

MITIGATION ACTION PLAN

for the

Davis-Mead 230-kV Transmission Line

Reconductor Project

(DOE/EA-1595)

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

November 2007

Western Area Power Administration

Mitigation Action Plan

1.0 HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Western Area Power Administration (Western) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1595) for the Davis-Mead 230-kV Transmission Line Reconductor Project (Project). Based on the EA and the mitigation commitments in this Mitigation Action Plan (MAP), Western has determined that the Project would not result in any significant environmental impacts, and the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) will not be required. The basis for this determination is described in the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued concurrently with this document.

Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to reconductor approximately 61 miles of 230-kV transmission line from the Davis Substation at Davis Dam near Bullhead City, Arizona, to the Mead Substation near Boulder City in southern Nevada. Reconductoring the transmission line would involve replacement of the existing conductor and insulator assemblies. The steps involved in reconductoring are unclipping, pulling, splicing, tensioning, and clipping conductor. Existing lattice steel transmission line structures and overhead ground wire are proposed to be utilized and remain intact. Access to the transmission line would be by way of existing access roads, some of which may require improvement for use. Boat or helicopter would be used to access structures where access is impractical, primarily for structures located on steep slopes or bordering on Lake Mohave. All disturbances are expected to occur within existing transmission line and access road rights-of-way (ROW). No new easements are anticipated. A number of environmental protection measures are included with the proposed action to minimize potential adverse environmental effects.

The requirements for preparing a MAP are specified in 10 CFR part 1021 (Section 331(a), Department of Energy National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures). These guidelines state that DOE shall prepare a MAP for commitments to mitigations that are essential to render the impacts of a proposed action not significant. The guidelines further state that the MAP shall also explain how mitigation will be planned and implemented. The EA analyzed the impacts of the Project. Western has determined that two mitigation measures are essential to render the impacts of the proposed action not significant: 1) comply with the provisions and stipulations of the Biological Opinion, dated October 19, 2007, and 2) implement cultural resource protection measures.

2.0 FUNCTION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE MITIGATION ACTION PLAN

The following sections describe the plans and actions by which Western will implement and verify mitigation action commitments described above.

Section 3.0 describes the monitoring and verification of mitigation actions and the reporting requirements. Section 4.0 describes the mitigation commitments and action plans for the Project.

The commitment to the mitigation is presented along with an action plan composed of the tasks, responsible party, and schedule anticipated for the mitigation.

3.0 MITIGATION ACTION PLAN MONITORING AND REPORTING SYSTEM

Section 5.d. (11)(f) of DOE Order 451.1B, National Environmental Policy Act Compliance Program, requires Western to report MAP activities in its Annual Site Environmental Report, published by January 31 of each year. This annual report will reflect new information or changed circumstances. If major changes to mitigation included in this MAP are necessary, these changes will be described in the annual report. The annual report will be made available to the public.

The responsible party identified in the table under Section 4.0 (G0400 Environment/Environmental Protection Specialist and G5600 Construction/Field Inspector) will verify mitigation results and determine if the mitigation actions achieved their intended purpose. Existing organizational and administrative controls will be used to gather information regarding implementation and status of mitigation actions. Such controls include applicable reporting systems, inspection, and verification. The results of inspection and verification will be reported on the anniversary of the MAP in the Annual Report. When mitigation actions are completed and verified, the information will be included in the Annual Report.

4.0 MITIGATION COMMITMENTS AND ACTION PLANS

Mitigation practices were defined for the Project in the EA and were considered during the assessment of impacts of the Project. Environmental protection measures were incorporated into the project description and must be implemented by Western and its consultant during construction of the Project. These measures were identified to reduce or eliminate impacts on effected resources (see Chapter 2 in the EA). Measures not addressed as part of this MAP will be implemented as part of Western's standard business and environmental program practices.

The following table outlines the mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less than significant and action items necessary to assure the mitigation is implemented to protect biological and cultural resources. Sensitive biological and cultural location information is not disclosed in the table.

