

# Facts about:

## the proposed Wellton-Mohawk Generating Facility, Yuma County, Arizona

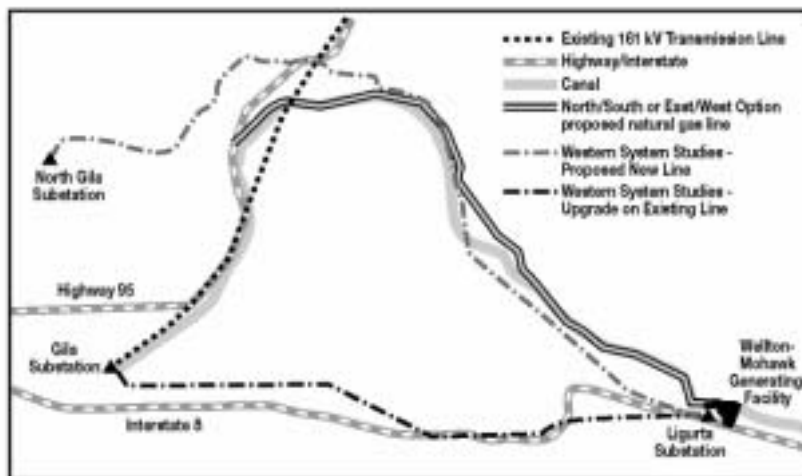
### What is the Wellton-Mohawk Generating Facility?

Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District, Yuma County Water Users' Association and Dome Valley Energy Partners LLC—collectively referred to as Dome Valley—propose to build and operate a natural gas-fired combined cycle electric generating facility, the Wellton-Mohawk Generating Facility, an associated solar collection field and ancillary facilities.

The proposed power plant would be located next to Western's existing Ligurta Substation, about 25 miles east of Yuma and nine miles west of Wellton, just north of Interstate Highway 8. The first phase of the proposed facility would interconnect with the transmission system at Western's Ligurta Substation.

The proposed project would be developed in two phases. The full output of the first phase would be nominally rated at 260 megawatts with about a 310-MW peaking capacity. After the second phase is built, the proposed facility would be nominally rated at 520 MW, with a peaking capacity of about 620 MW by using duct burners.

Each phase would consist of one combustion turbine, one heat recovery steam generator, a steam turbine, condenser, transformer, cooling towers, tanks, sedimentation/evaporation ponds, auxiliary boilers, an emergency generator, an emergency fire pump, and associated buildings. Wellton-Mohawk IDD would provide water for the proposed facility's use—including cooling—from the Wellton-Mohawk Canal. A solar component would convert solar energy to thermal energy to provide inlet air-cooling. Natural gas for the proposed facility would be delivered via a new natural gas pipeline that would interconnect to a proposed or existing natural gas transmission line near U.S. Highway 95, northwest of the facility.



### Why are Western, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation involved in this project?

Dome Valley requested to interconnect with Western's transmission system at Ligurta Substation. In response, Western conducted a transmission system impact study and found that we would need upgrades and additions to the existing transmission system to accommodate the proposed facility. These include upgrading the existing Ligurta Substation, upgrading Western's existing 12.7-mile Ligurta-Gila transmission line, adding 75 MW of transformer capacity in Western's Gila Substation near Yuma, constructing a new 18-mile transmission line between the Ligurta Substation and Arizona Public Service's North Gila Substation north of Yuma, and interconnecting this line at the North Gila Substation.

The new Ligurta-North Gila transmission line would parallel the existing Wellton-Mohawk Canal for most of its length. In addition, Western would require that primary and secondary communication systems be installed to ensure reliable transmission system operation. Because the electricity generated by the proposed facility would be integrated into Western's transmission system, Western must prepare an environmental impact statement. Western will be the lead Federal agency in preparing the EIS.

Portions of the transmission line upgrades and additions and a proposed natural gas pipeline for the facility would cross lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management's Yuma Field Office. The proposed

facility would occupy land currently owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. All three Federal agencies must determine the impact of this proposal on the facilities they own and operate.

## **What decisions will be made?**

Dome Valley proposes to build the facility and interconnect the first phase of the project at Ligurta Substation. With the proposed transmission system additions, Western's system would have capacity available to transmit power from the proposed first phase. Transmission system improvements for the second phase have not been identified and depend on future state and regional transmission studies. They would be addressed in a separate environmental analysis. Western will use the EIS, along with other factors, to determine whether to approve its participation in the facility.

