

# Estes to Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project

## Environmental Impact Statement Initiation

Western Area Power Administration

July 2012, Volume 1

### Next Steps: Scoping Meetings

Western has extended the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project EIS public scoping process through August 31, 2012. Western will hold two public meetings:

- August 6, 2012: 10am - 7pm**  
 Loveland Public Library  
 Gertrude Scott Meeting Room  
 300 N. Adams Avenue, Loveland, CO
- August 7, 2012: 10am - 7pm**  
 Rocky Mountain Park Inn & Estes Park Conference Center  
 101 S. Saint Vrain Avenue, Estes Park, CO

Drop in at any time to learn about the project and participate in several interactive exercises. Forest Service staff will be available from 4-7 pm at each meeting.

### Contact

For more information, contact Tim Snowden, Western Area Power Administration, 5555 E. Crossroads Blvd., P.O. Box 3700, Loveland, CO 80539-3003, fax (970) 461-7213 or e-mail, RMR\_estesflatironeis@wapa.gov. Or, if you would like someone to contact you, please leave a voicemail at (720) 962-7213.

### Additional Information

For more information on the project, visit <http://ww2.wapa.gov/sites/western/transmission/infrastruct/Pages/Estes-Flatiron.aspx>

To learn more about NEPA's environmental processes, visit: <http://energy.gov/nepa/office-nepa-policy-and-compliance>

### We Have Heard You

On August 23, 2011, Western Area Power Administration (Western) began the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild. After listening to public comment during the initial meetings for the project, Western determined that a more intensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be appropriate for the proposal to upgrade and co-locate two existing separate transmission lines on a double-circuit transmission line to one right-of-way. The EIS has an expanded public involvement process. The Forest Service, as a cooperating agency on the EIS, will be making a decision regarding actions on National Forest System land.

### Expanded Public Involvement Process

Western initiated the EIS public scoping process April 17, 2012, to give the public and agencies another opportunity to identify new issues or route options. The scoping period has been extended to August 31, 2012, to provide more opportunity to comment.

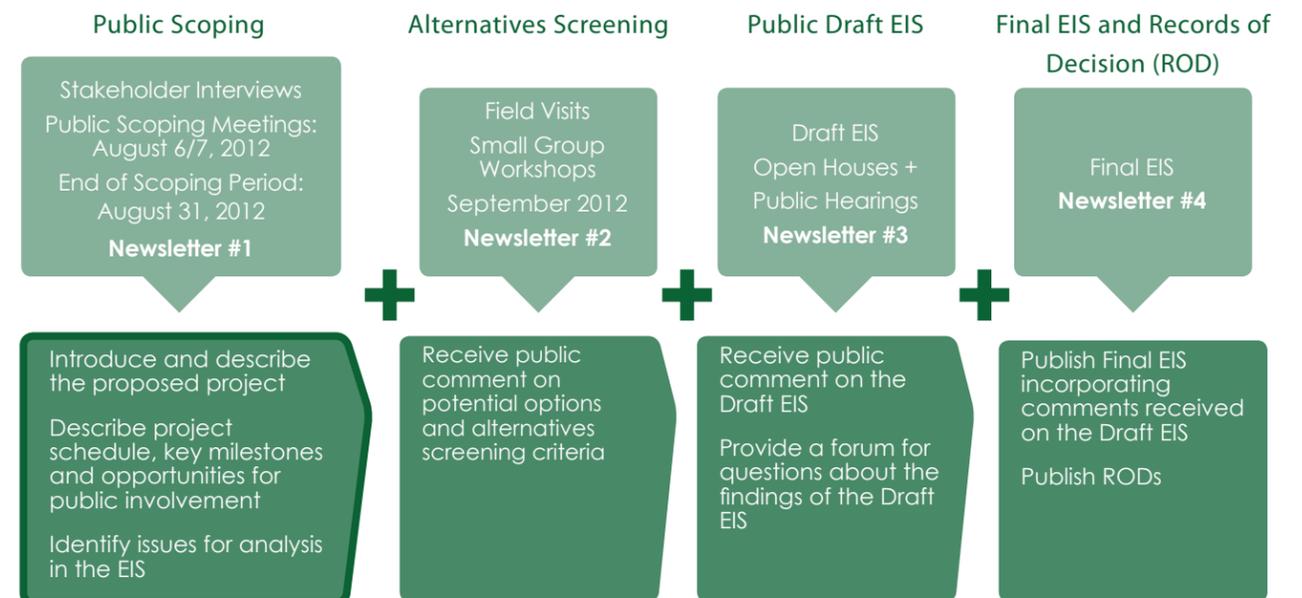
By regulation, the EIS process requires two distinct opportunities for the public to provide input and comment: 1) during the scoping phase of the EIS, and 2) after publication of the Draft EIS. For this EIS, Western is providing additional public involvement activities to solicit input on the EIS. Information received during the expanded scoping period and the alternatives screening analysis will help Western identify reasonable alternatives for the EIS. The full public involvement process for the EIS is shown below.

