area: There have been major efforts over recent years to preserve the "National Treasure View" of the Estes Park Valley in the adjacent Highway 36 area. These include the generous efforts of HP/Agilent in making the Hermit Park lands economically available to Larimer County to turn it into a county park and preserve the natural beauty of the area. This was complemented with the Open Space generous effort of the Meadowdale Ranch area to also preserve the natural beauty of the adjacent area. Obviously, these were both generous, time consuming efforts on a lot of people's part to move us towards leaving a legacy of natural beauty for our subsequent generations. It is also clearly obvious that the proposed new transmission line routing would be a major negative undoing of these efforts. This is particularly sad when it is obvious that there are other alternatives that would not wipe out this commendable work by so many to preserve our natural beauty of the Estes Park Valley.

3. There is no stated project objective to preserve and reclaim the beauty of the Estes Park Valley. There are many constituents and residents that want this to be one of the objectives of the proposed power line project and include eliminating the current Lake Estes metal towers: It is widely acknowledged that costs are about 10X or more to underground high voltage transmission lines compared to pole mounted conductors, and the maintenance difficulties and costs are also increased. This may make it very difficult to obtain the funds to truly make this one of the project objectives. The current decision procedure that involves accomplishing WAPA's major goal of reliable, safe, and economical power with a "check list" visual environmental assessment" will ensure that this objective will never happen. To accomplish this, there needs to be a fundamental change in the approach and would include a project objective of preserving and reclaiming the beauty of the EP Valley.

Our predecessors worked hard during the 1930s to accomplish the great water / power projects of that era. Many of our current privileges are made possible because of those efforts and it is their legacy to us. The Big Thompson project is one of those projects. There is a changing mood in America that many of the issues that were secondary such as Environmental View during that era must no longer be treated that way. It is obviously easier to put the difficult and potentially costly issues in the background, but this is an opportunity for the skilled and innovative people to rise to the challenge and overcome the obstacles. I solicit those in power and influential positions to rise to the challenge. There has already been concerned local citizens walking/hiking the alternative lines and suggesting good common sense alternatives. These are not just untrained or unskilled people that have been involved, but engineering background individuals with backgrounds that would complement capable power system engineers that have the specialized training to do the design. My dream would be that this whole effort would turn into a cooperative effort between the parties of interest and I appeal to each of you to become involved in an effort to accomplish this transmission line rebuild in a way that all parties can benefit from the outcome. I am also attaching an earlier submission that was made prior to the extension of the public comment period and it highlights some other points. (Letter 43 repeated) Again thanks for the time.

ATTACHMENTS (group 1 of 2): High-resolution, distant views of the 2 current routes (n=5) and views from Highway 36 driving into the Estes Valley from Pole Hill (n=9) These power transmission lines have no direct impact on the area in which I live within the Estes Valley, but I'm concerned that get the best possible result for any new and consolidated routing. Thus, I traveled around and acquired fairly high-resolution current images of existing routes and including the proposed alternative. These annotated images are attached to this email and to a second email I will send in order to limit the size of each mailing. The second mailing also includes an annotated topographic base map and an example of utility-pole camouflage I saw last year in eastern CA. These images have been made available to Tom Adams of the Crocker Ranch, to the residents of Pole Hill, and to others in the Estes community. I request that WAPA carefully consider alternative scenarios to the proposed consolidated route and that WAPA perform realistic modeling of viewscape impacts to the Estes Valley as the gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. From the photos I acquired, I can see where a doubling of pole height (as visually annotated on the photos) could be visually advantageous for some property owners and deleterious for others, and I don't know if the new consolidated configuration would contain more lines and/or thicker cables.

I also would hope that WAPA consider burying at least parts of some lines for scenic and security reasons and to perhaps find a way to have this project expand to include the removal of the "erector set" poles along Lake Estes. This is an opportunity for "out-of-the-box" thinking in how our national utility infrastructure can become more harmonious with the natural environment. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

ATTACHMENTS (group 2 of 2): Views from on the Crocker Ranch and from the Meadowdale/Ravencrest subdivisions on Pole Hill. Also an example of a camouflaged utility pole from eastern CA and an annotated overall topographic base map for the area. Commentary text is in first emailing.

As a resident of Estes Park, CO I have been reading with great interest all of the articles and letters concerning WAPA's proposal for the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project. I have been dismayed by the potential negative environmental, scenic, and economic impacts that this project will have on our beautiful mountain valley---concerns that have already been raised by countless other concerned citizens. I could raise my voice and join with theirs to reiterate those same concerns in this letter because they are my concerns as well. But let me, instead, raise the voices of two concerned visionary citizens from the past---one who fought to preserve the natural beauty of the Rocky Mountains before it was forever destroyed for future generations, and one who saw the natural world and its beauty being destroyed during his lifetime and who tried to warn us of the consequences of that destruction.

Enos Mills (1870-1922), who is considered the Father of Rocky Mountain National Park, knew how important natural beauty and wild places are to the health and rejuvenation of the human body, mind and spirit. He fought for years to have this place preserved as a national park for future generations. Please consider the following quotes from his book The Rocky Mountain Wonderland (1915): "...the Rocky Mountains are being stripped of their scenery... [In] the Rocky Mountains there are many areas rich in perishable attractions which might well be reserved as parks so that their natural beauties could be kept unmarred. It is to be hoped that the growing interest in American scenery will bring this about before these wild mountain gardens are shorn of their loveliness." (pp. 314-315)

Mills talks about the "profitable use of scenery" (p.315) for "paying dividends in humanity," (p. 316) referring to both commercial and human dividends "If a park is to be kept permanently productive, its alluring features must be maintained... [a] marred nature will not attract nor refresh. People often feel the call of the wild, and they want the wild world beautiful." (p.321) He goes on to quote U. S. Circuit Court Judge Robert E. Lewis on these combined dividends of parks and natural beauty: "Is the test dollars, or has beauty of scenery, rest, recreation, health and enjoyment something to do with it? Is there no beneficial use except that which is purely commercial?" (p.326) Again, in his own words, Mills says: "Scenery, like beauty, has superior merit, and its supreme use is by people for rest and recreation purposes." In summary, Mills writes: "Investments in outdoor vacations give large returns; from an outing one returns with life lengthened, in livelier spirits, more efficient, with new ideas and a broader outlook, and more hopeful and kind. Hence parks and outdoor recreation places are mighty factors for the general welfare; they assist in making better men and women. A park offers the first aid and often the only cure for the sick and the overworked. Looking upon our sublime scenes arouses a love for our native land and promotes a fellow feeling...and when people mingle amid primeval scenes they become fraternal. Saving our best scenes is the saving of manhood. These places encourage every one to do his best and help all to live comfortably in a beautiful world. Scenery is our noblest resource. No nation has ever fallen from having too much scenery." (pp. 330-331)

The other visionary whose voice I would like you to consider is from the more recent past---that of John Denver (1943-1997), whose music and message are still very much alive today, and ringing in our ears if we would but listen. Many of his songs speak of the beauty and wildness of nature, of our need to preserve it, and of the fear in his heart about "why they try to tear the mountains down to bring in a couple more, more people, more scars upon the land." ("Rocky Mountain High," 1972) Consider the words of his song "Eclipse," (1974) and apply them to the issue at hand: "There's a heavy smog (steel towers?) between me and my mountain It's enough to make a grown man sit and cry, It's enough to make you wonder, It's enough to make the world roll up and die, I think it's kind of interesting the way things get to be, The way the people work with their machines, Serenity's a long time comin' to me, In fact I don't believe that I know what it means anymore." Serenity---"the quality of being serene; clearness; calmness; quietness; stillness; peace." (The New Webster Dictionary) Estes Park and Rocky Mountain Park are places where people come to play and rest in the great outdoors, away from the noise and clutter of the cities. They come in search of wildness, outdoor experiences, natural beauty, rest, quietness. They come here to restore and refresh their bodies, minds, and spirits. What is at stake here with the current plans for the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project is the marring, even the destruction of the scenic beauty, those "alluring features" of the entrance to the Estes Valley, the "Gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park." Please do not allow WAPA to destroy the very essence of this beautiful mountain valley by creating an eye-sore at its very entrance. Please do not destroy the very reason so many choose to visit and to live here. Thank you for taking the time to read, listen to, and take to heart, the concerns of those who love this valley. Enos Mills preserved it for us; let us preserve it for those who come after us.

"There's a heavy smog (steel towers?) between me and my mountain It's enough to make a grown man sit and cry, It's enough to make you wonder, It's enough to make the world roll up and die, I think it's kind of interesting the way things get to be, The way the people work with their machines, Serenity's a long time comin' to me, In fact I don't believe that I know what it means anymore." Serenity---"the quality of being serene; clearness; calmness; quietness; stillness; peace." (The New Webster Dictionary) Estes Park and Rocky Mountain Park are places where people come to play and rest in the great outdoors, away from the noise and clutter of the cities. They come in search of wildness, outdoor experiences, natural beauty, rest, quietness. They come here to restore and refresh their bodies, minds, and spirits. What is at stake here with the current plans for the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project is the marring, even the destruction of the scenic beauty, those "alluring features" of the entrance to the Estes Valley, the "Gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park." Please do not allow WAPA to destroy the very essence of this beautiful mountain valley by creating an eye-sore at its very entrance. Please do not destroy the very reason so many choose to visit and to live here. Thank you for taking the time to read, listen to, and take to heart, the concerns of those who love this valley. Enos Mills preserved it for us; let us preserve it for those who come after us.

I have been coming to the Estes Park area for the last 30 years, visiting from Tennessee. After the flood that destroyed Estes I was so impressed with the direction the area took to improve the town of Estes and have responsible growth. I was horrified to learn of the proposal of the larger power lines that will grace the entrance to the valley on Hwy 36. Please be respectful of the impact this will have on the very scenery that tourists come to enjoy. Have some foresight!

Think past the immediate dollar savings and consider the long term benefits of utilizing the existing utility corridor. Take into consideration the people whom you serve. Think of the tourist who sustain the area, coming to experience the beauty of the Rocky Mountains. Think of the negative impact of cresting the hill coming in from Boulder and having the majestic view impeded with the enormous, ugly power lines for generations to come Think and consider.

While I appreciate WAPA's desire to upgrade aging transmission lines in the Estes Valley, I do not support the agency's proposed route for the consolidated high voltage lines. The need for the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project is sound; however, the path selected for these lines lacks the same sensibility. Numerous credible objections have been raised against the current proposal, and reiterating all of them in this letter is not necessary. Nevertheless, I do feel several points regarding the transmission route proposed by WAPA deserve special attention.

Recently, I came across a book of postcards at the Estes Park Museum. One particular postcard caught my attention because it reflected the profound beauty of the gateway to the Estes Valley as well as the efforts taken to preserve its integrity. The authors of the book illustrate how this postcard's publisher carefully removed a prominent fence that scarred the valley's landscape. Nearly 90 years ago people recognized the significance of this view - the first view tourists would have of the Estes Valley and its spectacular mountain backdrop as they descended into Estes Park on what is now US Highway 36. In these tough economic times, the need to preserve this natural beauty as means to attract visitors and bring them back repeatedly is even more imperative than it was when postcard's publisher elected to enhance the image, transforming it from just a picture to an invitation.

The proposed route also would place these consolidated transmission lines in close proximity to raptor nests and communal roosts. The dramatic rock formations and surrounding trees at the top of Pole Hill traditionally have been a foraging area and home to both falcons and hawks. In addition, Pole Hill currently is within the territory of at least one golden eagle. Although measures can be taken to reduce raptor fatalities resulting from power line collision and electrocution, research indicates these fatalities remain more common in areas where transmission lines encroach "raptor use areas." Furthermore, studies done in both the United States and Europe suggest that raptors nesting on the structures supporting high voltage lines yield fewer offspring as a result of thinner egg shells and enlarged yolks. Unfortunately, this proposal would bring high voltage lines closer to a vulnerable raptor habitat as well as populated residential areas like Meadowdale Hills and Ravencrest Heights.

I sincerely hope WAPA will give serious consideration to other proposals, including those favoring burying sections of the transmission lines. At first glance, this procedure may appear more costly. However, when examined through the proper lens, the extra initial expenditure can be justified. For example, WAPA's current proposal involves combining two separate high voltage transmission lines into a single right-of-way. There is an inherent savings already in this plan in that a substantial amount of money will not be spent on revamping and then maintaining the existing two lines. Furthermore, these consolidated lines will be serving an ever-increasing population far into the future. Consequently, all additional costs associated with burying sections of this line would be insignificant to those paying for the project in the years to come. Quite simply, to not approach this project using this lens would be fiscally unsound and irresponsible.

A debate over the need to consolidate these transmission lines is unnecessary; the need is clear. However, WAPA's current proposal to avoid existing routes, including the USFS Utility Corridor, is flawed. How (and when) WAPA came to this decision is puzzling to me, but the consequences of the plan are quite clear. WAPA, please reconsider your current plan in order to protect a national treasure as well as the economic and environmental interests of the citizens of the Estes Valley and the State of Colorado. Please lessen the intrusive facets of the current proposal for the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project. Thank you for your interest in this matter.

I write today as a member of a growing number of residents and citizens to request your help in investigating what appears to be a gross waste of public funds in the course of rebuilding the Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line out of Estes Park, CO and crossing Forest Service lands. We are being asked to participate in an Environmental Assessment (EA) with a pre-determined outcome that in effect, violates the six basic tenets of NEPA, while unnecessarily wasting public funds. Money is needlessly being wasted on environmental impact study redundancies, such as the DOE EA-1899, slated to reverse rigorous prior analyses and outcomes in EISs already completed by the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest to date. I stand with others in opposition to this EA, and the re-route it is designed to rationalize.

What started in 2010 as an uncontroversial \$14 million dollar rebuild of the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line has been transformed into an unnecessary and costly \$19 million dollar re-route, all prior to any knowledge or consent from the public. On a larger scale of what you see every day, this might not sound like much; however, if a 36% increase in total project cost due to waste were applied to Western's current \$3.25 billion dollar Congressional borrowing authority, this would translate to \$1.17 billion dollars in public funds potentially wasted. Furthermore, this unnecessary and costly re-route detrimentally affects hundreds of people on the ground. It affects every business owner who depends on the Estes Valley landscape to draw people to Rocky Mountain National Park, and it affects the three million visitors who bring much needed revenue to Colorado as they travel here to spend their hard-earned dollars visiting the Estes Valley and Rocky Mountain National Park every year.

The groundwork for this project has already been laid to streamline siting by way of the original Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line clear-cuts and by way of a previously Designated Utility Corridor that currently consolidates gas, water, and power line utilities. Further review of the situation reveals that Western is specifically disregarding their own mandates to streamline siting of the Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line away from the single private residence of the Pew Crocker Ranch, away from the USFS Designated Utility Corridor, only to route it back again into the Utility Corridor after making it safely out of the Pew Crocker view. This proposal is longer, more costly, more environmentally damaging, and it makes a mockery of Federal law put in place to facilitate cooperation among agencies to promote efficient transmission siting through Federal lands.

There seems to be a major disconnect between Federal policies to cut costs and the reality of local execution of those policies. In his own testimony before the Congress, Western's Tim Meeks said it is Western's goal to establish "hydropower allocations in a timely, reliable, and cost-effective manner." He, along with many others before Congress, testified that "Increased environmental regulatory compliance costs" was a major factor contributing to a "net effect of increasing expenses, while reducing the quantity and reliability of the hydropower product." That being the case, it doesn't stand to reason why Western's Rocky Mountain Region staff have continued such an environmentally and fiscally wasteful pursuit. This raises serious questions as to why federal policies for streamlining are not being implemented at the regional and local level.

Concerning the Special Use application to the USFS, I request Western be required to recognize and follow the established land protections as laid out in the Arapaho-Roosevelt Natural Resource Management Plan as it stands today. Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest staff must give timely notice to Western that their proposed special use permit cannot be granted based on the fact that there is no need, no public benefit, and the use request itself is in conflict with their current USFS management area directives. Time is of the essence. If the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest fails to act until after the one-year deadline has passed on April 22nd, 2012, they will have forfeited their authority to do so once project approval falls to the FERC backstop. Worse yet, if the USFS re-writes or amends twenty-five years of Forest Policy to fit one project, they will have neglected their duty as custodians of public lands for the good of the general public.