Since the BLM needs to grant rights-of-way easements for portions of the transmission line additions and new natural gas pipeline, BLM will participate as a cooperating agency in preparing the EIS. Reclamation would transfer title of the property to the proposed facility location to Wellton-Mohawk. The EIS will address the proposed property transfer and Reclamation will also participate in the EIS as a cooperating agency.

The Arizona Corporation Commission would authorize construction of the facility by issuing a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility. The proposed project would also require other permits from various state and local jurisdictions. These include an Arizona Department of Environmental Quality air emissions permit and Yuma County land use authorizations.

Western will contact other Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies during the scoping period to solicit their input and participation in the EIS process.

## **What will the EIS address?**

Western is preparing an EIS to fulfill its requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA requires that Federal agencies analyze the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Federal action and address any adverse impacts. NEPA also requires Federal agencies to communicate the impacts of its actions to interested and affected parties before it decides to implement the proposed action.

Western, in consultation with the cooperating agencies, will carefully examine public health and safety, environmental impacts and engineering aspects of the proposed facility, the proposed transmission system upgrades and facilities, and the proposed natural gas pipeline. Even though only portions of the proposed facility and its components are influenced by Western, BLM, or Reclamation decisions, the EIS will address the entire first phase of the proposed project. Western has identified the following issues and concerns and will finalize the list following the EIS scoping process:

- Transfer of public lands from Federal ownership to Dome Valley
- Environmental effects on local property owners
- Fuel use
- Benefits to local community
- Induced growth
- Power rates
- Potential direct and indirect affects to cultural resource sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places
- Water conservation and reuse
- Effects to migratory bird populations
- Power plant emissions and effects on local communities
- Groundwater effects from the wastewater ponds

## **What does Western need from you?**

Western needs members of the public, tribes and Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies to identify issues and concerns to help us define the EIS scope and alternatives. Please complete the enclosed postage paid response sheet, listing your concerns, issues, or questions, or call the Western contact below, by June 30, 2003. If we do not hear otherwise from you, we'll keep your name on the project's mailing list for future EIS-related announcements.

Western also invites you to attend our scoping meetings, scheduled for 6 to 9 p.m., June 3 at the Wellton Elementary School, 29126 San Jose Avenue in Wellton, and 6 to 9 p.m., June 4 at the Yuma Civic and Convention Center, 1440 West Desert Hills Drive, Yuma. Both facilities are handicapped accessible. We'll also have an interpreter available to assist hearing-impaired persons.

Western needs your input by June 30 to help us define the scope for the EIS.

You may also provide comments on the proposed project throughout the EIS process. Send your comments to: Mr. John Holt, Environment Manager, Desert Southwest Customer Service Region, Western Area Power Administration, P.O. Box 6457, Phoenix, AZ 85005, fax (602) 352-2630, e-mail [holt@wapa.gov](mailto:holt@wapa.gov).

## **When will there be other opportunities to provide comments?**

After analyzing public concerns and possible impacts from the proposed project, Western in consultation with the cooperating agencies, will issue a Draft EIS. You will have 45 days to review this report and provide comments on it. Western expects the Draft EIS will be available for review in August 2003. Western will host a public hearing to receive comments on the Draft EIS during the review period. Western will then review these comments before preparing a Final EIS. You will have another 30 days to review the final EIS. Western expects to issue the Final EIS near the end of 2003. The three agencies will then make individual decisions on whether to move forward with their actions related to the proposed project. Agency decisions on the proposed facility are expected in early 2004. Dome Valley would begin construction following the agencies' decisions.

## **How can I learn more?**

Call or write Mark Wieringa, NEPA Document Manager, Western Area Power Administration, P.O. Box 281213, Lakewood, CO 80228-8213, phone: 720-962-7448, fax: 720-962-7263, e-mail: [wieringa@wapa.gov](mailto:wieringa@wapa.gov).

For project information in Spanish, contact Ms. Enoe Marcum, Environmental Specialist, Desert Southwest Customer Service Region, Western Area Power Administration, P.O. Box 6457, Phoenix, AZ 85005, phone: 602-352-2422, fax: 602-352-2630, e-mail [marcum@wapa.gov](mailto:marcum@wapa.gov).