

SCOPING DOCUMENT

✓ m 12/22/96

PROPOSAL TO ISSUE A SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO
VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

For The Purpose of:
Issuing a Special Use Permit
to Construct and Maintain a Single-Phase,
34 KV, power line to a Private Property Inholding

Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
Toiyabe National Forest
Clark County, Nevada

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

A. Background

The private land inholding was privatized under a mineral patent. The inholding is located on the west side of Mt. Potosi and is commonly known as the Mt. Potosi mill site.

The tremendous growth of the Las Vegas metropolitan area is creating further growth and development of private inholdings within the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA). These inholdings create special challenges for the private land owner and the Forest Service.

The Forest Service recognizes the responsibility it shares to protect not only the National Forest resources but to assist private property owners as necessary to allow them the enjoyable use of their property. This responsibility includes analyzing proposed actions for utility services which may cross over National Forest System (NFS) lands.

Occupancy of NFS lands by Valley Electric for the purpose of constructing and maintainin a power line is contingent upon issuance of a Special-Use Permit for such occupancy and use.

B. Location and General Size of Area Involved

The Forest Service proposes to issue a Special-Use Permit to Valley Electric for the purposes of constructing, operating, and maintaining

a 34 KV power line. The power line will service private property. The private property owner is in need of electrical power to further develop his property. The private land owner is considering the development of a health (wellness) retreat.

The power line is proposed to meet the demands for reliable electricity to insure sufficient power to meet the land owners proposed use of his private property.

The proposal could potentially create direct impacts to approximately 5 acres along or adjacent to the Potosi road, Forest Road 582. Indirect impacts from the proposal could potentially impact an area .25 miles in diameter around the private land parcel.

There is a high potential for direct impacts to historical and cultural resources on the private property. The Forest Service is required to display those impacts in its environmental analysis.

The total acreage includes both National Forest System and private lands impacted either directly or indirectly). The proposed action would allow Valley Electric a Special-Use Permit for:

Proposed facilities

The permit would allow for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a 34 KV power line. The power line would be extended from its current terminus located in the NE 1/4, Section 1, T23S, R57E, to a new terminus located in the SW 1/4, Section 1, T23S, R57E. The power line as proposed would be an overhead line approximately located as displayed on the attached map.

The permit would allow for the development of private land according to and subject to state and county zoning regulations and ordinance

B. Relationship to Other Plans and Documents

The land involved with this proposal is under the administrative jurisdiction of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, Toiyabe National Forest. Valley Electric has other permits authorizing occupancy and use of NFS lands. Because of the land ownership patterns, ie., private lands surrounded by NFS lands, it is not possible to locate the power line on private land.

The Toiyabe Land Management plan (LMP) contains the following standards and guidelines:

1. "National Forest System lands will not be available for uses that can be accommodated on private lands" (Page IV-62).
2. "Issuance of special use permits will be limited to those which serve the public need Priority will be given to special uses which maximize public benefits including energy related uses". (Page IV-9).

This scoping document will begin the environmental analysis of the proposal.

C. Nature of Decision to be Made

Decision is to either issue or not issue a permit to Valley Electric. Other decisions to be made may involve how and where the power line may be sited. Those options include underground installation.

II. IDENTIFIED LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The analysis will include:

1. Demand for the new facilities.
2. Alternate locations.
3. Unavailability of suitable non-Federal land.
4. Compatibility of use which might be authorized with existing uses of the land.
5. Area impacted, beneficial and non-beneficial, and suitability of the proposed sites for their intended use.
6. The sites contribution to public safety.

The following preliminary issues and concerns have been identified by the Forest Service:

1. Potential degradation of visual quality created by the proposal.
2. Potential impacts to several archeological and historical site locations.
3. Public safety and/or benefits.
4. Potential impact to threatened, endangered, and/or sensitive species.
5. Topography and soils.
6. Recreational resources.
7. Cumulative impacts on visual quality, soil and vegetative resources, historical and archeological resources created from increased public use from customers using the private development; and from connected actions on private lands and NFS lands.