You have the power to oversee how our public funds are spent and to ensure that our federal public lands are not unnecessarily damaged. I request that Western halt any further progression of this unnecessary re-route and pursue a categorical exclusion for a rebuild in the Designated Utility Corridor.

Today, I am not asking for more "transparency". I'm not asking for more "open houses" and outreach. I would have asked for that two years ago when the project truly began behind closed doors. Finally, I'm not asking for another EIS, when Western already has two of them at their disposal.

I'm asking that you get to the bottom of this waste of public funds, Western's abuse of their position as the lead agency in disregarding Forest Service policy, and the possible undue influence relating to the circumvention of NEPA to the apparent benefit of one influential land owner with obvious political clout, the Pew Crocker Ranch. I'm asking for accountability.

I am writing in regard to the power line proposal east of Estes Park. There is no need to create an unnecessary re-route.

The existing, active power line and corridor is 15% shorter, will save tax-payers money, minimizes new clear cuts, avoids populated areas, and protects the view sheds that draw over 3 million visitors to the Estes Valley every year. Western should re-build this project along the original, already clear-cut Estes-Flatiron transmission line, and route it away from the highly valued view corridors.

Ideally, if you have any extra money to put toward this project, please consider burying the lines crossing Lake Estes.

At minimum, re-build the Estes-Flatiron Line in its rightful place, within the USFS Designated Utility Corridor. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

The proposed re-route of the transmission lines away from the USFS Designated Utility Corridor runs counter to common sense and reason. Please scrap this plan and use the existing corridor. This will eliminate new and unnecessary clear cuts, disruption of scenic view corridors, and disruption of animal habitat. It is the right, proper, and just thing to do on many levels.

I WILL NOT VISIT THE PARK IF THE POWER LINE IS BUILT THERE.

I'm writing this evening to request your help in stopping the re-routing of the Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line out of Estes Park, CO. As a long time resident of Colorado I strongly value the mountains and the beauty they provide. At the same time I understand the need for power. That is why utility corridors exist - to provide power to the mountains. Minimizing the impact of the corridors and keeping the number of corridors to a minimum is paramount to maintaining the beauty of the mountains.

The re-routing which is being proposed is to the benefit of one land owner (the Pew Crocker Ranch) and does not benefit the public. In fact it takes away from the public by destroying scenic viewsheds and possibly hindering tourism.

I demand that Western be required to recognize and follow the established land protections as laid out in the Arapaho-Roosevelt Natural Resource Management Plan as it stands today. Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest management must give notice to Western that the special use permit can not be granted based on the fact that there is NO need, and NO public benefit.

As I understand it, the deadline for action is April 22nd, 2012. I strongly urge you to stop the further progression of this unnecessary re-route and pursue a categorical exclusion for a rebuild in the Designated Utility Corridor.

Do not allow this waste of public funds. Stop Western's abuse of their position. And stop the appearance of favoritism to benefit of one influential land owner with obvious political clout! I'm asking for accountability.

In addition to the below statement. I am appalled to hear the DOE finds it necessary to impede upon one of Americas greatest National Parks. DO NOT ReRoute the power lines.

WAPA's proposed plan for a rebuild of the Estes-Flatiron Transmission line appears, upon examination, to be designed to waste the maximum amount of money at the same time that it causes the greatest amount of adverse environmental impact and violates the most number of federal regulations.

An alternate routing of the line through a USFS designated utility corridor along with selected burial of the line across Lake Estes and the Park Hill subdivision is superior in almost every respect.

WAPA initially estimated the rebuild cost at \$14M; however, this quickly ballooned to \$19M largely as a result of selecting a route which avoided the existing utility corridor where the Estes-Flatiron line currently resides, thereby requiring much more extensive environmental review. Other increased cost factors are due to the selected routing being 15% longer than the utility corridor route, as well as the need to acquire expensive new land right-of-way (ROW).

The US Code (43 USC 1763) requires utility projects to be placed within existing utility corridors "to the extent practical," provides for streamlined review and permitting processes (see 16 USC § 824p(h)(5)(B)) for such projects, and requires agencies to do so "by fully taking into account prior analyses and decisions relating to corridors" (16 USC 824). The USFS designated this utility corridor as part of an active management process over the past 100 years as a way of routing visually intrusive utilities away from the important viewscape entry areas into the Estes Valley along Highways 36 and 34. Two separate Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) over the past quarter century have served to confirm further this designation. Given that the current Estes-Flatiron transmission line lies within the corridor, it presumably is "practical" for WAPA to place the rebuilt transmission line there as well. WAPA essentially is seeking to use a cursory Environmental Assessment (EA) to overturn two prior comprehensive EIS's. In seeking public comment on their proposal, one wonders whether public response should be anything but: "Why don't you start by following the law?"

WAPA's publicly stated reasons for their choice of routing are that they would need to acquire additional right-of-way (ROW) along the utility corridor route, as well as a belief that access roads are significantly better along their proposed route. Some simple analysis casts doubt on these claims. For example, their proposed route also requires obtaining ROW: 17.9 acres of prime, developable land with significant fair market value. In contrast, the Estes-Flatiron route requires slightly more land (23.7 acres), but it should cost significantly less since it is undevelopable land which is heavily encumbered by being located within a utility corridor.

Similar analysis regarding access roads shows both routes to be somewhat comparable. Indeed, the utility corridor route dates back all the way to 1877, when it was the main road between Loveland and Estes Park, since it represents the easiest terrain between the two towns. The utility corridor currently contains a natural gas pipeline, a water tunnel access point, and the current power line. These utilities were all placed there because it was the most "practical" route. There is currently difficult access to poles 3-5, 3-6 and 4-1, but, as has been explained to WAPA, this is easily addressed by moving them 150 feet downhill to coincide with the gas pipeline access road. In addition, there is no road access between poles 4-1 and 4-2, but this is not needed since pole 4-2 is easily accessed from the road on the eastern side. All told, probably \$300k in access road improvements are likely required, with strong opportunity for cost-sharing with the gas company.

The utility corridor route is far more protective of the scenery in the Estes Valley than WAPA's proposal, and it also will be substantially cheaper to build, due to the fact that it is shorter, as well as because the EA can be avoided entirely with the project built under a Categorical Exclusion (36 CFR 220.6), with minimal review.

Whichever routing is ultimately selected, the rebuild project leaves unaddressed the extremely visually objectionable one mile of transmission towers across Lake Estes. In addition, the subsequent mile through the corridor beginning at the east edge of Lake Estes is also quite visible from town. These visual impacts can be remedied by direct burial of the power lines.

WAPA has stated that they have never buried any power lines and have no experience doing so. In this regard they are well behind the technological curve. Two main types of buried cable technologies exist : XLPE (cross-linked polyethylene ) and high pressure fluid filled (HPFF) cable. HPFF is an older, mostly legacy technology, whereas XLPE is the current state-of-the-art, preferred technology. The heat from XLPE cable is dissipated directly into the ground, with no other cooling mechanism required. Georgia-based Southwire has had over 750 miles of their XLPE underground cable installed in the United States [source [ww.southwire.com](http://www.southwire.com)]. Cost of underground high-voltage cables has come down so significantly that the state of Connecticut in 2004 passed a law requiring all new high-voltage transmission lines to be buried. In addition, Germany and Austria have laws forbidding any overhead high-voltage power lines within 200m of a residential area, and essentially nowhere in Europe would overhead high-voltage transmission lines be allowed in a scenic area. In such instances the cables are buried. As for costs, at the voltage levels relevant to this project, EuropaCable, a consortium of the largest XLPE cable manufacturers in Europe, reports average installation costs in Europe currently are in the \$2-4M / mile range [see [www.europacable.com](http://www.europacable.com), and <http://www.stirlingbeforepylons.org/docs/EuropacablePaperStirlingMitigation.pdf>].

Closer to home, the Public Service Company of Colorado - Xcel (PSCo) currently has over 50 miles of underground high-voltage transmission lines installed in Colorado (XLPE & HPFF). The Sandown-Leetdale project in Denver, which PSCo completed last year, provides an excellent cost comparable for the Estes-Flatiron rebuild project. This project involved a mile of new overhead transmission lines along with 5 miles of buried Southwire XLPE cable. The electrical specifications for the project are identical with those for the Estes-Flatiron rebuild (115kV double circuit AC overhead lines, with a 230kV single circuit AC buried component). In addition, the cables were buried beneath the road, which is likely how it would need to be done across the causeway through Lake Estes. The total cost for the project was \$16.6M, with the portion attributable to the undergrounding of the power lines coming to a bit under \$3M / mile [source: <http://www.eei.org/meetings/Meeting%20Documents/2011-10-08-TDMConf-2-Cozad,%20Brad.pdf>]. It should be noted that copper prices were significantly higher when this project was done than they are today.

For cost comparison, WAPA projects \$1M / mile overhead line installation costs for this project. The \$2M buried vs. overhead cost differential narrows when one takes into account ROW acquisition costs (30' width is sufficient for buried, whereas overhead requires 110'), lifetime power losses (buried cable has 50% of the power loss of overhead lines), and lifetime maintenance expenses (buried cables are substantially cheaper than overhead since there are no costs for continual clearing of nearby vegetation or weather induced repairs). As a bonus, there is an issue with inadequate right-of-way for an overhead line around a Bureau of Reclamation accessory building at the east end of Lake Estes, which would be successfully resolved by burying. Total expected additional cost of burying 1 mile of cable east of Lake Estes (\$1.5M) and expanding the project to include burying the 1 mile of towers across the lake (\$2.5M), can reasonably be expected to be on the order of \$4M.

To save money, this project could be fast tracked with a Categorical Exclusion since it utilizes the utility corridor.

Note that the expected additional cost is less than the amount that WAPA is wasting attempting to bypass the utility corridor (\$19M - \$14M = \$5M). In addition, one would have to be quite naïve to believe that the \$19M figure would not balloon further if WAPA persists in pursuing their plan, as the project would likely then become tied up in court for quite some time, since WAPA clearly is violating multiple federal regulations with their proposal.

Finally, if one considers the adverse economic impact to the Estes Valley over the next 100 years as a result of WAPA's proposal, as well as the loss in property value to the 160 residents of Meadowdale Hills, not to mention the intangible loss of majestic viewscape, it seems foolish even to be having a debate about whether or not these lines should be buried.

As new residents of Estes Park, we are thrilled to be part of this amazingly beautiful environment. At the same time, we find the discussion regarding the construction of the new power lines very interesting, and a bit puzzling. It is apparent there is a need for additional lines or at least the conveyance of power across the valley. What we don't understand is the reluctance to actually consider placing the lines underground. Even though the initial cost of burying the lines may be greater than the above ground towers, the long term maintenance, especially given the extreme wind and snow, would make burying the lines a cost effective option. Likewise, given that buried cable has been very effective in other areas of the country for many years, this option seems most reasonable.

Are we worried about protecting jobs required for maintenance of the above ground option, or the beauty of the valley? Whatever the case, there is no question that since this effort would constitute a major Federal Action, a very refined environmental impact statement must be developed, with various options considered. This would not only require an indepth analysis of the cost of several options, but would also require them to be proposed with a specific recommendation made. Then the public would have the opportunity to agree, challenge, or provide further options for consideration. What is critical is that all options be carefully analyzed, thoroughly vetted by the community, and implemented with minimal environmental disturbance of the Estes Valley.

What is the cost of purchase for the Right-of-Way? \* Your initial proposal [Route along US36; through Meadowdale Hills Subdivision; then Eastbound] \* Alternate proposal by Estes Valley interests [Route that proceeds Eastbound along a utility corridor; this does not run through the subdivision] Thank you.

It is indeed unfortunate that the citizens of Estes Park knew nothing of the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project in Larimer County, Colorado until after the Estes Park Board of Trustees were provided with a letter dated November 15, 2011 from Gene Iley, Jr., Environmental Manager, United States Department of Energy. This letter states, "Following the requirements in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Western will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) on its proposal, which includes opportunities for you to provide comments." RMR Facility Engineering and Construction indicated in the Estes-Lyons 115-kV Double Circuit Transmission Line Rebuild, Attachment B Schedule that the start of Environmental & Lands was Q4 FY10 with completion Q4 FY11. Citizens of Estes Park have been told you are currently preparing the environmental assessment. The public comment deadline was extended until January 31, 2012, because the holidays drew attention away from the issue, and there was not enough time for residents to study the project. It appears you have been working on the environmental assessment for a year. The conclusion I have drawn is that you do not plan to consider the opinions of the residents of the Estes Park community, and it appears the letter came to our town as a formality to put on the record that we were given the opportunity to provide comments.

This past month I have taken time to accumulate information regarding the Project as well as information on electrical transmission lines. I realize the project involves entities other than the Town of Estes Park and the lines will cross county as well as town lines. Since this is a Federal project, and I am a United States citizen, my input for the entire project is valid. In the Facility Development Document, Estes-Lyons 115-kV Double Circuit Transmission Line Rebuild, January 17, 2011, Western Area Power Administration, Rocky Mountain Region on page 3, I quote: "The new alignment segment improves the aesthetics from Colorado Highway 36 into Estes Park." Estes Park is one of the top tourist towns in the U.S. Highway 36 is one of the main entrances into our town. The view coming off Pole Hill is spectacular. It is breathtaking. Since we are talking about aesthetics, putting transmission lines in this location will ruin the view from Pole Hill where you can see the town including Lake Estes. You see the mountains of Lumpy Ridge in the distance. You see the famous Stanley Hotel. There are ordinances in our Estes Valley Development Code which do not permit obstruction of views, and we are particularly protective of our ridge lines.

Our economy is tourism. We have put electrical lines on Prospect Mountain underground to protect the view, and we hope to put more lines underground.

I do not live in the Meadowdale area where homeowners will be negatively affected if electrical transmission lines are placed where they live. I do understand that their homes will lose value, and it is possible that their health might be compromised. You cannot say for certain that they will not have health issues due to transmission lines. The lines will be unsightly.

Estes Park often experiences strong winds. Large old trees were downed recently and fences blew over, Because of our problems with pine bark beetle killing so many trees, we are in constant danger of fire. I was at the Estes Valley Public Library recently looking for information unrelated to this project in an old copy of the Estes Park Trail. I quite by accident came across a December 12, 1941 article which was written just after Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese. That was seventy years ago and probably when our existing electrical transmission lines were installed. It's interesting to note that some of the same concerns about protection of our electrical system exist today. I quote from that article: "Sabotage not unlikely here Sheriff states" "Frank Purvis, project superintendent at the diversion tunnel of the Colorado Big Thompson project, suggested investigation of all employees, and Sheriff Schaffer offered full cooperation, including finger-printing equipment. C.H. Howell, representing the Reclamation Bureau, stated that the most vulnerable points of the entire project are the transmission lines, and sub-stations." It is necessary to keep our community and the Front Range communities safe and supplied with adequate electrical power (enough just to meet our community's future needs). I believe you can accomplish that, and that you can find a way that will not harm our economy, our safety, our health, or our quality of life. I researched the problem. I know that since 1975 gas insulated underground transmission lines have been in place that have not required any maintenance (Siemens) for 35 years and recent checks showed they are in good condition still. Perhaps General Electric or an American company has a system which will work as well. I ask that you check out the possibility of having transmission lines put in trenches at least in areas where views will be obstructed and neighborhoods will be affected. I understand that vegetation (grass ?) can be grown on the ground above the trenches. These lines can be easily connected to above ground poles as well. The systems are very flexible. I believe it would be worth the expense long term to put the lines underground in a portion of the project. Also I do not understand why the existing corridor will not be used. It seems to me it would be less expensive.