### Goals for the Expanded Process

Public involvement is critical to the development of the EIS. The goals for the expanded public involvement process are to:

- Engage a diverse group of public and agency participants.
- Provide information to Western concerning the views expressed by the public about the proposed project.
- Identify public and agency concerns so they can be addressed at appropriate stages of the EIS process.

### Expanded Public Involvement Process



## Public Scoping

Western has extended the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild Project EIS public scoping period through August 31, 2012. The extension provides opportunities for the public to provide additional comments and identify issues, opportunities and concerns that should be considered in the Draft EIS. Interested parties can submit comments through the end of the scoping period.

As part of the scoping process, Western will hold day-long drop-in meetings on August 6, 2012 (Loveland, Colorado) and August 7, 2012 (Estes Park, Colorado). Attendees can drop in at any time to learn about the project and participate in several interactive exercises.

### Objectives for Scoping

- Introduce the objectives of the proposed project.
- Describe the project schedule, the key milestones and opportunities for public involvement.
- Identify issues for analysis in the EIS.
- Present the purpose and need and project description.
- Ensure that we have reached key stakeholders and obtained their perspectives.
- Identify siting opportunities and constraints for consideration in the alternatives screening analysis.

The comments received from agencies and the public during scoping will be used to guide the alternatives screening analysis in the next phase of the EIS.

## Alternatives Screening Analysis

Once scoping is complete, Western will begin the alternatives screening analysis phase of the EIS. Options that meet the project purpose and need will be developed during this phase.

Western will host a series of field visits and small group workshops to solicit input about options to consider and potential issues or impacts. Western will seek input from the public and interested Federal, state, and local agencies, and Native American tribes.

### Objectives for Alternatives Screening Analysis

- Identify routing opportunities and constraints.
- Develop alternatives screening criteria.
- Participate in exercises to review and refine routing options.
- Provide a forum for the public to comment on routing options and ask questions about the process.

The comments received from agencies and the public during this phase will be considered during the alternatives screening analysis, resulting in the alternatives considered in the Draft EIS.

## Draft EIS Review

Following the alternatives screening analysis and workshops, a Draft EIS will be prepared to assess the environmental impacts of the alternatives carried forward in the EIS. Once the Draft EIS is released, agencies and the public will have an opportunity to comment on the EIS during a 45-day review period. Western will hold public hearings and open houses to provide information on the Draft EIS analyses and gather public input.

### Objectives for Draft EIS Review

- Receive public comments on the Draft EIS through formal public hearings.
- Provide a forum for the public to ask questions about the findings of the Draft EIS.

## Final EIS and Records of Decision

The Final EIS will include responses to all substantive public comments received on the Draft EIS. Western will not issue its Record of Decision until at least 30 days after the issuance of the Final EIS. The Forest Service will be using the information in the Final EIS to write its Record of Decision.

