

# Chapter 5

## Consultation and Coordination

### 5.1 Introduction

In response to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (1978) for implementing NEPA, a coordination program was developed for the Harry Allen–Mead Transmission Line to ensure members of the public and Federal, state and local agencies were contacted, consulted and given adequate opportunity to be involved in the process. This chapter describes the lead agency’s (BLM) scoping process, the cooperating agencies’ involvement, stakeholder issues and concerns identified and other formal and/or informal reviews or consultations.

The scoping phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA), covered in this section, consisted of agency and other stakeholder contacts for purposes of gathering data, disseminating plan information and identifying and understanding the issues identified during scoping. Additionally, previous environmental documentation and existing agency data was reviewed and evaluated for applicability and adequacy for use during this EA and is discussed in Section 5.2.

The EA process was begun with the filing of a right-of-way application by Nevada Power in October 2002 with the BLM to construct a 500kV transmission line from the Harry Allen Substation to the Mead Substation. Following the application, the BLM determined that an EA would be required. BLM implementing regulations require an EA be completed for this Federal action to determine whether there are significant environmental impacts from the construction of the 500kV transmission line and associated ancillary construction activities on Federal land.

### 5.2 Previous Projects

Existing published and unpublished environmental data, maps, reports and statements prepared for previous transmission line-related actions in the area were reviewed and evaluated to determine their applicability and adequacy for use in the environmental studies. The most relevant information was incorporated from the following reports:

- Harry Allen–Northwest 500kV Transmission Line Environmental Assessment, March 2002
- Harry Allen–Crystal 500kV Transmission Line EA, June 2001
- Crystal Substation Expansion and Harry Allen–Crystal 500kV Transmission Line Reroute Environmental Assessment, November 2001
- Crystal Substation Environmental Assessment, October 1997
- Moapa Paiute Energy Center Draft Environmental Impact Statement, March 2001
- Proposed Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, May 1998

- Proposed Apex Land Sale Environmental Assessment, October 1998
- Harry Allen Generating Station EIS, 1980

### **5.3 Agency Contacts**

Agencies and organizations having jurisdiction and/or specific interest within the proposed project area were contacted following the right-of-way application filing to inform them of the proposed project, to verify the status and availability of existing environmental data and to solicit input during the EA process. See Section 5.4 for a discussion on Cooperating Agencies. Formal consultations were conducted with specific agencies and discussed in Section 5.4.

A scoping letter, study area map and plan schedule was sent out to the following Federal, state and local agencies:

#### **Federal**

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS)  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)  
U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration (Western)  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE)  
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)  
Nellis Air Force Base

#### **State**

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW)  
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection  
Nevada Division of State Lands  
Nevada Division of Transportation

#### **Local and County**

City of North of Las Vegas  
City of North Las Vegas Planning Commission  
City of Henderson  
Clark County Public Works  
Clark County Advanced Planning Division  
Clark County Environmental Planning Division

Clark County Major Projects Team  
Clark County Division of Aviation  
City of Las Vegas City Planning  
City of Las Vegas Planning Commission  
Boulder City Community Development

## **5.4 Cooperating Agencies**

In December 2002, BLM as the lead Federal agency, sent a letter to the Federal agencies inviting each to participate in the process as a cooperating agency and inviting each to attend a January 9, 2003, Agency Meeting to learn about the proposed project, ask questions and to help each determine their involvement. Western, USBR and Nevada Division of Wildlife attended the meeting on January 9. Western and USBR both identified itself as a cooperating agency for the proposed project. Western and USBR immediately began attending monthly team meetings and participating in the decision-making process.

## **5.5 Scoping Process**

### **5.5.1 Coordination with BLM**

Several meetings were held with the BLM and cooperating agencies to address the proposed project’s purpose and need, EA significance criteria, results of the studies, routing and required mitigation. The agencies, Nevada Power and its environmental contractor met on a monthly basis to discuss any issues and project needs. Representatives of BLM and the cooperating agencies toured the proposed alignment. As a result of these meetings, the following list of major issues and/or concerns were expressed by BLM and the cooperating agencies:

- Cultural resources mitigation planning and scheduling
- Section 7 consultation requirements and timing
- Minimizing impacts to natural resources
- Minimizing visual impacts
- Logically, accurately and appropriately addressing cumulative effects

### **5.5.2 Public Scoping Meetings**

The proposed project was first introduced to the community and interested stakeholders in July 2001 as the Interstate Intertie–part of the Centennial Plan designed to move interstate electricity supplies through the heavily urbanized Southern Nevada region. Nevada Power held 30 public meetings and open houses, along with several neighborhood meetings, at locations convenient to the communities potentially affected

by the routing of the transmission line. Each workshop provided consumers with an overview of the process, alternative route maps, aerial maps, photographs of equipment, frequently asked questions/answers sheet, list of upcoming open house workshops, environmental information, energy conservation brochures and information, as well as customer service information. Workshops were held in Northwest Las Vegas, Northeast Las Vegas, Henderson, Central Las Vegas, Southwest Las Vegas and Boulder City.