Thousands of people live in the Estes Park area and millions of people visit the Estes Park area each year for largely the same reason: the incomparable natural beauty of our environment. Why not take the Estes-Flatiron transmission line rebuild project as an opportunity to enhance this natural beauty rather than contribute to the degradation of the beauty that surrounds us? The proposed plan would significantly mar the views along US Highway 36, the main entrance corridor for visitors to the area. In the long run, the negative first impression presented by the transmission lines will have a negative impact on the tourist economy of Estes Park. The industrial character of the new poles will also significantly reduce property values in areas near the transmission lines.

In addition, Forest Road 122 is a high-use entrance to the backcountry of Roosevelt National Forest. The backcountry experience of visitors here will be significantly degraded by transmission lines along this road.

I believe that the best (but not the cheapest) solution is to bury the lines in highly visible areas, including the current lines along Lake Estes and across the Highway 36 causeway,

and then follow the shortest route east along the ALREADY DESIGNATED UTILITY CORRIDOR through the National Forest. There are values higher than money.

As a constituent I oppose the privatization of public land in the State (sic) of Colorado and I demand that WAPA listen to, and adhere to the protections as set forth in federal laws to protect our public lands.

The proposed Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project has raised the concern of many citizens of the Estes Park area. I understand and support the need to update our nation's infrastructure. I also believe that the scenic beauty of the Estes Valley is a national treasure that needs to be preserved to the greatest extent possible, for present and future generations of Coloradans.

The decisions that are made today will have a lasting impact. I am concerned about any major industrial project that could have an adverse effect on the environment near and around the Estes Valley. The proposed 10-story steel towers are taller than any structure in the Estes Valley. And their placement along the US-36 scenic entry into the Estes Valley will be a major eyesore to the millions of visitors entering Estes Park each year.

Furthermore, the proposed routing is contradictory to WAPA's objectives of avoiding populated areas, as the proposed route traverses directly through an established hillside community. I also understand that the US Forest Service has been asked to review the Elk Ridge Forest Management Plan to realign the designated utility corridor to align with the proposed route, despite the fact that the alternative route already lies within the established utility corridor. It would seem the US Forest Service would prefer to maintain the pristine nature of one of their most popular back-country trailheads in the Roosevelt National Forest.

Mr. Snowden, I urge WAPA to reconsider the proposed route. It does more damage to the scenic qualities of Estes Park than any other alternative, it traverses more residential areas, and it creates an unnecessary imposition on the US Forest Service. Instead, I hope that this can be an opportunity to explore solutions that will restore the majestic scenery of the Estes Valley and to reclaim this national treasure for today and generations to come. I would personally like to commit the assistance of my office in collaboration towards this goal. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. Snowden, we have a rare opportunity to do something well for Estes Park, the National Forest Service and private homeowners with this upgrade, if done well. If Estes Park can get three million for a 250 car concrete parking structure adjacent to the Visitors Center, there should be a financial solution to overcoming the visual blight of power lines and protect Estes Park's valuable beauty for the future. Thank you for working to make this happen.

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I write you out of concern for the Estes Park Valley. I have taken my family to Estes Park for 1 to 3 weeks per year each June for a number of years now, and my wife and I plan on relocating there in the next 10 years. The EP Valley's economy relies on its scenic beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities, and the proposed routing of the new corridor directly impacts at least two of those that I commonly use, and I am but one of the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Valley each year.

Let me be clear, I do not object to improvements to the nation's power infrastructure. I am an applied economist at Ohio State University, and currently conduct smart-grid research. However, all infrastructure projects must be evaluated on a cost-benefit basis. There is already a utility corridor that leads to EP Valley that is adequate for the upgraded power transmission lines. Instead of upgrading an existing corridor, this plan is to create an additional, 100'+ wide clear cut corridor within clear view of a primary highway used to travel to EP Valley? I cannot fathom any reasonable cost-benefit study that would find such an approach to be first best. Instead, it is a waste of money and a degradation of a world-class mountain destination.

Therefore, I respectfully plead that a full investigation be conducted to explain how such a decision can be made, with such possibly large negative consequences for the community, at a greater cost, and with no benefits.

On behalf of our family members who jointly own the Crocker Ranch in Estes Park, Colorado, we respectfully submit these comments on the November 15, 2011 Scoping Notice for the Western Area Power Administration's ("WAPA") proposal to Reroute and Renovate Three Estes-Flatiron Transmission Lines to Double Circuit 115-kv (the "Project"). We appreciate that WAPA and the U.S. Forest Service ("Forest Service") are soliciting public input at this early stage, in advance of completion of the Environmental Assessment ("EA") for the Project. This scoping notice carries out WAPA's policy to "apply the NEPA review process early in the planning stages ...." 10 C.F.R. § 1021.101. Please add these comments to the administrative record and add us to the mailing list for the EA. The Interest of the Family Owners of the Crocker Ranch: The Crocker Ranch is a unique property at the base of Mount Olympus in the Estes Valley of Colorado. The Ranch is on the edge of town and is visible from various points within town and as visitors enter town from the east on Highway 36. The Crocker Ranch is part of the iconic viewshed of Estes Park, and Mount Olympus and the meadows at its base are critical to the scenic quality of the valley. Our family has owned the Crocker Ranch for over 100 years. We have been caring stewards of the valley throughout our ownership of the Ranch, and plan to continue this tradition in the future. In addition to helping maintain iconic viewsheds, supporting wildlife, and helping to maintain the character of the valley, many people do not know that the Crocker Ranch also supports physical infrastructure that thousands of people depend upon who live off the ranch. The Ranch houses facilities for the Colorado Big Thompson Water Project, which supplies water to the residents of the Front Range. The Ranch also is crossed by power lines that provide electricity to the Estes Valley.

WAPA operates an electric transmission line that crosses the northern part of the Ranch east to west along the base of Mount Olympus (the "Northern Route"). The line traverses the steep, boulder strewn flank of Mount Olympus, crosses an open area of the Ranch, and then exits the eastern edge of the Ranch where it must traverse a valley and ascend a steep ridge before continuing on to Flatiron. WAPA holds easements of various widths for the Northern Route, all of which are significantly narrower than the 110 foot right-of-way WAPA needs for the upgraded lines. The existing line runs visibly along the base of Mount Olympus and is easily visible from many points along Highway 36 and within the Town of Estes Park.

Our families do not wish to modify WAPA's Northern Route easements to increase their width. We would strongly prefer that WAPA remove its power lines from the Ranch altogether. But we also recognize WAPA's need to maintain a safe and reliable transmission system. We support WAPA's proposed action to construct a line along the southern portion of the Ranch (the "Southern Route"). The Southern Route tracks an existing power line. It would place the new lines in a draw, largely below and shielded from view from Highway 36 and much of town. The Southern Route is in an area accessible to WAPA's maintenance equipment. Although we would prefer no lines at all, we are confident that the facts will demonstrate to WAPA and the public that the proposed Southern Route is preferable to the Northern Route, and that the proposed Southern Route will be easier on the eyes for everyone than the Northern Route.

Comments 1: The Allegations That the Proposed Action Was Designed to Benefit the Crocker Ranch Are False. Members of the community, including certain residents of the Meadowdale Hills Subdivision, have made unfounded allegations that the proposed Southern Route was designed to benefit the Crocker Ranch. Those allegations are false. The Crocker Ranch bears the burden of power lines today and will bear them under the proposed action. In addition to the power line currently sited on the Northern Route, the Southern Route corridor on the Crocker Ranch contains an existing power line. This line crosses the Crocker Ranch to supply power to the homes of the same residents of Meadowdale Hills who attack the Ranch. The Project will place a new line on the Crocker Ranch with a wider right-of-way than currently exists. Under any alternative currently proposed, the Crocker Ranch will continue to bear the burden of power lines, including the lines necessary to supply power to the Meadowdale critics. Allegations that the Crocker Ranch stands to receive a sweetheart deal are simply wrong.

Homeowners in the Meadowdale subdivision purchased their homes subject to an existing easement for power lines. That easement was priced into the value of the homes when they were purchased. Like the homeowners in Meadowdale, who want no power lines nearby, we would prefer not to have power lines at all on the Crocker Ranch. But the presence of power lines is the cost of the modern world we live in, and we are prepared to continue to bear that burden. WAPA should ask Meadowdale to come to a similar recognition, and should reject the misleading information being disseminated by the Project's opponents. WAPA should make its decision on the facts of the Project, not based on political pressure from special interests.

**II. WAPA Should Carefully Consider and Model Both the Visual Impacts and the Visual Benefits of the Project. WAPA should conduct viewshed modeling from multiple viewpoints.** Misleading information regarding the visual impact of the Project is rampant. For example, the website responsiblelines.org currently displays an image of a power pole superimposed directly behind the iconic "Estes Park" welcome sign at the turnout on Highway 36. Under no proposal currently under consideration by WAPA would such a result occur because the topography prevents the line from being visible at that location. We urge WAPA to correct these misconceptions by producing accurate visual representations of the Project and its alternatives from multiple locations.

WAPA should have a landscape architect model viewshed impacts using ArcGIS or similar technology. WAPA should produce visual representations of the Project from multiple Key Observation Points ("KOPs"), including the Highway 36 turnout to the east of town, and from various points within town looking east. This would allow the public to understand the true impacts of the Project. WAPA cannot ignore the visual benefits of the Project. WAPA's viewshed model should model the net visual effect of the Project, not just the negative impacts. The Project will remove multiple lines that tarnish the landscape today. The Northern Route lines on the Crocker Ranch are very visible along Highway 36, including at the turnout. From key points in town, such as the Safeway parking lot, the iconic view to the east includes the Northern Route power lines. The Project will improve these views. The proposed action places the lines in a draw that is approximately 200 vertical feet below Highway 36 at the site of the turnout. The lines will be screened by trees along much of Highway 36. WAPA should model the net benefits of removing existing lines, as well as the net impacts of any new lines. Once WAPA models the net visual effect of the Project, we are confident that WAPA and the public will conclude that the Project will at the worst be a visual wash, and may produce a net visual benefit.

In addition to modeling the visual benefits of removing the Northern Route lines, WAPA should model the visual damage that would be caused by replacing them if the Northern Route option is constructed.

WAPA should better describe Project details and mitigation. WAPA should disclose specific details about the proposal and potential mitigation because misinformation about the Project is extensive. For instance, a common misconception is that the height of poles will "double" under the proposed action. But our understanding, based on information WAPA has provided at public meetings, is that the poles will increase from 70 to 105 feet (an increase of 35). Similarly, we understand that WAPA can install "rust" colored power poles rather than steel colored poles, which will mitigate visual impacts. WAPA should describe and model these and other details carefully (including opportunities for vegetative screening, whether different size poles are possible at certain locations etc.) because these details can greatly affect the visual impact of the Project.

III. The Purpose and Need Statement for the Forest Service and WAPA Should Identify Access and Cost-Effectiveness as Objectives. The EA must include a purpose and need statement that "briefly specifies] the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing the alternatives including the proposed action." 40 C.F.R. § 1502.13. The purpose and need statement is critical because only alternatives that substantially meet the purpose and need must be evaluated in the EA. See, e.g., Citizens' Com. To Save our Canyons v. U.S. Forest Serv., 297 F.3d 1012, 1031 (10th Cir, 2002). We urge WAPA and the Forest Service to adopt purpose and need statements that identify the critical importance of providing for adequate access to the lines for maintenance and emergency repairs. We also urge WAPA to adopt a purpose and need statement that recognizes the need for the Project to be cost effective.

Access. WAPA and the Forest Service identified tentative purpose and need statements in public meetings in November 2011. WAPA's statement included WAPA's need to ensure its facilities are "accessible for maintenance and emergencies." See November 29, 2011 Open House Briefing Materials. But the Forest Service's purpose and need statement was silent regarding the need for access to the lines. Given the critical importance of ensuring adequate access to facilities and infrastructure, we commend WAPA for including this requirement in its tentative purpose and need statement. But this should be a Forest Service purpose and need as well. The damage done by pine beetles in Colorado has increased the always-present risk of falling trees. Adequate access to infrastructure within the National Forest System for routine maintenance and emergency repairs is critical. Both WAPA and the Forest Service should specifically identify access to Project infrastructure as a key component of the purpose and need for the Project.

Cost Effectiveness. WAPA's November 2011 tentative purpose and need statement identified the need to ensure that the Project is "cost effective for its customers." November 29, 2011 Open House Briefing Materials. Although we do not believe that cost should be the only, or even the primary, consideration for the Project, we support WAPA's consideration of cost as a central component of the purpose and need for the project. Although it is a federal power marketing administration within the U.S. Department of Energy, WAPA recovers its costs from the cities, towns, and rural electric cooperatives it sells power to. Under Section 9(c) of the Reclamation Project Act of 1939, WAPA *must* recover out of its power rates an amount "at least sufficient" to cover any operation, maintenance, and construction costs. See 43 U.S.C. § 485h(c). This means that ratepayers will ultimately bear the burden of both the construction costs of the Project, and the long-term maintenance costs that ultimately result. Reducing the cost burden for electric ratepayers is a critical component of the purpose and need for the Project. WAPA should expand upon the objectives of access and cost-effectiveness in the EA.

A. The Northern Route Does Not Meet the Project's Access Objective. The Southern Route will achieve WAPA and the Forest Service's purpose and need to ensure adequate access. The Northern Route will not. Parts of the western section of the Northern Route traverse the base of Mount Olympus, in a steep boulder field that is susceptible to landslides and has no current access. Even if feasible, constructing new access to the Northern Route would exponentially increase visual impacts and would require engineered roads and grading. The eastern third of the Northern Route on the Crocker Ranch crosses a steep valley and the line must then ascend a steep ridge. No access exists, and constructing such access would be infeasible and visually destructive. The Southern Route on the Crocker Ranch follows an existing power line and existing two-track road. The road could be upgraded with minimal effort and little increase in visual impact. Unlike the Northern Route, there are no significant topographic features that preclude access. As the Southern Route leaves private lands and enters the National Forest System at Pole Hill Road, the Southern Route tracks an existing road. This allows for easy access to Project infrastructure with minimal upgrades. There is no corresponding existing access on the Northern Route and none can be constructed easily. Put simply, the Southern Route will achieve WAPA and the Forest Service's purpose and need for maintenance and emergency access. The Northern Route will not and is not feasible.

B. The Northern Route Does Not Meet the Project's Cost-Effectiveness Objective. The Northern Route will not achieve WAPA's purpose and need to ensure the Project is cost-effective. The Northern Route would entail both higher construction costs and higher long-term maintenance costs than the Southern Route. Constructing the Northern Route would require significant engineering to locate facilities and access roads along the steep base of Mount Olympus and along the steep valleys and ridges on the eastern third of the Crocker Ranch. The remote nature of much of the Northern Route on the Crocker Ranch, and the inherent difficulties with accessing much of the route, would certainly increase the long-term cost of maintaining the lines. The Southern Route, being located in a draw easily accessible from Highway 36, will provide for cheaper construction costs and lower long-term maintenance costs than the Northern Route. The Southern Route will achieve WAPA's cost-effectiveness purpose and need while the Northern Route will not.

**IV. The Project Opponents' Arguments Regarding Designated Utility Corridors are a Red Herring.** Some critics of the Project have argued that the upgraded line should follow the Northern Route on the Crocker Ranch because it is in a "Utility Corridor" designated by the Forest Service. See [responsiblelines.org](http://responsiblelines.org). The opponents point to a map from the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (the "Forest Plan") to support this proposition. Id. This argument is meritless and misleading and WAPA and the Forest Service should reject it. First, it is axiomatic that the Forest Service cannot designate "utility corridors" or other land uses for private lands. See, e.g., Forest Plan at i (stating that the Forest Plan "provides guidance for all resource management activities on the Forest"). The claim that portions of the private Crocker Ranch are in a Forest Service utility corridor is simply wrong. Second, the Project's opponents argue that the Northern Route on the Crocker Ranch is preferable because it follows an existing power line. WAPA should explain that the Southern Route similarly tracks an existing power line on the Crocker Ranch: the line on the Crocker Ranch that supplies power to the Meadowdale Subdivision. If the Northern Route on the Crocker Ranch is in a "Utility Corridor" then so is the Southern Route on the Crocker Ranch.