Resource and Schedule	Actions Needed to Avoid Significant Impact	Responsible Party	
		G0400	G5600
Wildlife Mojave desert tortoise <u>Schedule:</u> Throughout the project	Terms and conditions of the biological opinion, dated October 19, 2007, would be implemented during all activities.		
	1. Minimize injury and mortality of desert tortoise due to project activities, capture, and handling.		
	a. Authorized desert tortoise biologist onsite during project activities.	X	X
	b. Authorized biologist shall present a desert tortoise awareness program.	X	X
	c. Authorized biologist shall survey for desert tortoise and their burrows and clear the ROW of tortoise before vehicles travel the ROW.	X	
	d. Authorized biologist excavates all potential desert tortoise burrows by hand, removes tortoises, and collapses or blocks burrows to prevent occupation by tortoise.	X	
	e. All desert tortoise observed within the project area or on access road shall be reported immediately to the authorized biologist and activities shall cease.		X
	f. Desert tortoise will be relocated 1,500 feet into adjacent undisturbed habitat on protected public land.	X	
	g. Desert tortoise shall be treated in a manner to ensure they do not overheat, do not exhibit signs of overheating, and are not placed in a situation where they cannot maintain surface and core temperatures.	X	
	h. All fuel, transmission or brake fluid leaks, or other hazardous waste leaks, spills or releases shall be reported immediately and removed and disposed of at an approved off-site landfill. A designated area will be used to service construction equipment.		X
	i. Vehicles shall not exceed 15 mph on access road; authorized biologist to monitor speed limit.	X	X

Resource and Schedule	Actions Needed to Avoid Significant Impact	Responsible Party	
		G0400	G5600
Wildlife (continued)	j. Project personnel shall exercise caution when commuting to the project site, obey speed limits, and report tortoise observations, including mortalities to the authorized biologist. Pets prohibited on the project.		X
	k. Inspect parked vehicles, whether the engine is engaged or not, for desert tortoises prior to moving the vehicle. Contact authorized biologist if tortoise is observed.		X
	l. The biologist shall ensure that no habitat is disturbed and that all vehicles and equipment remain on the ROW or areas devoid of native vegetation. Traveling cross country and outside of designated areas shall be prohibited.	X	X
	2. Minimize predation on tortoises by ravens or other desert tortoise predators attracted to the project area.		
	a. Promptly dispose of trash and food items in predator-proof containers with resealing lids, empty trash daily, and remove all waste and dispose of in an approved landfill. Remove and properly dispose of construction waste daily.		X
	3. Minimize loss and long-term degradation and fragmentation of desert tortoise habitat, such as soil compaction, erosion, crushed vegetation, or introduction of non-native invasive plants or weeds.		
	a. Flag boundaries of all areas to be disturbed before beginning any activities; all disturbances, vehicles, and equipment shall be confined to flagged areas. Disturbance beyond construction zone is prohibited.		X
	Authorized biologist will ensure project vehicles and equipment occur only in designated areas.	X	
	b. Monitor site for weeds; take appropriate control measures to ensure weeds do not establish at site.	X	X

Resource and Schedule	Actions Needed to Avoid Significant Impact	Responsible Party	
		G0400	G5600
Wildlife (continued)	4. Ensure compliance with the reasonable and prudent measures, terms and conditions, reporting requirements, and re-initiation requirements in the BO.		
	a. Western's designated field representative will be responsible for overseeing compliance with protective stipulations for the tortoise and for coordinating directly with Western and the USFWS.		X
	b. The onsite biologist shall record each observation of tortoise handled. A final report will be submitted to the USFWS within 90 days of completion of the project.	X	
	c. Reporting Requirements. Upon locating a dead or injured desert tortoise within the action area, notification must be made to the USFWS at (702) 515-5230. All deaths, injuries, and illnesses of desert tortoises, whether associated with project activities or not, will be summarized in a report.	X	
	d. Upon notifying the USFWS of a dead or injured tortoise, Western shall take appropriate action as directed by USFWS.	X	X
Cultural Resources Eligible cultural resource sites <u>Schedule:</u> When construction activities occur in proximity to the sites	Special conditions in Nevada		
	1. Monitor project activities at the site	X	
	2. Vehicles and equipment remain on the existing access road with no upgrading or realignment in the area of the site.		X
	Special conditions in Arizona		
	1. Monitor project activities at the site.	X	
	2. Hand carrying the old and new conductors within site boundaries and a surrounding 50-foot-wide buffer area and transported outside the area prior to pulling or winding.		X
	3. Equipment and vehicles avoid the site and buffer area.		X