Community comments were very positive about the open house format and staffing. Community comments reflected BLM's emphasis to use existing transmission line corridors to the maximum extent. Community comments and recommendations also included:

- Respect for existing master plans of the communities affected
- Use of low cost options
- Pursuit of renewables as future energy sources
- Implementation of conservation measures such as air conditioning load management

Henderson citizens urged Nevada Power to build along existing corridors using the most eastern routes possible. Air quality, protecting natural wildlife and respecting and protecting the natural environment were also noted in a few comments, again consistent with the agencies' concerns.

In 2003, after submitting an official right-of-way application to BLM, Nevada Power began hosting its second round of public workshops, with the first workshop being held on January 22, 2003, at the Walnut Recreation Center in Las Vegas. Attendance was extremely low. On January 27, Nevada Power hosted its second community workshop at the Henderson Convention Center. There were attendees from the City of Henderson Planning Department and Neighborhood Services and 18 other community attendees. Four comment sheets were received with positive remarks. Most people had no objection to the proposed project due to the lines being on the east side of the existing lines. Two members of the Sierra Club did express some concern due to the visual impact on the Rainbow Gardens hiking trails. On January 29, Nevada Power hosted its third and final Community Workshop in Boulder City. There were eight attendees; four of them were Boulder City Staff Members. Feedback was positive.

In addition to public workshops that Nevada Power conducted, BLM and cooperating agencies held a public scoping meeting on April 2, 2003. Information developed during the scoping process formed the basis for transmission line routing, impact assessment and mitigation planning studies.

As directed by the CEQ regulations, the extent of analysis for the issues and concerns raised during the agency and public scoping process were determined by BLM and the cooperating agencies.

### 5.5.3 Meetings with Local Officials and Local Stakeholders

Nevada Power representatives met with several public and community representatives to present an overview of the proposed project. Information provided included a packet outlining the scope and need for the proposed project, maps and photographs of the equipment that would be installed. The following is a list of the various local councils and commissions that Nevada Power met with to discuss the proposed project.

- North Las Vegas Planning Commission
- North Las Vegas City Council
- Las Vegas City Council
- Las Vegas City Planning Commission
- Clark County Regional Planning Commission
- Clark County Planning Commission
- Clark County Commission
- Clark County Multispecies Habitat Conservation Group
- City of Henderson Planning Commission
- City of Henderson City Council
- Boulder City Council
- River Mountain Ranch Estates Home Owners' Association
- River Mountains Trail Partners
- City of Henderson

## 5.6 Formal Consultation with Federal Agencies

In addition to the BLM, Western and USBR, other agencies (identified in Section 5.3) were contacted for specific information during the preparation of this EA.

To comply with the Endangered Species Act (1973) as amended and the implementing regulations for Section 7 consultation, species lists were requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at the beginning of the EA process.

Section 7 Consultation is being conducted for the desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, Yuma clapper rail, bald eagle, western yellow-billed cuckoo and relict leopard frog. These Federally-listed biological resources were addressed in a Biological Assessment (BA) submitted in October 2003 to FWS. BLM received a notice of initiation of consultation from FWS in November 2003.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) requires that any undertaking on Federal land or land requiring a Federal permit take into account potential effects to cultural resources that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Section 106 consultations and associated cultural surveys were

conducted as required. BLM and the cooperating agencies conducted consultations with Native Americans as deemed appropriate. Refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.3.6 Cultural and Ethnographic Resources for details regarding tribal communications.

The intensity of impacts to cultural resources is determined in accordance with the NHPA, which permits three options: "no effect," "no adverse effect" or "adverse effect." Effects to cultural resources are evaluated based on the Secretary of the Interior's criteria for eligibility for listing of a cultural property in the NRHP, as per Section 106 of the NHPA. Archaeological sites that fail to meet any of the Secretary's criteria regarding the historical and/or cultural significance of a property (criteria a through c), or regarding the potential of an archaeological site to provide information on the history of the region (criterion d), are termed ineligible for nomination to the NRHP. If agency and SHPO concurrence has been obtained on a declaration of ineligibility, impacts to ineligible properties are not considered adverse.

An Archeological Survey of the Harry Allen to Mead 500kV Transmission Line, Nevada Cultural Resources Report CR5-2462(P) was submitted to SHPO in early December 2003. SHPO concurrence on the report determination was received on January 5, 2004.

## ***5.7 Public Review of the EA***

Public review of the EA will be completed following the 30-day comment period. If no significant impacts are identified and the proposed project is approved, the BLM, in cooperation with Western and USBR, will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact for public lands crossed by the Proposed Action. Cooperating agencies will issue their appropriate decision documents in cooperation with BLM's decision document.