We commend WAPA and the Forest Service for their efforts involving the public. We are hopeful that the careful analysis in the EA will demonstrate what we know to be true: the proposed action has far less impact than the alternative Northern Route. We hope these comments are helpful. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

WAPA's proposal would result in more than 1.5 miles of transmission line on our ranch with drastic environmental and economic impact. I do not understand why the situation on our ranch was not discussed with us prior to crafting this proposal. Our ranch will have more transmission line on it (1.5 miles) than any other private landowner's property. Our ranch is one of only two that are going to be impacted by a new segment of transmission line. Apparently other landowners were extended the courtesy of input during the planning stage, but we were not. Why not?

However, I do appreciate the opportunity to express ali' concerns even if it is "after the fact" of your submitting your proposal. These are our concerns and comments: 1) There is no need to replace the transmission line on our property because it was completely rebuilt less than four years ago. The brand new power poles have tags dated 2008. Based on the life of the old line, these have a remaining useful life of something like 60 years. Removing the existing line and replacing it will unnecessarily repeat the environmental impact that was just suffered, though this time the impact will be much greater due to the wider right-of-way and bigger footprint of the concrete pads for the new poles. To abandon or replace this new line would be a horrible example of exactly the kind of waste that generates adverse publicity, with good reason. Just how many miles of "like new" rebuilt line are proposed to be removed? Why was there such poor planning as to rebuild miles of transmission line, to only a year or two later come up with a new plan to tear it all out? How much money was spent on the rebuild, that is now a total waste'?

2) The massive steel power poles will have a much greater adverse environmental impact than the use of wood poles. Your agency's "Environmental Assessment Determination" states "Western anticipates the proposal will decrease long-term impacts on wildlife habitat, viewscape , and fire hazard." How can a massive 105 foot tall steel structure have less impact on viewscape than a 65 foot wooden pole that is compatible with a forest setting rather than a jarring contrast to it.

3) The proposed "new segment" is unnecessary and will dramatically increase the environmental impact on a collection basin of the North Fork of the Little Thompson River. The proposal is to replace a straight and direct 0.75 mile portion of the existing line (poles 9-4 to 10-3) near the Pole Hill Power Plant with 1.4 miles circling the collection basin of a stream that flows into the North Fork of the Little Thompson River. a) Continuing to use the shorter current 0.75 mile of transmission line instead of replacing it with a nearly twice as long 1.4 mile loop will be less expensive and will have less environmental impact.

. b)The existing 0.75 mile route does not impact any riparian areas, while the proposed 1.4 mile route makes a loop around the collection basin of an intermittent stream that flows into the North Fork of the Little Thompson River, with the unavoidable impact that construction and maintenance of that line will bring. (This stream is visible on the map of the rebuild that you have provided.) There are more likely to be scarce, threatened or endangered species of wildlife and plants in this riparian area than along the current route. The North Fork of the Little Thompson is believed to be habitat for the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse. Impact on a riparian area is much more serious than a non-riparian location, because erosion, contaminants and runoff will flow many miles along the existing river.

4) The economic impact of the "new segment" will be devastating to us and to our neighbor. Several years ago we placed our ranch under a conservation easement to preserve its natural character. However, we realized that at some point a ranch of 3,900 acres is likely to require a headquarters compound, so we reserved an area that would not be subject to the conservation easement so that it would serve as a site for a headquarters compound. It is precisely through the center of that reserved acreage that the new segment is proposed, rendering it unsuitable for a headquarters compound. I am 70 years old and have placed the ranch on the market so that I can comfortably retire from the proceeds of the sale. Our Realtor advises us that the loss of the only site suitable for a headquarters compound decreases the value of the entire ranch by approximately \$1,000 an acre, or a total of about \$3.9 million dollars because the optimal price comes from buyers who expect world class amenities that are not possible on the part of the ranch that is protected by the conservation easement. That reduction in value means the money we had hoped to have left over for educating our grandchildren and for a comfortable retirement will now disappear. Think for a moment how you would feel if your retirement funds were taken from you. It is not simply the right of way that is required for this half mile of new segment that is impacted by the transmission line, but the value of the entire ranch. Similarly, our neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Gary Havener who have a beautifully secluded wilderness home will now find themselves impacted by massive steel power poles that create an adverse viewscape, the hum of powerlines, and the potential health hazards they pose.

We are also concerned about the superficial nature and inaccuracies of the "Environmental Assessment Determination" and the "facts" memorandum: 1) The Environmental Assessment Determination memorandum states many conclusions without offering evidence supporting those conclusions: a) It assumes system capacity needs to increase, without offering any evidence and without addressing the emphasis communities now place on limiting energy use and on using alternate sources of energy such as wind or solar. It also fails to consider alternate methods of increasing the electrical supply other than using these transmission lines.b) It states as a reason for the proposal the need to bring the current facility to modern safety codes, without rebutting the reasonable assumption that the current facility can be brought up to modern safety codes without changing its location and without replacing wood poles with steel towers.

c) It states "Western anticipates the proposal will decrease long-term impacts on Wildlife, habitat, viewscales and fire hazard." Again, this statement is not backed up by evidence and does not address such facts as the relocation of portions of the transmission line from areas that do not impact riparian areas to locations that do,

(does not address) the obvious fact that bigger and taller steel poles are going to have more, not less, impact on viewscales.

There is no reference to any search for scarce, threatened, or endangered species of plants or animals that might be impacted. The "easier access" that is listed as a virtue, instead can lead to more vehicular traffic with adverse impact on plants and animals.

2)The "facts" document does not adequately describe the entire situation: a) It does not disclose that several miles of the transmission line were just rebuilt with new poles, nor the amount of money that was spent doing this, which now becomes a total waste when those reconstructed area are torn down.

b) The "facts" document is false when it states that "vehicle access is required along the entire 32 miles of right of way for maintenance and wood pole replacement and that "vehicle access is required to remove the old transmission lines and to build new lines". The fact that the current poles exist is irrefutable evidence that the current location is suitable for removal and construction of power lines, so even such areas as the pole 9-4 to 10-3 section immediately West of the Pole Hill Power Plant do not need to be relocated to longer and more convoluted and more environmentally impactful routes simply because of the desire for ease of access by vehicle.

c) No mention is made of the impact on land owners and the expense to the public inherent in compensating owners for building on private land.

Conclusion. Construction of the proposed new transmission line would be a poster child for the worst kind of wasteful lack of planning. Not only will it mean total loss of the funds that were just spent rebuilding the existing Transmission line across our ranch, but the proposed location of the loop around the collection basin for a tributary of the North Fork of the Little Thompson River maximizes environmental impact which can be avoided by choosing a location away from those headwaters. Finally, a location that impacts only the current transmission line route will cause far less environmental impact and economic loss and will require far less landowner compensation than the proposed location which dramatically lessens the value of a 3,900 acre ranch.

Please complete the rebuilding of the existing transmission lines rather than replacing them and please do not build the proposed new segment that would devastate the value of our ranch and ruin our retirement.

The Larimer County Board of County Commissioners would like to offer the following comments for your consideration in the scope of the Environmental Assessment for the proposed Transmission Line rebuild. In addition to the list of issues and the list of environmental factors to be considered in the evaluation noted in the scoping announcement we would suggest the following additional or amplified issues be included in your analysis. We suggest that the analysis include all reasonable alternatives including potential routes that might require new ROW.

The analysis must include an evaluation of the visual impacts of the new facilities proposed for each of the alternatives. Included in this analysis should be an examination of the potential for improvements to the current scenic qualities of the facilities in the Estes Valley.

The potential use of underground facilities should be considered in these analyses

The analysis of the use of existing easement and the need for new acquisition must include a complete analysis of the characteristics of towel' failure and fall pattern. This would be in part to insure that there are not negative financial impacts to the property owners where an existing casement exists and no new ROW is proposed.

The analysis must include the economic and social impacts of these new towers and evaluate the alternatives with this in mind. Larimer County's general policy with respect to electrical transmission towers is one of prudent avoidance. We would suggest the analysis should include such a prudent avoidance analysis.

What are the anticipated impacts to the local and county roads as well as private property from the construction of these facilities and how will the impacts be mitigated? Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed scoping of the Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild. Larimer County looks forward to actively participating in the process for this facility.

The Association for Responsible Development was founded in 1985 as a private group of citizens "dedicated to preserving the unique mountain character and natural beauty of the Estes Valley, by fostering appropriate and responsible development." The members of ARD have become aware of the W AP A proposal to up-grade power transmission lines from Estes Park as part of the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild. While ARD supports efforts to improve and modernize power transmission facilities in the Estes Valley, the proposed upgrade as outlined by WAPA representatives gives us cause for concern.

The proposed upgrade of transmission lines includes installation of several 100- foot metal utility poles along an easement that parallels U.S. Highway 36. This highway is one of two major routes by which traffic enters Estes Park .. Highway 36 travels through the Estes Valley, peaking at a location that over-looks Lake Estes and the Town of Estes Park. As you know, the Town relies heavily on tourism for its livelihood and is considered "The Gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park." While we support the upgrading of our electrical infrastructure, we ate concerned that the proposed taller transmission towers and lines may well constitute a major negative impression for those entering Town. The existing metal towers adjacent to Highway 36 along Lake Estes have presented a visual eyesore for many years. They impart an industrial image to the eastern entrance of Town. The new towers as we understand it are to be significantly taller after the upgrade and this change could constitute further liability to the scenic view coming into Town.

Consistent with Resolution No. 18-11 adopted by the Estes Park Board of Trustees in December of2011. ARD strongly urges WAPA to consider an alternative plan for the transmission line upgrade. In our view, an approach that involves underground installation of the upgraded transmission lines is the preferred alternative.

We also strongly agree with the Mayor and Board of Trustees of Estes Park that removal of the existing transmission poles and installation of un del' ground power lines along the existing USFS Utility Corridor across the Estes Valley would be a major improvement in preserving the aesthetic values of the valley that support our economic dependency on tourism.

We feel that underground lines would also constitute a more secure power transmission system that would not be affected by the extremely high winds that are often present in the valley. Buried lines would also be less susceptible to damage by falling trees that are an increasing hazard during the epidemic of pine bark beetles that we are experiencing. As such they would also improve and protect the security and integrity of our power supply. In summary, ARD supports responsible construction and modernization of power transmission lines into Estes Park. Given the historic and scenic nature of the Highway 36 entrance into Estes Park, we feel that modernization of this system would best be accomplished through establishment of an underground transmission line system for that portion of the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild.

As residents on or near Mall Road and Joel Estes Dr., Estes Park, CO (Park Hill Subdivision), we strongly support the attached Department of Energy proposal, which would remove the existing three transmission lines from this area.

This would eliminate the potential health hazards with which we have contended since 1938 from electromagnetic fields (EMF's), as well as visual pollution and resulting reduced property values. Further, we are strongly opposed to the recommendation from a nearby property owners association that would double our existing three transmission lines to six lines by transferring their 3 lines to our area. We believe there are only approximately 8 homes in their area which view their existing 3 lines versus the approximately 20 homes along Mall Road and Joel Estes Drive with very close proximity to our 3 existing lines. Doubling our exposure to EMF's would conflict with the stated WAPA policy to "reduce the public exposure the EMF's, particularly when the siting of the facilities may occur in populated areas." (2 signers)

The transmission lines that deliver power from Estes Park to other Front Range communities must be upgraded- to meet future energy needs and to provide increased security of supply. I strongly support this work, but I have two major concerns about the specific proposal being considered by the Western Area Power Association: 1 Negative impact on our scenic views- both within the Estes Valley and on Highway 36 leading into Estes Park: We are a tourist-oriented community and derive most of our income from visitor-related revenues. Our magnificent, unimpeded views are one of the unique reasons people choose to come here.

WAPA's proposal, which involves much taller utility poles running along the highway and directly through some neighborhoods, will have a serious negative impact on our viewshed.

No one wants to drive through a utility corridor to get to a resort community.

2) Security of energy supply: WAPA's proposal replaces two parallel transmission lines with a single set of poles, designed to carry a much higher electrical load. This makes sense from a maintenance standpoint, but it eliminates redundancy, and would leave thousands of Front Range residents without power if anything should happen, anywhere along this line, to disrupt the flow of electricity. And disruptions could be caused by high winds, forest fires, falling trees, and (especially where poles are near the highway) by traffic accidents on icy roads.

There are viable alternatives that will prevent these problems. These include carefully locating towers, and using shorter towers in some locations, in order to make them less visible. Towers can be painted and camouflaged to blend in with their surroundings. They can be moved farther from the road to reduce the chance of accidental damage. And portions of the route can be placed underground.

WAPA has the ability to use 3D computer modeling to show the public what their current proposal would look like, and allow us to visualize the impact of each of the above alternatives. I join the Estes Park Board of Trustees, the Larimer County Commissioners, the Association for Responsible Development, and the residents of Pole Hill Road and Meadowdale Hills in calling for WAPA to develop alternatives to their current proposal and show us what they look like.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns regarding what appears to be a troubling waste of tax-payer and rate-payer funds by Western Area Power Administration (Western) Staff in the course of re-building the power line between Estes Park and Flatiron in Colorado.

I am writing today to express opposition to the proposed re-route of the Estes-Flatiron transmission Line. In the midst of a nationally tight economic climate and a growing need for efficient, renewable power, Western staff are wasting public funds by initiating a costly and time-consuming Environmental Assessment (EA) for a project otherwise categorically excluded from extensive NEPA documentation if sited within the Designated Utility Corridor. Under Title 36 CFR, the Estes-Flatiron Re-build Project, if sited within the utility corridor, would only require a decision memo and case file. "(e) Categories of actions for which (only) a project or case file and decision memo are required...Additional construction or reconstruction of existing...utility lines in a designated corridor...Examples include...(ii) Reconstructing a power line by replacing poles and wires. (CFR 2011 title 36 v2 pt220(e))"

Western staff have failed to fully take into account prior analyses of two comprehensive Environmental Impact Studies prepared by the USFS and the subsequent designation of the utility corridor along the shortest, most practical route between Estes Park and Flatiron. In reviewing the annual budget allocations for Western from 2010 to the present, it has become clear that Western staff have transformed a straight-forward, categorically excluded \$14 million Estes-Flatiron re-build into a costly, unnecessary, and publicly detrimental \$19 million re-route, one which apparently benefits and accommodates only a single, private land-owner with obvious political clout, the Pew Crocker Ranch.

As rate-payers, we watch our our electric bills increase through tacked-on fees 5% year-over-year in an exclusive tax to pay the regional, Platte River Power Authority. At the same time, we watch Western pursue an unnecessary re-route which is both 36% more costly to the public and inestimably more devastating to the foreground of the Estes Valley landscape. The Estes to Flatiron re-build is one project where you have the power and the duty to save money, to streamline this project, and to preserve the Estes Valley landscape for the good of the general public.

In your own testimony before the Congress on March 15, 2011 regarding Spending Priorities and Missions of Western Area Power Administration, you cited a goal of delivering, "hydropower allocations in a timely, reliable, and cost-effective manner." You went on to cite a number of factors that drive your costs up, many of which are out of your control. "Increased environmental regulatory compliance costs" was number one on your list of factors which you say, "have had the net effect of increasing expenses, while reducing the quantity and reliability of the hydropower product." If this is truly the case, then I request you instruct your staff to use the route they have, withdraw this unnecessary and costly EA, and streamline this project by way of a Categorical Exclusion and by way of the existing, direct, and less costly USFS Designated Utility Corridor. I appreciate your prompt attention to these matters, and look forward to hearing that you are protecting the public's interest.

I write today to request that Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) withdraw this EA and re-build the transmission line between Estes Park and Flatiron, Colorado by way of the USFS Designated Utility Corridor.

I oppose what promises to be a damaging re-route of the Estes-Flatiron Line out of Estes Park.

I fully support rebuilding the power line along the existing clear-cuts and then following the Designated Utility Corridor through National Forest. The fact that WAPA has eliminated this route as an option long before notifying the public, indicates that decisions have been made prior to any genuine public notice or involvement. Five minutes looking at the map will reveal without a doubt that this re-route doesn't benefit anyone except the private land-owner on the east end of town. By leaving out the Utility Corridor from this EA, WAPA has set the whole project up for a single outcome.