These identified preliminary issues and concerns may not be all-inclusive, but are provided as a starting point for public input and to assist in identifying additional interdisciplinary team or resource specialist input needed for completion of the environmental analysis.

The final decision to issue a Special-Use Permit rests solely with the Forest Service. The final responsibility to insure that the NEPA analysis meets the intent of NEPA rests solely with the Forest Service.

III. TIMING NEEDS OR REQUIREMENTS

The public is encouraged to participate throughout the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) environmental analysis process, which is expected to be completed by the spring of 1996. However, organizations and individuals are requested to provide specific input to this document by January 26, 1996.

Individuals and organizations on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area mailing list will receive a copy of the scoping document. Comments should be addressed to: Assistant Forest Supervisor, 2881 S. Valley View, Suite 16, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102. Again, please submit comments to this document to the above address by January 26, 1996.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Section 102 (2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) P.L. 91-190 requires the Forest Service to conduct an environmental analysis of all federal actions. The decision to issue a Special-Use Permit to allow occupancy and use of National Forest System lands is a federal action and is subject to NEPA. NEPA also requires that the Forest Service involve the public in the NEPA process.

Public comments received during the scoping process will be used in developing the Environmental Assessment with accompanying Decision Notice. The level of NEPA documentation will depend on the comments received and significance of the identified impacts.

Public comments are subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Release of comments can include the commentors name and address. However, under the Privacy Act the commentors name and address can be withheld from release under FOIA, if, the commentor so designates in the written or oral comment. **If you desire your name and address to remain private, you must make that request with your comment.**

NEPA also allows the Forest Service to cooperate with other agencies in the preparation of NEPA documents. This NEPA analysis will be conducted in cooperation with Valley Electric. Knight and Associates will prepare the Environmental Assessment (EA) through a Collection Agreement entered into by the Forest Service and Valley Electric.

Comments received will assist Valley Electric and the Forest Service in determining the scope of the issues and to identify if any significant issues exist related to this proposal early in the analysis process.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Humboldt-Toiyabe
National Forests

Spring Mountains
National Recreation Area
2881 S. Valley View, #16
Las Vegas, NV 89102

Reply to: 1950/2720

Date: December 22, 1996

Dear Constituent:

Enclosed is a "Scoping Document" describing a proposal to construct, operate, and maintain a power line on the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, near Mt. Potosi. Your input is valuable in assisting the Forest Service to determine issues, impacts, and solutions.

Please review the proposal and submit comments as described in the "Scoping Document". We prefer written comments. However, if you wish to comment but prefer to provide verbal comments please contact George Perkins at (702) 873-8800 between the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Monday to Friday.

Comments are welcome and will be considered throughout the analysis process up to the time a decision is issued. However, to be most effective in assisting us in completing the analysis and to insure that all comments are included in the analysis, we want to reemphasize that comments should be submitted by January 26, 1996.

Thank you for your interest in the management of your National Forests. Your response to this "Scoping Document" will insure that you continue to receive mailings about the proposed project. If you desire to continue to receive mailings about the project, but are not interested in responding to this "Scoping Document" or if you have questions about the environmental process or the project please contact George Perkins as described above.

Sincerely,

Acting
for
JAMES S. TALLERICO
District Ranger

enclosure



Caring for the Land and Serving People

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**COMMISSION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES**

255 W. Moana Lane

Suite 207A

Reno, Nevada 89509

(702) 688-2626

January 3, 1996

Assistant Forest Supervisor
Toiyabe Forest
2881 South Valley View
Suite 16
Las Vegas, Nevada 89102

Subject: Scope - Valley Electric

Thank you for consulting the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses concerning the proposed power line. The proposed route impacts Potosi Wild Horse Herd Area.

Power lines that require new maintenance roads provide access for indiscriminate and organized off road vehicle use. Forest Service standards and guidelines may have addressed this issue to prevent undue harassment to wildlife and wild horses.

In the event that Forest planning has not fully addressed this issue, we encourage the District to address the issue in the Record of Decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Barcomb".

CATHERINE BARCOMB
Executive Director

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