### Objectives for Final EIS and Records of Decision

- Publish Final EIS incorporating comments received on the Draft EIS.
- Publish RODs.

## Technology Spotlight

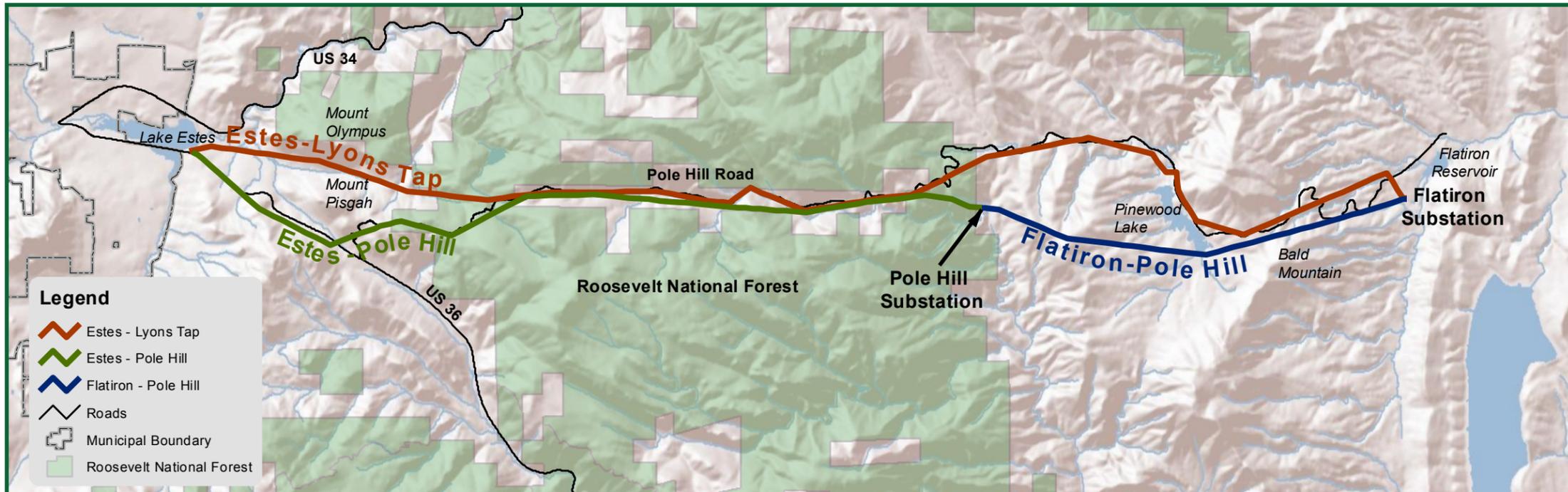
**Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF)** on the proposed rebuilt double-circuit transmission line would be lower than on the existing single-circuit line as a result of the following design elements:

- Rebuilt conductors would be slightly higher above ground, reducing the EMF at ground level.
- The rebuilt line would be constructed with vertical single poles and short crossarms, known as a vertical geometry, which yields some cancellation and shielding effects.
- The rebuilt line would generally carry the same load, or current flow, and combined with the vertical geometry, would yield some overall reduction of the magnetic field.

## Focus on Design

**Context Sensitive Design** is an approach to decision-making and design that takes into consideration the communities and lands that the transmission line passes. This concept will be incorporated into the alternatives development process for the Estes-Flatiron Transmission Line Rebuild. Context sensitive design concepts could:

- Optimize transmission structure design, heights, and locations to reduce landscape and visual effects.
- Identify opportunities to consolidate or share rights-of-way and parallel linear features.
- Identify opportunities to screen or back-drop structures and reduce skylining.
- Engage stakeholders and communities in the development of project-specific design criteria.



Existing Transmission Lines



The proposed project would consolidate existing transmission line rights-of-way.