On December 19th, less than three weeks after the very first official public scoping meeting, the Estes Park Town Administrator quietly released a memo stating that Mayor Pinkham and the Town Trustees knew about this project more than a year and a half ago, since May of 2010. In a public meeting two days later, Mayor Pinkham was asked why the public was not informed when he, the PRPA, and the Estes Park Trustees knew about this since May of 2010. He was asked what role he, Platte River Power Authority, or other public officials played in the decision to disregard streamlining this project within the Designated Utility Corridor through a Categorical Exclusion, and why decisions had been made to trigger the re-route and an unnecessary Environmental Assessment. In a room full of Estes Park residents with Larimer County Commissioner Tom Donnelley present, Mayor Pinkham gave no substantive answer and finally made a joke that he subscribed to a policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell". The increasingly undeniable fact that the public has been excluded until after project siting decisions have been made raises questions as to just who benefits from this project re-route and why.

Concerning the actual start of the project, we've been told by WAPA (also shown on their timeline chart) that there will be no construction until 2013, yet WAPA has already submitted an application to the USFS (April, 2011) which stated, "Construction will begin on the east end of the project in the Spring of 2012". The application also states that construction on Forest Service lands will begin in 2013. By purposefully omitting the 2012 start date on the east end of the project, WAPA has misled the public to think that the entire project is just in the beginning stages. How can WAPA start any portion of the project in Spring of 2012 when we're just supposed to be in the "beginning stages" of public scoping?

Furthermore, WAPA submitted an application with detailed maps for a re-route prepared in January of 2011, maps which outline a re-route which they had been working out with the Pew Crocker Ranch more than a year prior to informing or involving the public. These facts clearly indicate that the real scoping for this project started in early 2010, and continued for a year and a half behind closed doors. In short, WAPA has eliminated real options, hidden prior negotiations, excluded the public, and ultimately triggered an unnecessary and costly EA in an attempt to justify a pre-determined outcome which is disingenuous at best and potentially fraudulent.

All of these timing issues point to a NEPA process that appears to be nothing more than a rubber-stamp for a pre-determined outcome. I ask that WAPA withdraw this EA, pursue a Categorical Exclusion, and construct the Estes to Flatiron Rebuild along the proper route between Estes and Flatiron, using the existing clear-cuts due east from Olympus Dam, along the one and only Designated Utility Corridor.

I further request WAPA cease and desist any contracting, clear-cutting, excavating, or other related pre-decisional actions on either transmission line until this is resolved (see DOE/EIS-0442 and USDA 1950-1/2700/2720). This will be the best for the environment, for the local residents, and for the American tax-payer.

The proposal to rebuild and re-route the "Estes to Flatiron" transmission lines appears to be one of the more wasteful proposals recently put forth by the government to spend my money (I am a taxpayer) or that of my children (who will likely be paying off the federal debt used for this). Would private industry, with its capital constraints and need to demonstrate return to its investors, re-route an existing line with all the environmental studies, deforestation, and related costs? No. Private industry would re-use the existing corridor and get the rebuilding done as quickly and efficiently as possible. Further, considering the impact on the environment and scenery, private industry would not condone the current proposal because it would cost them too much to purchase the rights for the re-route.

Rather than abusing our taxpayer money because it is essentially a free good to you, make the right choice and conserve it. Give taxpayers a return on these funds by lowering the cost of service and permitting ratepayers to pay less in the long-term instead of paying a selective return to certain selected ranching interests. Give taxpayers a return on these funds by preserving the scenery and views that would be adversely impacted by this wasteful proposed expenditure. Let's see a return to common sense rather than visiting yet another "budget be damned because I have to spend it or lose it" disaster upon us taxpayers.

You may think that, because you deal with large numbers all day long, a million here and a million there won't make a difference, but when we have hundreds and thousands of bureaucrats and projects just like this pending across the country, dropping "small change" on pet projects has a multiplier effect that will only contribute further to the governmental slaying of the goose that lays the golden egg. Make the right choice and stand up for fiscal sanity.

Please use the existing, shorter utility corridor in Estes Park rather than a new, longer route. The existing power station is already an eyesore on the shores of what could be a beautiful lake.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request. I am writing to seek your leadership in preventing what promises to be a major waste of public funds. Please withdraw this costly and publicly detrimental Re-Route submitted by your employees for the Estes to Flatiron Transmission Infrastructure Program. As I understand it from looking over your DOE Fiscal Year 2012 budget request for the Western Area Power Administration, you identified a need to specifically rebuild the Estes-Flatiron Line. Unfortunately, what started out as a straight forward rebuild, has unnecessarily and literally taken a turn for the worse. The path forward is already mapped out, established, and set up to streamline through federal public lands.

Since the Bureau of Reclamation already blazed the trail for you in the 1930's, Western folks should have no problem identifying the obvious path out of Estes Park. Since the USFS already painstakingly studied this area to identify pre-existing heavy impact from co-located utilities, subsequently mapping out a single clear line for future projects, Western should have no problem siting this project without any further adieu along the utility corridor. That I am writing you this letter right now, that I am participating in this Environmental Assessment, points to the fact that either Western employees have not done their homework or there is some other force at work here. Either way, I request you interject some common sense and require them to follow their own rules.

Save the tax-payers money and withdraw this costly EA. In your own documents, you estimate a cost of somewhere between fifty to one-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollars for this environmental assessment cost alone. This probably doesn't account for the countless hours wasted by USFS staff in duplicating work already completed.

Then there's the cost of blazing new clear cuts where they do not currently exist. Let's not forget the future cost to our billion dollar tourism industry. These new clear cuts will devastate the public's experience when they crest the hill on US Highway 36 in anticipation of their first look at Rocky Mountain National park, only to be met with 105' steel towers, power lines, and scars to the land instead.

There seems to be a major disconnect between federal policies to cut costs and the reality of local execution. In his own testimony before the Congress Tim Meeks said it is Western's goal to establish "hydropower allocations in a timely, reliable, and cost-effective manner." He, along with many others before Congress, testified that "Increased environmental regulatory compliance costs" was a major factor contributing to a "net effect of increasing expenses, while reducing the quantity and reliability of the hydropower product." Here in Estes Park, we sit at the headwaters of several large rivers and at the outlet of the Colorado Big Thompson Project's Alva B. Adams Tunnel where renewable hydro-power is generated, yet the Platte River Power Authority keeps couching more hidden taxes into our bills. Our Estes Park utility bill due in January 2012 states, "Water consumption rates will increase by 5.6%. ELECTRIC RATES WILL INCREASE by 1.4%, PLUS AN APPROXIMATE 4.1% INCREASE TO PAY THE WHOLESALE ELECTRIC POWER COSTS, FORMERLY CALLED THE 'POWER RIDER.' THIS PERCENTAGE IS \*PASSED DIRECTLY TO PLATTE RIVER POWER AUTHORITY\* TO COVER THE INCREASED COST OF GENERATING AND TRANSMITTING ELECTRICITY TO ESTES PARK." As I understand it, major infrastructure projects such as the Windy Gap Firing Project, the rebuild of Estes to Flatiron transmission lines, and construction of new power plants in Chimney Hollow valley are being completed right now to transport water and power from Estes Park, not to Estes Park.

This raises serious questions. Are these increased fees being passed on to us really paying you for the increased costs of "environmental compliance" in the end? If so, how does the public benefit from paying Western staff to transform an uncontroversial re-build from Estes to Flatiron into an unnecessary and costly re-route which apparently costs 35% more than your 2010 projections? Where is the extra five million dollars going? Worse yet, are we, without our knowledge or consent, being charged the cost of these major infrastructure programs such as Windy Gap? Is this additional 4.1% going to the Platte River Power Authority to help cover their costs at Windy Gap? Myself and a growing number of tax-payers are asking, what happened to "Beneficiary pays"? Why are we ultimately paying for an Environmental Assessment for a re-route that isn't even required if they use the USFS Designated Utility Corridor?

Your own Tim Snowden was quoted as saying that "Estes Park is not a Normal Situation". Well, he is right. Not because there are just a few "residents" that don't want this in their back yard, but because there is one influential land owner who doesn't want the original Colorado Big Thompson Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line in their own private valley, the Pew Crocker Ranch, owned by the Pew family heirs. It is entirely relevant to point out that, during 2011 alone, the Pew Trusts spent \$1.04 million dollars in lobbying for their interests in Federal Budget and Appropriations, Energy and Nuclear Power, and Real Estate and Land Use (see the Sunlight Foundation's Influence Explorer). The Pew Center for research on Global Warming, paid for by the Pew Trusts, has been tracking the DOE's Recovery Act spending closely since Western's new borrowing Authority was announced in 2009 (U.S. Department of Energy-Os Recovery Act Spending Report by pewclimate.org). Our own Estes Park Mayor (also PRPA Vice Chairman), Bill Pinkham and the Town Trustees were in the loop on this since May of 2010, yet they have remained silent until late in the game after the decision was made to bypass the Designated Utility Corridor at a severe detriment to their own constituents and to the Estes Valley.

Whether what we have here is a case of undue influence, or simply a mismanagement by Western employees in planning this out, one thing is clear. If allowed to proceed as proposed, this unnecessary, lengthy, and more costly re-route will wreak undue harm to the land and it will break the public trust. I ask that you do whatever is necessary to support Western employees in reversing this EA and in pursuing a rebuild along it's rightful place, by way of a categorical exclusion within the Designated Utility Corridor from Estes Park to Flatiron. I further request that any premature plans to clear-cut or excavate the proposed re-route be brought to a halt until this is addressed. The Estes to Flatiron Rebuild project is one where many often-competing agendas all align to allow you to meet your mission. By siting this project within the Designated Utility Corridor, you will be providing efficient, cost effective power while also preserving our federal public lands for the good of the general public.

My wife and I own a home in Meadowdale Hills off of Pole Hill Road. We have communicated our concerns about the proposed route of the transmission lines along highway 36 and through Meadowdale Hills, by email dated November 27, 2011. Our concern now is that our elected representatives are monitoring the public comments and actions of WAPA but taking no affirmative action to represent their constituency. Without some positive action by all of you, we are concerned that WAPA will push through it's proposed route to the detriment of the landscape, the general public and the status that the Estes Valley has enjoyed since the early 1900s. We urge each of you to take positive action on behalf of those whom you are elected to represent. We believe that you have received numerous communications from your constituents and the Estes Park Board of Trustees to know their concerns.

I am writing to you on behalf of myself a local business owner who helps people with their real estate decisions and a resident of Estes Park. I must admit that I do not know all the details of the proposed (final) plan; however I feel compelled to write you on what I do know. Estes Park is a special place that draws people attracted by its natural beauty. There are already areas in the Estes Valley where views are obstructed by power lines. Many people also believe that living in close proximity to power lines can cause diseases like cancer. These factors negatively affect the marketability of properties. Moving power lines closer to homes or in areas where they are more visible will have a negative impact on adjacent property values. This can also spread and have a negative effect on all property values in the Estes Valley.

My hope is that you consider these factors in your final decisions. As a property owner in Estes Park, I do not want to see my property values decline because of the movement. I also do not want to see areas of economic blight created due to the proximity of power lines moved closer to existing homes. And I do not want to see more views of the Estes Valley obstructed by unsightly power lines. Thank you for your consideration.

The proposed Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project has raised the concern of many citizens of the Estes Park area. I understand and support the need to update our nation's infrastructure. I also believe that the scenic beauty of the Estes Valley needs to be preserved to the greatest extent possible, for the present and future generations of Coloradoans. The decisions that are made today will have a lasting impact.

Whereas the majestic scenery of the Estes Valley is a national treasure, I am compelled to voice my concerns about any major industrial project that could adversely impact the environment near and around the Estes Valley. The proposed 10-story steel towers are taller than any structure in the Estes Valley. And their placement along the US-36 scenic entry into the Estes Valley will be a major eyesore to the millions of visitors entering Estes Park each year.

Furthermore, the proposed routing is contradictory to WAPA's objectives of avoiding populated areas, as the proposed route traverses directly through an established hillside community. I also understand that the US Forest Service has been asked to amend the Elk Ridge Forest Management Plan to realign the designated utility corridor to align with the proposed route, despite the fact that the alternative route already lies within the established utility corridor. It would seem the US Forest Service would prefer to maintain the pristine nature of one of the most popular back-country trailheads in the Roosevelt National Forest.

Mr. Snowden, I urge WAPA to reconsider the proposed route. It does more damage to the scenic qualities of Estes Park than any other alternative, it traverses more residential areas, and it creates an unnecessary imposition on the US Forest Service. Instead, I hope that this can be an opportunity to restore the majestic scenery of the Estes Valley and to reclaim this national treasure for oday and generations to come. I look forward to working with you.

You have the power to oversee how our public funds are spent and to ensure that our federal public lands and valuable tourism vistas are not unnecessarily damaged. WAPA should withdraw the Re-Route EA, streamline the project's siting for the public good, and rebuild the transmission line from Estes to Flatiron using the USFS's Designated Utility Corridor.

Concerning the Special Use application to the USFS, I request Western be required to recognize and follow the established land protections as laid out in the Arapaho-Roosevelt Natural Resource Management Plan as it stands today. Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest staff must give timely notice to Western that their proposed special use permit cannot be granted based on the fact that there is no need, no public benefit, and the use request itself is in conflict with their current USFS management area directives. Time is of the essence. If the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest fails to act until after the one-year deadline has passed on April 22nd, 2012, they will have forfeited their authority to do so once project approval falls to the FERC backstop. Worse yet, if the USFS re-writes or amends twenty-five years of Forest Policy to fit one project, they will have neglected their duty as custodians of public lands for the good of the general public.

The proposed Estes-Flatiron Transmissions Line Rebuild is concerning many of the Estes Park area citizens. I feel the scenic beauty of the Estes Valley needs to be preserved. Our town depends on tourists to prosper. The towers coming into town along US-36 would be an eyesore.

I would also like to address the towers that are proposed to go through the Meadowdale Hills subdivision. This is a residential area and your route will traverse directly through this community. I understand that there is an alternative route which already lies within an established utility corridor.

I understand the need to update our nation's infrastructure, but please consider a route that will keep the beauty of the Estes Valley intact and affect as few residential areas as possible.

There are many home owners in our residential community of Meadowdale Hills and much of our savings have gone into our homes. It will be difficult to see the value of our properties decline especially since there is an existing utility corridor.

I have a power line that runs just South of my house, like 40 feet. I currently have an easement of 30'. The new proposal says that 110' feet will be required which is not at all possible due to the house. I am also very concerned about the health effects, I know the original one was there before me but my concern now is the increase in power running through the lines. Since my house is right there I really don't want everyone living there to "glow". My father owns a 5th wheeler on the property that he stays at and does not want the line to run over his 5th wheel, which we were told should not be a problem. I know that my neighbors do not like the current plan and would like even more to be run over my property than already is but I think I am already losing on this one and would really appreciate not getting it any more than I already have to. Last time when they cut down trees at my place, they left them lying in the middle of the driveway so I could not get through, not very well appreciated. We have 1 driveway that splits into 3, one is close to the current pole, and would also like to keep that driveway as passable. Mostly I am worried about the line next to the house and the easement issue. I know I have complained enough but just want to make sure this all goes as smoothly as possible. Thanks.

ON A RECENT TRIP TO ESTES I WAS MESMERIZED BY THE BEAUTY AND VERY UPSET TO HEAR THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF NEW POWERLINES ARE GOING UP ALONG OR NEAR RTE 36. WHAT A TERRIBLE SHAME THAT WOULD BE. THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE AREA IS PRECIOUS AND SUCH A RARITY. IT IS PAINFUL AND DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT ANYONE WOULD CONSIDER THIS. THIS WOULD DESTROY THE LANDSCAPE, THE AMAZING VIEWS, AND UNDOUBTEDLY TAINT THE ALLURE. PLEASE CONSIDER "NOT CONSIDERING", AND LEAVE " THE LANDSCAPE AS IT IS.

