

EIS timeline

Public scoping— August/September 2006

- Public provides issues and comments on EIS scope

Route refinement—Winter 2006/07

- Public review and comment on refined routes

Draft EIS published—Summer 2007

- Public review and comment

Final EIS published—Winter 2007/08

- Public review and comment

Record of decision published— 1st quarter 2008

- Public notified of decision

EIS to address connected, cumulative actions

In the EIS, Western will evaluate the impacts from connected and cumulative actions. Connected actions are closely related to the proposed action because they may trigger other actions that may require an environmental impact statement; could not proceed without other actions occurring either before or at the same time; or depend on a larger action for their justification.

Western has determined that the actions connected to Western's proposal to participate in the EPTP include activities associated with constructing, maintaining and operating the proposed transmission lines and ancillary facilities, including expanding existing substations, constructing new substations; constructing access roads; and installing fiber optic communication facilities.

Cumulative actions are actions that, when viewed along with the proposed actions, have cumulatively significant impacts. Western has determined that cumulative actions for the proposal to participate in the Project include Tri-State's proposed generation projects and other past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects.

How you can learn more

For more information about the proposed project, visit the project Web site online at <http://www.wapa.gov/transmission/eptp.htm>. If you have question, comments, concerns or would like more information, send an e-mail to us at eptp@wapa.gov, or call the toll-free EPTP hotline, 1-888-826-4710.

Comment on the project

Comments on the proposed project can be submitted at one of the meetings or to:

Jim Hartman, Environmental Manager
Western Area Power Administration
Rocky Mountain Region
P.O. Box 3700, Loveland, CO 80539
fax 970-461-7213; or
e-mail eptp@wapa.gov

Scoping comments should be provided by Sept. 30 to be considered in defining the scope for the EIS. Western will consider all public comments provided during the entire EIS process.

About Western

Western Area Power Administration markets and delivers reliable, cost-based hydroelectric power and related services to cities and towns, cooperatives, irrigation districts and Native American tribes in 15 Western states, including Colorado and Kansas. Western is one of four power marketing administrations within the U.S. Department of Energy whose role is to market and transmit electricity from Federally owned and operated multi-use water projects.

About Tri-State

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association is a wholesale electric power supplier owned by the 44 electric cooperatives that it serves. Tri-State generates and transports electricity to its member systems throughout a 250,000 square-mile service territory across Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming.



Eastern Plains TRANSMISSION PROJECT

AUGUST 2006

Scoping meetings set for Eastern Plains Transmission Project

Scoping meetings on proposed transmission facilities in eastern Colorado and western Kansas are set for 10 communities near the project between Aug. 28 and Sept. 14.

Western Area Power Administration seeks public comments on the proposed project. You are invited to identify issues and alternatives to evaluate for environmental impacts in the Eastern Plains Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement.

The scoping meetings will be structured as informal open houses. They will provide interested parties the opportunity to view proposed project and EIS process information, ask questions and make comments. Preliminary locations of transmission line corridors and new substations have been identified and will be presented. Western representatives will be available to answer questions and provide additional information.

When and where will scoping meetings be held?

Open-house meetings from 3 to 8 p.m., will be held across the eastern plains to share information about the proposed project and answer questions. Meetings are planned for:

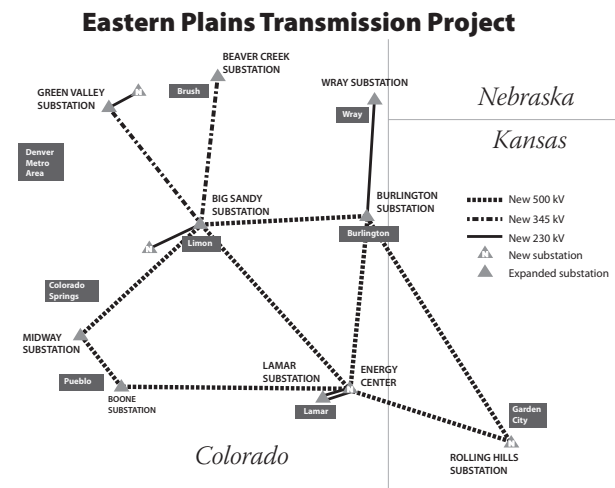
- **Aug. 28, Brush, Colo.,** Carroll Building, 418 Edison Street
- **Aug. 29, Wray, Colo.,** City Hall, Community Room, 245 W. 4th Street
- **Aug. 30, Limon, Colo.,** Limon Community Building, North Room, 477 D Avenue
- **Aug. 31, Aurora, Colo.,** Holiday Inn—Denver International Airport, Breckenridge Ballroom, 15500 East 40th Avenue
- **Sept. 5, Fountain, Colo.,** Lorraine High School/Community Center, 301 E. Iowa Avenue
- **Sept. 6, Pueblo, Colo.,** Pueblo Convention Center, Fortino Grand Hall C-West, 320 Central Main Street
- **Sept. 11, Burlington, Colo.,** Burlington Education and Community Center, 420 S. 14th Street, Old Town
- **Sept. 12, Sharon Springs, Kan.,** Community Activity Building, "CAB" Building, Wallace County Fairgrounds
- **Sept. 13, Lamar, Colo.,** Lamar Community Building, Multi-Purpose Room, 610 South 6th Street
- **Sept. 14, Lakin, Kan.,** Veteran's Memorial Building, 207 North Main Street

All meeting locations are wheelchair accessible. Please contact Western if you need other accommodations to attend the scoping meetings.

