

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

**Western Area Power Administration**

**Floodplain Statement of Findings for the Miracle Mile-Cheyenne No. 1  
Transmission Line**

**AGENCY:** Western Area Power Administration, DOE.

**ACTION:** Floodplain Statement of Findings.

**SUMMARY:** This Floodplain Statement of Findings for the Miracle Mile-Cheyenne No. 1 Transmission Line was prepared in accordance with the U.S. Department of Energy's Floodplain/Wetland Review Requirements (10 CFR part 1022). Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to redirect the flow of the Little Laramie River to prevent a transmission line structure on the Miracle Mile-Cheyenne No. 1 transmission line from being washed out. The activity is within the Little Laramie River floodplain located approximately 9 miles northwest of Laramie, Albany County, Wyoming. Western prepared a floodplain assessment describing the effects, alternatives, and measures designed to avoid or minimize potential harm to or within the affected floodplain. This action is categorically excluded under the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Procedures (10 CFR part 1021). Due to the need to redirect the river's flow before the onset of winter weather and maintain project effectiveness, the 15-day public review period following the publication of the Statement of Findings has been waived per

10 CFR 1022.18 (c).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Rodney Jones, Environmental Specialist, Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region, Western Area Power Administration, P.O. Box 3700, Loveland, CO 80539-3003, telephone (970) 490-7371, email [rjones@wapa.gov](mailto:rjones@wapa.gov).

For further information on DOE Floodplain/Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements, contact: Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585, telephone (202)586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This Statement of Findings for the Miracle Mile-Cheyenne No. 1 transmission line was prepared in accordance with 10 CFR part 1022. A notice of floodplain involvement was published in the Federal Register (FR) on October 28, 1999 (64 FR 58057). The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) responded to Western's Notice of Floodplain Involvement expressing concerns over increased water velocity in the immediate vicinity of the work, as well as upstream and downstream. Western is planning to undertake a transmission line structure protection measure that includes redirecting approximately 60 feet of the Little Laramie River, located northwest of Laramie, Albany County, Wyoming. Structure 82/2 of the Miracle Mile-Cheyenne No. 1 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line is located within a small ox bow bend of the Little Laramie River. The river has eroded the stream bank to within 3 feet of the base of the structure. The structure is at risk of failure due to ongoing stream

bank erosion. If the current rate of erosion continues, the structure could potentially fail during the year 2000 spring runoff, or sooner. Western needs to correct the situation immediately to avoid interruption of electrical service, maintain system reliability, and avoid potential harmful effects that could result from the failure of the electrical transmission line. Per a review of the flood hazard maps for Albany County, Western determined that redirecting the flow of the river around the transmission line structure involves the 100-year floodplain of the Little Laramie River. The transmission line consists of wood pole, H-frame structures carrying three-phase electric power. The Miracle Mile-Cheyenne No. 1 transmission line was put into service in 1960 as part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program.

Western is proposing to cut a channel between the two arms of the ox bow, which will divert the stream flow behind and south of Structure 82/2. A back hoe will be used to cut the new channel, which will be approximately 60 feet in length. All spoil dirt will be removed and placed away from the stream. The channel will be cut from the downstream side to the upstream side to prevent any spoil material from entering the stream. At this location, the stream is approximately 8 feet wide and a few inches to a foot in depth during low flow conditions.

Western considered alternatives to its proposed action, including no action, installing new structures to span the Little Laramie River, and the installation of rip-rap to stabilize the river banks of the ox bow at structure 82/2. The installation of new structures and/or rip-rap would not have avoided impacts to the floodplain. The no action alternative

would not have resolved the risk to structure 82/2.

In response to WGFCD concerns, a qualified hydrologist has conducted a field review of Western's proposal and alternatives, and determined that diverting the stream is not expected to increase water velocity at the work site, or water velocity upstream or downstream of the work site. Diverting the stream into the new channel is not expected to have any measurable affect on flood storage volume or impact floodplain characteristics down stream. There will be no new structures placed in the floodplain. The proposed activity would occur during annual minimum flow conditions. The action would conform with applicable State or local floodplain protection standards. This action is categorically excluded under the DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR part 1021).

Dated:

Michael S. Hacskaylo  
Administrator