I write in regard to the rebuilding of the Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line out of Estes Park, CO, which crosses Forest Service lands. I understand that you have likely received hundreds, if not thousands of emails with a form letter espousing that the EA fails to comply with NEPA, that you need to take action, etc. I agree and adopt the form letter as if fully set forth herein. However, I would like to take this opportunity to communicate a short personal statement. Put simply a rerouting of the power lines away from the existing Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line clear-cuts and by way of a previously Designated Utility Corridor, is a colossal waste of tax payer funds. This is especially significant given the current fiscal state of both the State of Colorado and the federal governments. A re-routing would be reinventing the wheel for no practical purpose other than to spend money on an unnecessary project.

Practically speaking, the rebuild project will cost significantly less by using the existing corridor as there would be no need to clear cut another pathway saving not only money but habitat as well. Moreover, the existing corridor currently consolidates gas, water, and power line utilities. There is simply no reason to expand the impact of these utility lines beyond the existing corridor.

While I can understand the desires of certain home/land owners adjacent to the existing corridor to have the transmission lines moved to another location to improve their views, property values, etc., my suspicion is that those landowners acquired their land after the establishment of the corridor, or they were properly compensated for any easement or taking by the Colorado or Federal governments. In simple terms, they've made their beds, and now must sleep in them.

I, like many thousands (millions?) of people, visit Estes Park on a regular basis and would honestly hate to see the landscape and views altered from their current state. Power lines are ugly and no one wants them in their backyard, but they are a fact of modern life. They do not, however, have to be re-routed and disturb the amazing view corridors when there is an existing pathway on lands already reserved for this purpose. I trust you will make the right decision.

I would much rather have updated and safer power-lines and just lose the "scenic" view. After going up and down the canyon day after day it loses its novelty quickly. Tourists won't care, it's still amazing to them, and that's great. Trust me, people will want the current poles until one pole gives out and power for a bunch of people is lost, then they'll blame you guys for not fixing it sooner. People will get used to them quickly, if they want to live in isolation there's plenty of room to build their own cabin secluded from society. Public safety and convenience should always take priority over simple aesthetics. People will be ignorant about stuff like this, but they always have been and always will be. I think it's amazing that a federal agency is willing to work this hard for an area of only 20,000 people (I'm just guessing-), people shouldn't take for granted the opportunity this presents,

It seems completely unnecessary to allocate a new corridor when the USFS corridor already exists. It makes not sense to replicate actions that would destroy a beautiful and scenic route into the Estes Valley.

I write today as a member of a growing number of citizens who stand in opposition to Western Area Power Administration's proposed Re-Route and subsequent costly, damaging, and unnecessary proliferation of utility corridors in the course of rebuilding the transmission infrastructure from Estes Park to Flatiron, CO. I understand the USFS is the Cooperating Agency for the Estes to Flatiron Rebuild project. The rebuild itself seems very straightforward, and I support the effort to upgrade these transmission lines. That said, after spending five minutes looking at a property map, any reasonable person can see that the re-route of the line up scenic Highway 36 and through Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest where no Utility Corridor currently exists is an accommodation to the single private residence of the APC Crocker Ranch LLC (Pew Crocker Ranch).

Over the past quarter century and through two comprehensive Environmental Impact Statements, the Forest Service has designated the route below Mt Olympus as the Utility Corridor for consolidation of large scale gas lines, transmission lines, and other future utilities that will benefit the public. The proposed route disregards this established policy, and puts you in the unfortunate position to violate your own rules to the detriment of the public and the land that is your duty to protect.

The proposal must be "consistent with the laws, regulations, orders, and policies governing National Forest System Lands" (36 CFR 251.54). This proposal does not meet the minimum requirements and conflicts with your Land and Resource Management Plan. Your management plan states "The allocation of utility corridors does not change by alternative...Corridor management shall be compatible with adjacent management objectives including visual, recreation and travel management...Expansion and other activities and actions that would not meet these (visual quality) requirements would not be approved." The statutes state that the proposal must be made consistent with the management plan, not that the management plan be made consistent with the proposal.

I request that you work with Western to approve a route within the confines of the USFS Designated Utility Corridor rather than proliferating corridors. The original USFS Designated Utility Corridor won't be moving, as it already consolidates a major gas line, a power line, and two major Bureau of Reclamation water tunnel access points and penstocks. Along the proposed re-route, there is only a single transmission line, but no Utility Corridor. I request you make this decision prior to April 22, 2012 when your authority to do so is expired (one year from the application date according to the EP Act of 2005).

Although some Western staff have claimed that the route in the Utility Corridor is too difficult, history will tell you otherwise. It is the location of one of the first roads into Estes Park dating back to 1877, the preferred route for the 1938 Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line, and the preferred route of the more recent gas line. The pre-public scoping negotiations with the Pew Crocker Ranch have unduly influenced Western to re-route the line.

Although you represent a Cooperating Agency as described in the 2009 FERC Transmission Siting Memorandum of Understanding among federal agencies and the DOE, the MOU explicitly states that it does not limit your legal authority or responsibilities (Section IX.A). Rather, you have both the power and the duty to uphold your mission. Please stick to your policies and work with Western to site the line rightfully in the Utility Corridor.

I further request that WAPA, the USFS, and any third-parties cease any contracting, clear cutting, excavation, or other related pre-decisional actions on either transmission lines until this is resolved (see DOE/EIS-0442 and USDA 1950-1/2700/2720) This will be in the best interest of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest environment, the Estes Valley, and the American tax-payer.

Please do not build those power lines in this proposed location. The reason the utility corridor is there is for projects like this. Use it. Please. One ranch vs. hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.

As a Colorado resident and (sic) a frequent visitor to RMNP and Lumpy Ridge, I do not approve of Western Area Power Administration's attempt to build a new power line to Estes Park.

Energy efficiency should be the first solution. Wisely applied, efficiency measures could potentially eliminate the need for a new power line. If a power line must be built, however, please use a corridor that is already impacted, such as the route of the existing line. Stay away from scenic areas including the foreground of Rocky Mountain National Park and the public access trailheads and trails into Roosevelt National Forest.

This whole proposal is wrong in so many ways. Matter of fact, there's nothing right about it.

Improve power transmission? Fine; people need that. Spend an extra \$5 million to plow clearcuts through untouched forest? That makes no sense financially.

It is a horrendously senseless idea in Estes Park. People come to this town, and to Rocky Mountain National Park, to see mountains, snowfields, cliffs, elk, deer, creeks, wild lands, not transmission lines and towers. There is no reason whatsoever for such a horrific visual impact. Build the new lines in the current corridor. There is no reason not to.

The Park Service's mandate is to preserve the visual quality of the land for which they are responsible. WAPA's proposal flies directly in the face of that charge. That alone should be enough to cancel this whole proposal, but apparently, it is not.

It seems that one crabby landowner gets to dictate what millions of people will see for the next several generations. This. Is. Wrong. Neither Czar Crocker nor any other individual should have this sort of power.

Use the corridor currently in place. Nothing else makes sense, financially, ethically, visually or morally. Please rise to the occasion and do the right thing.

(I am) a 25-year resident of Fort Collins, Colorado. I am writing today regarding (sic) the proposed re-route of electric lines east of Estes Park. I strongly urge you to do what is necessary to re-build the lines in the existing corridor. As an environmental geologist (BS and MS) with 25 years of experience, I know how much damage a new corridor would produce.

As a very frequent visitor of Estes Park and Rocky Mountain (sic) National Park, I know how damaging these lines would be to the "viewscape". Please follow (sic) a full and open public process. We have had a very similar episode here in south western Fort Collins just recently and the lack of a public process has created quite a mess. Thanks you.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my requests regarding what appears to be a troubling waste of tax-payer and rate-payer funds by Western Area Power Administration (Western) Staff in the course of re-building the power lines between Estes Park and Flatiron, Colorado. While I fully support the wise use of tax-payer funds leveraged to improve our publicly owned transmission infrastructure, I stand with an ever-increasing number of citizens in wholehearted opposition to the proposed re-route of this project from its original line.

In the midst of a nationally tight economic climate and a growing need for efficient, renewable power, Western staff are wasting public funds by initiating a costly and time-consuming Environmental Assessment (EA) for a project otherwise Categorical Excluded from extensive NEPA documentation if sited within the Designated Utility Corridor. (Title 36 CFR 220.6(e)).

Western estimates a cost of somewhere between fifty to one-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollars for the Environmental Assessment alone. This most likely doesn't account for the countless hours wasted by USFS staff in duplicating work already completed in two comprehensive Environmental Impact Statements. Additionally, there's the cost of blazing new clear cuts and taking taking new land where no corridor exists. Western staff have transformed a straight-forward, Categorical Excluded \$14M Estes-Flatiron re-build into a costly, unnecessary, and publicly detrimental \$19M re-route.

For this, there is no need, no public benefit, and the re-route itself appears to accommodate a single, private land-owner with obvious political clout.

In your own testimony before the Congress on March 15, 2011 regarding Spending Priorities and Missions of Western Area Power Administration, you cited a goal of delivering, "hydropower allocations in a timely, reliable, and cost-effective manner." You went on to cite a number of factors that drive your costs up, many of which are out of your control. "Increased environmental regulatory compliance costs" was number one on your list of factors which you say, "have had the net effect of increasing expenses, while reducing the quantity and reliability of the hydropower product." Than being the case, there seems to be a major disconnect between federal policies to cut costs and the reality of local execution. As rate-payers, we watch our electric bills increase through tacked-on fees 5% year-over-year, most of which is in the form of an exclusive tax to pay the regional, Platte River Power Authority. At the same time, we watch Western pursue an unnecessary re-route which is both 33-36% more costly to the public and inestimably more devastating to our federal public lands. Are these increased fees being passed on to the public actually paying for your increased costs of "environmental compliance"? If so, how does the public benefit from paying Western staff to transform an uncontroversial re-build from Estes to Flatiron into an unnecessary and costly re-route already bloated 33-36% beyond Western's original 2010 projections?

Your own Tim Snowden was quoted as saying that "Estes Park is not a Normal Situation". Well, he is right. Not because there are just a few "residents" that don't want this in their back yard, but because there is one influential land owner who no longer wants the original Colorado Big Thompson Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line in their own private valley, the Pew Crocker Ranch, owned by the Pew family heirs. It is entirely relevant to point out that, the Pew Center for research on Global Warming, paid for by the Pew Trusts, has been tracking Western and the DOE's Recovery Act spending closely since Western's new borrowing Authority was announced in 2009 (see U.S. Department of Energy Recovery Act Spending Reports 2009-2011 by pewclimate.org). During the 2011 election cycle alone, the Pew Trusts spent \$1.04 million dollars in lobbying for their interests in areas such as Federal Budget and appropriations, Energy and Nuclear Power, and Real Estate and Land Use (see the Sunlight Foundation's Influence Explorer). Our own elected officials have yet to take a stand against this re-route which is so egregiously contrary to the general public good. One has to ask, what is stopping them?

As American Citizens, we are heading into a time where there will be a continued and increased assault on our national public assets, and a continued effort for private interests to seize control of our public lands, our government, and our public infrastructure for private benefit under the guise of public-private partnerships. But for today, the project at hand involves a public agency using public funds to rebuild our public infrastructure through our federal public lands. Therefore, as one of countless citizens who have a stake in preserving Roosevelt National Forest, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the Estes Valley for the public good, I respectfully request that you withdraw this wasteful EA, withdraw this damaging and unnecessary re-route, and proceed without haste to streamline the Estes to Flatiron Rebuild through a CE and by way of the long-established USFS Designated Utility Corridor, for the good of the general public. You have the power to change the course of this project. What is proposed here cannot be undone, and it will not be forgotten.

As a frequent visitor to the Estes Park area, I was upset to hear that extremely tall power lines were being sited in areas that will impact scenic views. The beautiful vistas are the main reason folks visit the area. Please located the towers to a route that will have the least visual impact and make the towers shorter, in keeping with the current height.

Please do not reroute the transmission lines from Estes to Flatiron.

It seems like a no-brainer to use the existing corridor. How can you justify a new corridor when one already exists? It seems to me that it is in our communities best interest to minimize any impacts from this project.

For the public record, I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you (representing the Forest Service), Tim Snowden (representing WAPA), and the millions of Americans that understand the intangible value public lands provide to our society. Your stewardship over the last quarter century has been remarkable, balancing many uses and ensuring that our collective resources are sustainably managed for current and future generations. I am particularly appalled at some of the most recent legislation being proposed in Colorado that endeavors to strip the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest and other federally-managed lands from the populace in order to privatize the lands. The claim is that the Forest Service and other federal agencies are mismanaging the land and wasting taxpayer funds in the process. I have always steadfastly stood by the the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and other entities that provide the much needed public service that you provide. However, after learning about the details involved in the handling of the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild Project, I am horrified by the upcoming and permanent loss awaiting the public if the re-route, as proposed by WAPA, is approved.

In particular, by routing the line up Highway 36 and into the viewscape of the millions of visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park, their hearts will drop rather than be lifted by the grandeur of the Rockies. They will wonder what short-sighted company put expediency or political favor in front of the public good.

If they venture to the Pole Hill trailhead to spend time in the National Forest, their entire experience will be jaded by not only the inappropriate scale and character of the industrial-steel towers slated to dominate the public space, but also by knowing that responsibilities entrusted to our public servants were neglected.

Of course, these scenarios can be avoided, and as you know the Forest Service has laid out a plan to do just that. The Designated Utility Corridor that is depicted on the Forest Service map in your Land and Resource Management Plan provides a consolidated, linear, and out-of-the-way path for current and future utilities that provide benefit to our society. With the original 1938 Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line, the natural gas line, the hydro-power penstock on the east end, and the Olympus tunnel access point on the west end, this line is an excellent example of thoughtful management. It reduces the visual footprint of the utilities, keeps them away from the high scenic travel corridors enjoyed by the majority of citizens, and has been confirmed through two major Environmental Impact Statements as the route of least human impact.

Now, I understand that you represent the Forest Service as the Cooperating Agency for the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild project proposed by Western Area Power Administration. The rebuild seems very reasonable, and I certainly support the effort to upgrade the transmission line from Estes to Flatiron. I am astounded, however, by both the proposal to route the line out of the utility corridor and into the areas of maximum public impact. It of course makes me wonder what sorts of outside forces are at work steering our land stewards in such a catastrophic direction. And then I had a close look at the map. It was glaringly obvious that this entire re-route was a tactic to minimize the impact on the property of the APC Crocker Ranch LLC, a private valley controlled by the heirs of oil magnate Joseph N. Pew. The entire east end of the Estes Valley is privately owned by the Pew/Crocker Ranch, and access to the western edge of the Roosevelt National Forest completely blocked for the public in the valley. And now I understand the source of the immense influence being exerted on the staff of our public agencies. The entire reason why Western is engaged in any sort of public process for this transmission line rebuild is because individuals, like you and me, had the foresight to set aside, protect, conserve, manage, reclaim, and caretake lands for the good of the many. They have come before us, they are with us, and they will come after us. But along side these individuals have always been a contingent with a narrower perspective that favors self-interest, profit, and privatization for the benefit of the few. This is exactly the case in the Estes-Flatiron Rebuild as it is currently proposed.

Given this situation, I implore you to do your job, and do it well. You have the backing of a huge number of people, the governing laws, and the well-thought policies put in place by yourself, your colleagues, and your predecessors. Specifically, note how the proposed project runs completely cross-grain to your stated management directives and standards. Your policies state that utilities will be consolidated into Utility Corridors. They state that "the allocation of utility corridors does not change by alternative...Corridor management shall be compatible with adjacent management objectives including visual, recreation and travel management...Expansion and other activities and actions that would not meet these (visual quality) requirements would not be approved." They state that the proposed project must be "consistent with the laws, regulations, orders, and policies governing National Forest System Lands" (36 CFR 251.54). The re-route aspect of this proposal conflicts with most of the rules you have put in place based on years of management legislation. It does not meet the minimum requirements for an approval. Ultimately, the statutes state that the proposal must be made consistent with the management plan, NOT that the management plan be made consistent with the proposal. I ask you to perform your duties and deny this proposal as it is written, and to inject a sense of protection into the process as has been done by many times in the past. My intuition is that Western staff will have a place to hang their hat. They will have a reason to counter any undue influence, and can proceed with the project in the Utility Corridor because it provides the greatest public benefit.