EPTP would provide significant additions to high-voltage transmission system

The Eastern Plains Transmission Project is a proposed new transmission project that would include about 1,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines and related facilities in eastern Colorado and western Kansas, expanding existing substations and constructing new substations, constructing access roads and installing fiber optic communication facilities. As currently planned, the EPTP would be one of the largest transmission additions in the United States in the past five years.

Western proposes to participate in the construction of the Eastern Plains project with Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc., in exchange for capacity rights on the transmission lines. These rights would provide Western with approximately 275 megawatts of capacity on the proposed transmission system. Western needs this additional transmission



system capacity to provide more economical, reliable, diverse and flexible power delivery to its customers.

Tri-State is a wholesale electric power supplier owned by the 44 electric cooperatives that it serves. Tri-State generates and transports electricity to its member systems throughout a 250,000 square-mile service territory across Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming. Tri-

State's board of directors approved a comprehensive resource development plan that includes generation in western Kansas and eastern Colorado, and construction of a transmission system to deliver the generation to customers. The transmission portion of Tri-State's resource plan presents an opportunity for Western to obtain transmission capacity to meet Western's needs.

For more information about the proposed project, please visit the project Web site online at: <http://www.wapa.gov/transmission/eptp.htm>.

Public comments sought for environmental analysis

The EIS will address construction, operation and maintenance of about 1,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines and related facilities, expansions at existing substations and construction of new substations, access roads and fiber optic communication facilities.

The analysis area includes Adams, Arapahoe, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Elbert, El Paso, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Morgan, Otero, Pueblo, Prowers, Washington and Yuma counties in Colorado and Finney, Greeley, Hamilton, Kearny, Logan, Scott, Sherman, Thomas, Wallace and Wichita counties in Kansas.

Potential environmental issues already identified for analysis include impacts on:

- Protected, threatened, endangered or sensitive species of plants or animals or their critical habitats
- Other biological resources
- Land use, including agricultural operations,

- recreation and transportation
- Floodplains and wetlands
- Cultural or historic resources and tribal values
- Human health and safety
- Air, soil and water resources (including air quality and surface and ground water)
- Visual resources
- Populations based on socioeconomic and minority or low-income status

This list is not all-inclusive. Western invites you to suggest specific issue and concerns within these general categories or to suggest other issues that should be evaluated in the EIS. Western will use the scoping process to explore and refine any reasonable alternatives to the proposed route. Western will also analyze the impacts of not participating in the proposed project.

What is the National Environmental Policy Act?

NEPA is a Federal law that serves as the nation's basic charter for environmental protection. NEPA requires that all Federal agencies consider the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions.

NEPA promotes better agency decision making by ensuring that high quality environmental information is available to agency officials and the public before the agency decides whether and how to undertake a major Federal action. Through the NEPA process, you have an opportunity to learn about an agency's proposed

actions and to provide information and comments to the agency. To implement NEPA, all Federal agencies follow procedures issued by the President's Council on Environmental Quality.

For major Federal actions that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment, NEPA requires an environmental impact statement be prepared. An EIS provides a detailed analysis of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed action and the range of reasonable alternatives. Western will prepare an EIS for the Eastern Plains Transmission Project.

How you can be involved in the EIS process

An environmental impact statement process consists of several steps, each with opportunities for you to be involved.

First, Western publishes a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* and makes local announcements, including this newsletter and notices in local newspapers. The formal Notice of Intent states the need for the action and provides preliminary information on the EIS scope, including the alternative actions to be evaluated and the kinds of potential environmental impacts to be analyzed. You'll find this notice and other project information on Western's Web site at <http://wapa.gov/transmission/eptp.htm>.

Western has decided to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and once its Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS is published in the *Federal Register*, scoping begins. During the scoping process—now through Sept. 30—Western requests your comments on the scope of the EIS, such as what alternatives should be evaluated and what potential environmental impacts should be analyzed.

Information gained during scoping assists Western in identifying potential environmental issues, alternatives and mitigation measures associated with development of the proposed project. The process provides a mechanism for narrowing the scope of issues so the EIS can focus the analysis on areas of high interest and concern. Public participation in the scoping process is a vital component to preparing a sound EIS. The scoping process provides the public and agencies opportunities for meaningful involvement in the decision-making process.

Following the scoping process, Western will consider scoping comments as it refines the proposed routes for the EPTP to analyze in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Western will host a series of meetings late

this year to provide you an opportunity to review and comment on the refined routes. Based on comments received at this stage the routes may be further refined and used to prepare a Draft EIS. The Draft EIS reports on the analysis and comparisons of potential environmental impacts of the various routing alternatives, including a "no action" alternative. The EIS also reports on ways to avoid or reduce adverse impacts. The Draft EIS will identify Western's preferred alternative for the proposed project.

After Western issues a Draft EIS, planned for Summer 2007, the availability of the Draft EIS will be announced in the *Federal Register*, a subsequent newsletter, and notices in local newspapers. Copies of the Draft EIS will be provided upon request. Western plans to give you at least 45 days to review the Draft EIS and provide comments. Public hearings will be held during the 45-day public comment period. Western's newsletter and local notices will announce details on how you may comment on the Draft EIS.

Western will consider all substantive comments as it prepares a Final EIS. All comments received will be considered by Western before making a decision. Western plans to issue the Final EIS in Winter 2007/08. Once issued, the availability of the Final EIS will be published in the *Federal Register* a subsequent newsletter and local newspapers. Copies of the Final EIS will be provided to all commenters and parties requesting it. Western must wait at least 30 days after the notice announcing the availability of the Final EIS before issuing a Record of Decision. The Record of Decision will explain Western's decision on whether to participate in the construction of the Eastern Plains Transmission Project. The Record of Decision, expected in the first quarter 2008, would also describe any commitments to avoid or reduce potential environmental impacts.