Therefore, I request that you work with Western to approve a route in the Utility Corridor rather than proliferating corridors. The original corridor won't be always be maintained given the other utilities that have been consolidated within it. Although the proposed route has an existing transmission line, it has no Utility Corridor. This was an obvious and conscious management decision residential communities and recreational use have immensely grown in the areas it crosses since it was first installed. I also request you make this decision prior to April 22, 2012 when your authority to do so is expired (one year from the application date according to the EP Act of 2005).

History will tell you that the route along the Designated Utility Corridor is plenty practical from an engineering standpoint. It is the location of one of the first public roads into Estes Park dating back to 1877 (the "Loveland Road"). It was the preferred route for the 1938 Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line. And it was and the preferred route for the more recent natural gas line. The point is that the pressure exerted by the Pew/Crocker Ranch prior to the public scoping period has pushed Western into a position of rationalizing the re-route rather than embracing the tenets that are put in place for the greater public.

Although you represent a Cooperating Agency as described in the 2009 FERC Transmission Siting Memorandum of Understanding among federal agencies and the DOE, note that, in the end, the MOU explicitly states that it does not diminish your legal responsibilities nor your authority in executing policies that are based on the governing statutes. Rather, you have both the power and the duty to uphold your mission. Please uphold your policies and work with Western to site the line rightfully in the Utility Corridor and use a Categorical Exclusion for documentation.

Come on, Forest Service, do the right thing and do it quickly! Don't dodge the issue. Conflict may not be easy, but knowing you are doing the right thing makes it easier. You know that WAPA doesn't need a new corridor for their transmission line; that such a project would severely damage some beautiful, untrammelled country and would likewise trash the mountain vistas that bring people to Estes Park to spend lots of money; that letting this deadline pass may even be illegal. Don't foist this one off on somebody else: do your job, please! Employ that Categorical Exclusion and tell WAPA to build their line on the corridor that's already in place. If they can't see it on Google Earth, everybody else can. Time's a-wasting. Best get started.

Please act now to stop the destruction of our beautiful Estes Valley views by asking the WAPA to amend their proposal. I am a homeowner with an easement on which one of these power lines will be erected if this proposal goes through and I am really concerned about the health effects of these power lines. Not enough is known about the long term outcomes of having these high speed transmission lines in populated areas and I think it is an unacceptable risk to allow it.

I do not think that there has been enough openness about this project if the application was sent in last year. I was only informed last July that WAPA would be on my property checking the lines in case they might be replaced. There was nothing to alert me to the scope of this project. I am hoping that it will be amended. Once the power lines are up, there is no going back.

I write today as an American citizen who is concerned about the ability of government and large energy companies to do as they please, regardless of the public's opinion or factual health concerns. I lived in Longmont many years ago and LOVE Estes Park and the National Park located there. I cannot imagine anyone wanting to intentionally deface nature's beauty and endanger it with such unsightly and dangerous poles. What happened to caring about the "endangered" species -- we'll stop anything to protect the blue butterfly - but putting up a pole? No problem! Yikes! Please keep our National Parks and communities beautiful by concealing, rather than being "in your face", objects that obviously detract from a natural beauty. The rest of the letter is more formally written, but says what needs to be said -- don't do it!!

Crocker Ranch: Separating Power Line Fiction From Fact. Dear Editor, As the family member-owners of the Crocker Ranch, we have closely followed the Western Area Power Administration's proposal to reroute transmission lines between Estes Park and the Flatiron Substation (the Project). Our family has owned the Ranch for over 100 years and has been consistent stewards of the valley. But now certain opponents of the Project (including some residents of the Meadowdale Hills subdivision) have made some false allegations about our family and the Project. We write to set the record straight on a few of the myths being spread.

Myth 1: WAPA is Giving the Crocker Ranch a Sweetheart Deal. Fact: The Ranch bears the burden of power lines today and will after the Project is complete. WAPA proposes to move lines to the southern flank of the Ranch. The southern route will follow existing power lines that provide electricity to the homes of the same residents of Meadowdale Hills who attack the Ranch. We wish that WAPA would remove all of its lines from the Ranch. But we recognize modern society requires safe and reliable power. Under any alternative currently proposed, the Ranch will bear the burden of supplying that power to others, including the Meadowdale Hills homeowners. We are willing to accept that burden. Allegations that the Crocker Ranch stands to receive a sweetheart deal from WAPA are false. The Meadowdale Hills homeowners are the ones seeking a one-sided deal: transmission lines removed from their lands altogether and all put on the Crocker Ranch.

Myth 2: The Project Will Ruin Views of the Valley. Fact: Because WAPA has yet to produce a rendering of views before and after the Project, the Project's opponents have spread fear mongering depictions of visual ruin. The website responsiblelines.org depicts a transmission pole towering above the Highway 36 welcome sign. These images are deliberately misleading. WAPA proposes to install approximately 105 foot tall poles. The poles on the Crocker Ranch will be in a draw 200 feet under the turnout, shielded by trees that will render the lines largely invisible from that location. The top of the poles will be about 100 feet below the turnout, not towering over it. By contrast, the current lines scarring the base of Mt. Olympus are visible from the turnout, from many viewpoints within town such as the Safeway parking lot, and from along Highway 36. We recognize that the Project will produce lines that are visible from certain spots where they are not today. But it will also remove from view many lines. We think the net effect will be positive. We urge others to base their own conclusions on the facts in WAPA's environmental assessment for the Project and not on alarmist depictions.

Myth 3: The Northern Route on the Crocker Ranch is Within a U.S. Forest Service Designated "Utility Corridor." Fact: This claim is utterly false. The Forest Service has no authority to designate "utility corridors" on private lands like the Crocker Ranch and it has not done so. The northern route does have power lines on it today. But to expand the use of the northern route and make it accessible, WAPA would have to expand its easements, construct highly engineered roads across the base of Mt. Olympus and up the ridge on the eastern edge of the Ranch, mitigate landslide risks, and take other highly visually and environmentally destructive actions. And, just like the northern route, the proposed southern route follows an existing transmission line: the line for the Meadowdale Hills subdivision. If the northern route is in a utility corridor, then so is the southern route through Meadowdale Hills. Thanks for the opportunity to set the record straight. We urge everyone in the community to make up their minds based on objective facts rather than the propaganda being spread by special interest groups.

Yes, and hotsiry about the truly novel idea of large, managed public forests rather than the privatized lands of Europe, or even the majority of the Eastern U.S. at the time. There was a frontier mentality in the West back then and many individuals were accustomed to simply taking whatever they wanted without regard to consequences timber, mining and railroad companies included.

I am a resident of Estes Park and a Forrest Service volunteer. I strongly oppose moving the Estes to Flatiron transmission line into the U.S. 36 corridor.

Scenic beauty is crital to our local economy and the drive into Estes is part of it.

The transmission line should stay in the existing Designated Utility Corridor.Thank you and the Forrest Service for you stewardship.

I received this in an email and would like to find out if it is true. Please let me know before April 1, 2012 since I have until April 22, 2012 to respond. (attached email from Colonel James Carlton)

WAPA: Use the Route You Already Have, by Colonel James Carlton, USAF, Retired

The next time you drive into Estes Park on US Hwy 36, as you pass Hermit Park and crest the rise...pull off at the first available spot and look down that spectacular valley. This is the first view I had of Estes Park eight years ago, and this is the first vivid memory visitors to Estes Valley keep in their hearts. You need to appreciate this view because it may be gone forever. If you read on, you will be in danger...of not having the excuse in the future of saying, "if only I had known!" Read on and you will also have a chance of saving the natural beauty of Estes Valley for future generations. You only have until April 22, 2012. If you think "this is not my problem and someone else will keep the Rocky Mountains pristine", you will soon see 105-foot tall electrical towers marching up that very same valley that greets us all.

What is at issue is the plan by the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), part of the US Department of Energy, and the siting location of the improved electric transmission lines. This would not be an issue if WAPA had followed US Code and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Legal guidance tells WAPA to utilize a Designated Utility Corridor (DUC) when improving transmission lines. A DUC already exists between Estes Park and Flatiron, the start and end point of this project. This DUC currently consolidates major gas, water, and electric utilities away from scenic US Hwy 34, US Hwy 36, and National Forest Trailheads. WAPA has taken actions to re-route the transmission line out of the DUC, up scenic US Hwy 36, and through Roosevelt National Forest where no utility corridor exists.

Particularly of note here is that, while the Estes Valley benefits from the general grid, there is NO benefit to anyone in this area from these particular lines in question. These are not distribution lines, They are transmission lines, only.

WAPA completed the siting of this project prior to any public knowlede or consent in Feb 2010.

The route selected favors the owners of Crocker Ranch at the expense of virtually every other citizen and visitor to Estes Valley.

Citizens have been playing catch up since Nov 2011 in an attempt to get WAPA to follow their own rules. Since WAPA needs a special use permit from the US Forest Service (USFS) in order to move forward, the USFS must decline this re-route before Apr 22, 2012 and only allow the rebuild within the DUC for the good of everyone. If the USFS does nothing, WAPA will execute a plan that disregards federal law and the public good.

Ultimately, the Estes-Flatiron rebuild project deals with Publically owned power infrastructure, Public tax dollars, and Federal Public lands. A costly and damaging re-route serves only the interests of the private Crocker Ranch, to the cost and detriment of residents of Estes Park and every visitor to Rocky Mountain National Park now and for the next 100 years.

If you are OK with a plan that ignores almost every citizen, do nothing. If you believe laws apply to everyone, contact the USFS, tell them to decline the permit, and tell WAPA to use the existing Designated Utility Corridor for the good of us all and for generations to come.

It is a shame that the good of one (obviously rich and influential) is taken over the good of the many.

It is just stupid to reroute when there is a corridor at anytime and especially when the economy is struggling.

It is your responsibility to be open and not sneak as you have done in making decisions that affects so many people and the environment. Decisions like this always makes people wonder whose pocket is getting lined by APC Crocker Ranch. Your reputation will always be damaged. Hold your head up high and retain the beauty of the valley and our earth.

Every time I drive into Estes Park on Rt. 36 and the beautiful scene of the mountains and valley comes into view, my heart skips a beat! This vista which unfolds continues to thrill me time after time. I know that others who come to Estes Park for the first time feel the same way. This magnificent view is precious and important for the tourism of the area. Please consider this and preserve the integrity of the valley.

My family and I were extremely distressed on January 12, 2012 to find out "from a conversation with one of our neighbors" that Western Area Power Administration has tentatively scheduled a major construction project to begin in 2013 or 2014 to remove the relatively new wood pole transmissions lines that span our ranch properties with yet, a new larger and more complex steel tower segments which includes an expanded right of way easement and supporting road system.

As you confirmed with me, Mr. Snowden, during our telephone conversation as late as January 17, 2012; that neither my family nor our neighbors, the Paul Jonjak family had in fact not been notified in writing of this unneeded Flatiron-Pole Hill Project Proposal.
As you confirmed with me, Mr. Snowden, during our telephone conversation as late as January 17, 2012; that neither my family nor our neighbors, the Paul Jonjak family (were) afforded the opportunity to express our concerns and state publicly our opposition to this unneeded Flatiron-Pole Hill Project Proposal.
1, The "Fact Sheet" supplied from WAPA's web site states that "the vast majority of wood pole structures on all lines are the original poles and are 60-72 years old". Mr. Snowden there is no need what so ever to replace the Flatiron-Pole Hill 85 foot wood poles with 105 foot steel towers.
a. This segment of double wood poles has been completely rebuild with new wooden "double pole sets". The metal inspection date tags located on the poles range from the "oldest" of 1992 to the most recent replacement of 2008. WAPA's Scope, Rational and Premiss for the Flatiron-Pole Hill Rebuild project is inaccurate and intentionally misleading. b. Should anyone doubt this facts, the "old" poles that WSPA removed during this time period, are "still" laying in the grass pasture less than 1/8th of a mile from my home. c. .During the most recent construction project concerning the Flatiron- Pole Hill segment in October 2004; Western replaced one of the overhead ground wires on this wooden transmission line with a fiber optic line for communication purposes from Flatiron to Estes Park.
2. Access and Legal Right of Way: During the October, 2004 fiber optic replacement project "WAPA crews had been instructed to stay within (its) existing legal easement width (of 1 00 feet each side of the center line i.e. Contract July 24,1950, United stated Department of the Interior)". a. WAPA construction and maintenance crew vehicles did not stay within the granted easement boundaries, and in fact, over the distance of 1 1/4 miles illegally pioneered and/or created the most convenient trails across grass pastures, wet-areas, rocky formations between trees and through environmentally sensitive areas; causes grass damage, ruts and eventual soil erosion. (24 evidence photos 12/2004; damage claim 2125/2005) b. Some of the "WAPA trails" and damages extended a distance of a half-mile away from the granted easement boundary (See addendums map, "An Legal Easement; "8" Illegal Trails; "C" Approved Atwood Ranch Trail)
3. The WAPA "Fact Sheet" Proposal states that. ... "the proposed project would combine both existing right of ways into ~right way between Flatiron Reservoir and Estes Park. This right of way will be slightly wider than it is at the present. The new steel pole structure (105 feet) will be taller that the existing (85 feet) double wood poles structures." a. For some reason, should the WAPA Flatiron-Pole Hill Project ever be approved, the right of way trails located on both State, Private and Public lands would have to be a lot larger in concept and in use than the present as well as extremely wider and greatly strengthened into an "constructed replacement road" just to support the anticipated heavy equipment necessary to realistically start and complete this project; i.e. crane-trucks in excess of 105 feet for use to remove wood poles and replace with steel towers; tracked shovels and backhoes to dig dirt/rocks for the 14' X 14' X 30'deep foundation footings for the 105 foot steel towers. (NOTE) Just one footing will require something like 432* tons of concrete and (36) 30-ton cement delivery trucks to drive across fragile grass pasture just to build one 105 foot steel tower foundation, not to mention the number of dump trucks and loaders necessary to haul the dirt and rock created by digging the 14' X 14' X30' hole. *National Ready Mix Concrete Association. d. Mr. Snowden, right now there are approximately 32 relatively new (20) 2-pole wood structures and (2) 3-pole wood structures the comprises the 3 1/2 miles of the Flatiron-Pole Hill transmission line that cuts across the Pinewood, Atwood and Daymaker Ranches. (Top of County Road, 18E to the Pole Hill Power Plant, identified as "EE & FF" on the addendum map). Nobody at WAPA right now knows how many of the 105 foot steel towers it will take to span that 3 1/2 miles of State and Private lands that will be negatively impacted by this Flatiron-Pole Hill Project.
In closing, the potentially extensive environmental damage, destruction of fragile grass lands, eventual soil erosion and subsequent water run off into the little Thompson River are just a few of the enormously negative aspects of this proposal.
The expected eye sore associated with this project on the Valley itself
and the loss of quality of life for those of us who now and future generations of us which will have to live and work under these hazardous transmission lines can not even begin to measure.
However, the financial loss of property values as well as, future costs to WAPA and the federal government for property damages and subsequent legal actions by private property owners can be and are being considered.
And last but not least, the unneeded waste of public treasure on unnecessary and ill advised Department of Energy Project such as this one deserves future public attention and outcry, not to mention congressional alert., investigation and hearings.
We have been permanent residents of Estes Park for 33 years and attracted to the area by the uncluttered environment and visual corridors. We are opposed to wind turbines and we are opposed to transmissison lines in the visual corridors.
If the USFS does nothing, WAPA will execute a plan that disregards federal law and the public good. IT IS IMPERATIVE THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT FROM THE US FOREST SERVICE TO RE-ROUTE THE PROPOSED POWER LINE <u>BE DECLINED</u> .
They should be allowed to build ONLY within the Designated Utility Corridor for the transmissison lines for the good of all visitors and residents for generations to come.
As a resident of Estes Park, I find it appalling that the decision to alter the existing power transmission lines may rest more with money (Crocker Ranch) than the welfare of an entire valley of citizens.
As a homewoner in Estes Park, I feel the current view should be preserved and not altered based on the interests of the Crocker Ranch.
The added expense of proposed routing is more expensive than using using (sic) the current right of way.
I encourage you to decline WAPA's permit request to move their utility line outside of the Designated Utility Corridor for the above referenced project.
The concept of consolidating the locaiton of all public utilities into a designated corridor has been along standing planning concept that should not be disregarded in this case.

More importantly, many citizens have concerns that the view corridors will be forever tainted, something critically important to the economic viability of Estes Park. As the owner of two properties in Estes Park, one of which I plan to retire on, this issue is something I feel very strongly about.

We are dismayed with the possibility of approval of the plan to reroute/build electric transmission lines along US Highway 36 in the Estes Valley. This seriously degrades the natural beauty of this valley and the first view on the Rocky Mountain National Park route.

This degrades the Federal Public Lands and is unnecessary because a Designated Utility Corridor already exists.

Please oppose approval of this permit as a representative of the United States Forest Service.

Please insist that Western Area Power Authority (WAPA) follow the Federal Land Policies (sic) and Management Act, and utilize the existing Designated Utility Corridor (DUC) when improving its transmission system. The existing DUC currently consolidates major gas, and electric utilities away from scenic US Hwy 34, US Hwy 36 and National Forest Trailheads.

The Estes-Flatiron project deals with public tax dollars, and Federal Public lands. This costly and damaging re-route serves only the interests of the private Crocker Ranch, to the cost and detriment of the residents of the Estes Valley and every visitor to Rocky Mountain National Park now and for the next 100 years.

Again, please insist that WAPA utilize the existing utility corridor, and consider direct burial as the transmission system approaches the Estes Valley.

plus bury all the lines

I oppose Western Area Power Administration's proposed Re-Route and subsequent costly, damaging, and unnecessary proliferation of utility corridors in the course of rebuilding the transmission infrastructure from Estes Park to Flatiron, CO.

I understand the USFS is the Cooperating Agency for the Estes to Flatiron Rebuild project. The rebuild itself seems very straightforward, and I support the effort to upgrade these transmission lines. Any reasonable person can see that the re-route of the line up scenic Highway 36 and through Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest where no Utility Corridor currently exists is an accommodation to the single private residence of the APC Crocker Ranch LLC (Pew Crocker Ranch).

John called and asked questions about EMF and location of the proposed lines. He had concerns with EMF and stated he could not do modification to his home in Estes if there were going to be problems with cancer causing EMF's.

He asked if we could measure the EMF at his home.

Carey, it was also great to speak with you and I shared the information with my wife when she came home last evening. I was very surprised when the UPS man arrived today to find the information you promised had already arrived. Thank you so much for your prompt attention and I have been reading through the material. I am still not convinced about the true nature of force fields and cancer. I will feel much better once we have met and taken actual measurements at our home site in Estes. I was also pleased that you included your business card. I look forward to meeting you and thanking you in person for all the great help and information.

As I understand it, the Bureau plans to decommission about 16 miles of lines in the Pinewood area. I believe these lines were called the Estes-Pole Hill Line in several overlay maps. As it happens, poles number 11-3 and 11-2 are located on my property. While removal of the wires and insulators themselves would appear to me to be fairly straightforward, and require very little in the way of on-site equipment, the same can't be said for pole removal. In fact on my property it would be necessary to make quite a big mess to get any equipment to the pole sites. Therefore my question is, would it be possible for you to just leave the poles where they are? I can't imagine you can reuse them, and their resale value must be fairly small or non-existent. If you can't just leave them in place, could I buy them from you where they are? If so, what would the cost be? I would really like to avoid disturbing the property if at all possible.

Please add me to the mailing list for this project so that I receive notice of all comment periods, EIS scoping, the draft EIS, etc.

I was pleased to learn that your agency will be doing a full scale environmental study and will be considering alternative routes. I would appreciate it if people conducting that study and such other members of the Western staff as may be appropriate could meet with me on my family's ranch property that is located adjacent to the Pole Hill Power Plant. As I indicated in my previous correspondence, the proposed route would have had about a mile and a half of power line on our property and would be replacing a line that was just completely rebuilt very recently. A visit will allow me to show you the dramatic impact the proposed route would have had and will allow everyone to consider more carefully how the line can be located so as to minimize environmental and other damage. It will also enable me to better understand the factors Western needs to consider, as we discuss future plans.

Thank you! I just received a copy of the DOE plan to rebuild the Estes-Flatiron transmission line segments and have downloaded copies of your maps of the rebuild project from the Web. Although this is not the first time I have heard about this plan, this is the first time that I have been able to view some of its details. I have a house on property adjacent to the proposed ROW rebuild, and I wonder specifically what will occur. Can you please tell me? As I understand from the map I downloaded, you are planning to abandon the old right-of-way "Estes-Lyons Tap: Remove 1-1 to 4-7", and to rebuild "Estes - Pole Hill Rebuild 3-1 to 5-1". Is this correct? My house is currently very near the 3-4 pole on the Estes - Pole Hill segment at 118 Pine Tree Drive. I wonder to what extent my property will be affected with the planned widening of the ROW in this segment? There is a two-story structure on my property that is near the boundary of the existing ROW. Can you tell me what will happen to this structure? I may have misread the map I downloaded. There is a comment that covers Pine Tree Drive, that makes the existing map difficult to discern. I believe my house is located between the existing poles 3.2 and 3.3 on the Estes - Pole Hill segment at 118 Pine Tree Drive.

<p>WAPA's current plans for upgrading the Estes Park-Flatirons Transmission Line is a major concern for everyone who values the scenic heritage of Estes Park. While at first glance only the residents beyond the jurisdictional limits of the Town of Estes Park would seem to be directly involved, it has been suggested that the project, as currently conceived, will directly and unalterably impact the view corridors along Highway 36 to the detriment of the millions of visitors who annually travel that road.</p>
<p>More directly, the opportunity to revisit the issue of the power stanchions along Lake Estes, with an eye to renegotiating what took place in 1938, and would not, I trust, be allowed to take place today, is one that I urge you to consider carefully.</p>
<p>No final action be taken on the project until all the alternatives are fully explored and until the public is completely informed by the federal agencies involved as to just what is going to happen and why. I believe that many others share these beliefs.</p>
<p>We are residents of the Meadowdale Hills community in Estes Park and recently became aware of WAPA's plans for reconstructing power lines between Estes Park and the Flatiron substation near Carter Lake. We have numerous concerns regarding the proposed project.</p>
<p>For starters, Pole Hill Road is our main access to our homes and the increased damage/traffic to this road from heavy vehicles will have a profound impact on our entry/exit from the neighborhood.</p>
<p>Replacing the current wooden transmission towers with steel ones will ruin the aesthetics of our community not to mention the increase in the number of power lines which will expose us to increased electromagnetic radiation.</p>
<p>Further impacting our beautiful community will be the clearance of our pine trees that are within a 100 foot radius of the transmission line. Those of us that live in Meadowdale Hills chose this community because of its beauty and natural appeal. This will be negatively impacted by the above changes and ultimately will lower our property values.</p>
<p>I understand that an alternative reconstruction could take place along the currently existing Crocker Ranch section. This certainly appears to be a much more feasible alternative as the overall length of the transmission line would be shorter thereby reducing the number of transmission towers and lessening the maintenance expenses. A clearcut already exists along this route which would avoid the need to remove our pine trees. Since the Crocker Ranch section is much less populated than that of Meadowdale Hills, this will avoid routing the line through a residential neighborhood. Lastly, having increased power lines easily viewable from highway 36 (which is so highly traveled by tourists and residents), there will be a far greater detrimental visual impact from the current proposal as opposed to constructing along the Crocker Ranch line. We thank you for your time in reading our concerns and strongly considering them in your final plans for reconstructing the power transmission lines.</p>
<p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment on the proposed Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project. We support the Estes Park Town Board's resolution opposing the project as currently proposed.</p>
<p>My husband and I have lived here and worked in public service or tourism industries in Estes Park for over 32 years. We know personally how much our small community depends on tourism for our economic survival.</p>
<p>People do not come here or live here to see power lines, they come for the dramatic views and the mountain lifestyle. Any massive changes to the viewsheds by the addition of the proposed towers will impact the visitor and resident experience which ultimately impacts our sales-tax bottom line.</p>
<p>Colorado as a whole also depends on tourism and the income from sales-taxes to survive. We feel Colorado as a state tries to develop innovative ideas for energy conservation and has always been a creative problem-solving kind of state. Now we ask WAPA to work with the public comments and with local governments to devise alternative creative solutions to the proposed plans.</p>
<p>Why not spend the money to underground utilities? The time to protect and respect Colorado's mountain communities is now. Please don't build the towers and ruin the view - we work hard to promote our town and all the tourism activities.</p>
<p>As residents of Estes Park, we urge WAPA to be sensible and NOT destroy the vital view corridor along Highway 34 with 105 ft high transmission poles</p>
<p>WHEN you have the option to use the existing USFS Utility Corridor</p>
<p>AND find a way to bury the lines from at least Mall Road to Lake Estes AND remove the obsolete mess of old transmission stuff on the lake.</p>
<p>Thank you for NOT destroying a beautiful community's view corridors and thus its economy which is almost totally dependent upon the views of Lake Estes, backdrop of RMNP, etc.</p>
<p>I am aware of the need to upgrade old equipment if we want to keep the quality of power that we have now and in the future. The driving force behind the success of Estes Park and the entire valley is the beauty of the land. To preserve that beauty I think we should do whatever is needed to maintain what we have or improve on it. The power line project, as efficient as it may be, is at best ugly.</p>
<p>My hope is that a solution can be found that will fill the need of everyone even if we all must all bite the bullet of increased cost.</p>
<p>I am extremely opposed to the alignment of the Estes - Flatiron powerline as it is proposed! It appears there has been LITTLE or NO public input on this controversial project! I recommend that public meetings be held in Estes Park to solicit meaningful public involvement.</p>
<p>In addition, I request that the scoping process be extended at least 45 days, to assist WAPA in meeting its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act.</p>
<p>Please add our voice to keep the direct route within the existing USFS Utility Corridor for the proposed upgrade to power lines.</p>
<p>Our reasoning is that the larger power lines of 105 feet will obstruct the pristine view of all including visitors to our valley and also EMFs will be closer to residents. A percentage of the population is sensitive to these field (as much as 30% is documented in Europe). Future growth in the residential area will make uninhabitable some of these area around the power lines in future generations.</p>
<p>Ladies and Gentlemen, as a land owner in the Estes Park Meadowdale Hill subdivision, I am concerned with your proposed power line consolidation.</p>
<p>Although the elimination of one of lines is a benefit, at what cost to the environment and landowner views? How much damage will there be to the national forest and private land to construct the new towers?</p>

I would strongly recommend you reconsider your proposed consolidation plan and look for other options.
I am writing to ask for your assistance in a matter involving the NEPA process for the Estes-Flatiron Re-build project. While I support the upgrade of the transmission lines, I am opposed to the re-route out of the utility corridor.
From my understanding, the timing of Environmental Assessment has been coordinated in a way that circumvents any decisions made by the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest staff after April 22, 2012.
Over a period of twenty-seven years and through two Environmental Impact Statements, the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest has developed clear policies on placement and consolidation of Utility Corridors in their Land and Resource Management Plan as directed by relevant law (see 43 USC 1763). Unfortunately, Western's proposed re-route siting disregards the long-established Utility Corridor designated by the Forest Service in order to accommodate a single influential land owner (Pew Crocker Ranch).
By purposefully omitting the Utility Corridor on the west end of the project as a viable route, the proposal presses the Forest Service to ignore its own rules regarding the proliferation of utility corridors and its careful designation of areas of high scenic integrity.
Individuals within the Forest Service in turn may currently be violating their procedures by not informing Western of the non-compliant proposal (see 36 CFR 251.54 and FERC 2009 Transmission Siting MOU Sect. IX.A), but rather have capitulated and participated in a costly and unneeded Environmental Assessment.
By submitting a special use application with a pre-determined route that counters established Forest Service policy, Western impels the Forest Service to violate their legal responsibilities and re-write vetted management decisions regarding Utility Corridor designation. As such, in an email to concerned residents, the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest has indicated that it will amend its management plan to accommodate the non-compliant re-route or claim clerical error in its initial Utility Corridor designation.
Most importantly, by delaying the NEPA process months after its permit application submission, Western invalidates the public Environmental Assessment process since the Forest Service must make an authorization decision well before the EA is complete. Due to provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Forest Service forfeits its ability to apply their current Forest policy one year from the permit application date. (see 16 USC 824p(h)).
I request that you provide oversight on this project and investigate why the staff at the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest have not followed their policies and have not informed Western of their non-compliant proposal in a timely fashion. By participating in this Environmental Assessment, Forest Service staff have turned a blind eye to their own policies and have not worked with Western to keep their rebuild in the Designated Utility Corridor defined in their Forest Plan.
Furthermore, I request that Western withdraws this EA, and rather fully takes into account the prior analyses made available to them in the two EISs completed by Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest over the last 25 years. This project can be streamlined with only a Categorical Exclusion for NEPA documentation (see 36 CFR 220.6 (10)(e)(ii)), which will avoid the unneeded expense of the EA process that will effectively not be applicable after the one year deadline. I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, and thank you in advance for your work in protecting the public's natural resources.
As members of the Estes Valley ILand (sic) Trust we expend much effort to keep our environment as natural as possible. This benefits the residents of our area nad benefits those visitors to our valley. These proposed power lines are not at all compatible with what we desire for our living environment.
The re-route of the western end of the Estes to Flatiron re-build project proposed by Western Area Power Administration will cause an unacceptable level of visual impact for the public and as a resident of the Estes Valley, I oppose this re-routing completely.
Please consider the negative visual impacts of this project and their affect on the key economic driver in this region of which my business is dependent: tourism.
I completely oppose the re-route, but am in favor of the new lines route being placed in the Forest Service designated utility corridor that runs below Mt Olympus.
The very important investment should be made of running these lines underground as they traverse between the Estes Lakes and into town. Currently they are very ugly and an ancient idea and to have these poles above ground in a world-class recreation and tourism area should be eliminated during this project.
In particular, by routing the line up Highway 36, the millions of visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park will forever be impacted as they travel this scenic highway. Instead of coming to the crest of the hill and being in awe of the snow-capped peaks in front of them, they will instead be shocked to see 110' steel industrial transmission towers with stacks of wires blocking their view. The lines will affect their experience of this national treasure all the way into the Estes Valley.
For those of us who visit the National Forest at the Pole Hill trail head regularly, these industrial towers will accompany us all the way up the backcountry road and across our spectacular views of RMNP.
The noise pollution and negative health consequences from the buzzing transmission lines alone will completely and negatively alter our forest experience.
As a resident of Pole Hill Rd., these lines would ruin our neighborhood, affect land and house values negatively, and the scenic hiking adjacent in the national forest would be ruined by these new lines. Please do not create such a travesty of a mess in this area.
I'm requesting that Western withdraw this Environmental Assessment and streamline this re-build in the already designated utility corridor, and that the Forest Service work with Western to keep the project in the utility corridor (not proliferate new ones).
If the EA and re-route were to continue, a full social-economic impact analysis will have to be done, along with a full visual-impact analysis on the human environment, including our community adjacent to and within the administrative boundary of the National Forest.
Thanks for your consideration of the public needs instead of just one landowner who doesn't even dwell on their property of the Crocker Ranch.

I have been coming to Estes Park for over 40 years and now bring my wife and 2 young children with me the 3-4 times per year that we visit. We have enjoyed the area so much that we bought a vacation home on Pole Hill because of the tremendous unobstructed views from the area. I'll always remember the incredible expansive views as we travelled down Highway 36 into the Estes Valley in our old station wagon. We would like for this type of initial experience in Estes Park to continue forever.

Not only will the reroute of power lines destroy these views, it will also likely severely impact the value of our property on Pole Hill.

Please follow the DUC when the lines need to be updated.