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November 15, 2011

Arizona Corporation Commission  
**DOCKETED**

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Docket Control  
Arizona Corporation Commission  
1200 W. Washington St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

DOCKETED BY

Re: *Southwest Transmission Cooperative, Inc. ("SWTC") Construction, Mitigation and Restoration Plan; Marana Tap to Sandario Tap Transmission Line Rebuild Project Certificate of Environmental Compatibility ("CEC"); Case No. 161; Docket No. L-00000CC-11-0127-00161; Decision No. 72477*

Dear Sir or Madam:

As required by Condition 13 of the CEC dated May 6, 2011, attached is SWTC's Construction, Mitigation and Restoration Plan for the Marana to Sandario Transmission Line Rebuild Project. Your assistance is appreciated.

Very truly yours,

GALLAGHER & KENNEDY, P.A.

By:

Michael M. Grant

MMG/plp  
15169-17/2911416  
Enclosure

cc w/enclosure (mailed): Chairman John Foreman, Attorney General's Office

**Original and 25 copies** filed with Docket Control this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2011.

CONSTRUCTION, MITIGATION, AND RESTORATION PLAN  
FOR THE MARANA TAP TO SANDARIO TAP  
115kV TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD PROJECT

**Introduction**

This Construction, Mitigation, and Restoration Plan ("CMRP") for the Marana Tap to Sandario Tap 115kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project (the "Project") satisfies Condition 13 of the Certificate of Environmental Compatibility ("CEC") granted by the Arizona Corporation Commission in Decision No. 72447. The goals of the CMRP, as stated in CEC Condition 13, are as follows:

*"Before construction on this Project may commence, Applicant shall file a construction mitigation and restoration plan ("Plan") with the Arizona Corporation Commission Docket Control. Where practicable, the Plan shall specify that Applicant use existing roads for construction and access, minimize impacts to wildlife, minimize vegetation disturbance outside of the Project right-of-way, particularly in drainage channels and along stream banks, and shall re-vegetate, unless waived by the landowner, native areas of construction disturbance to its preconstruction state outside of the power line right-of-way after construction has been completed. The Plan shall specify Applicant's plans for coordination with the Arizona Game and Fish Department ("AGFD") and the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO"). Applicant shall use existing roads for construction and access where practicable, and the Plan shall specify the manner in which Applicant makes use of existing roads."*

**Components of the Plan**

As described in the CEC, the Project consists of rebuilding the existing 115 kilovolt ("kV") transmission line. The rebuild process will include both the removal of existing structures and the construction of new structures. The mitigation and restoration strategies outlined in the CMRP apply to all land traversed by the transmission corridor, including state-owned and private lands.

Components of the plan include:

- Section 1.0: Pre-Construction Activities
- Section 2.0: Agency Coordination Activities
- Section 3.0: Avoidance
- Section 4.0: Construction
- Section 5.0: Post-Construction Activities
- Section 6.0: Clean Up and Inspections

## **1.0 Pre-Construction Activities**

Proper communication and coordination play an important role in preventing unnecessary disturbances from happening in the first place. Any questions or concerns with the CMRP should be directed to Southwest Transmission Cooperative's ("SWTC") Environmental Planner or other designee prior to commencement of each stage of construction. Construction includes two phases: 1) initial access road and pad clearing and 2) removal of old structures and installation of new structures.

### **1.1 Pre-Construction Meetings**

Contractors will be responsible for the construction of all aspects of the Project. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, pre-construction meetings will be held with SWTC's project managers, Environmental, Engineering and Land Services staff and the contractor's project managers. The pre-construction meetings will serve to familiarize all parties with environmental compliance issues and components of the CMRP. Copies of the CMRP will be distributed to SWTC personnel, the contractor's project managers and all inspection staff.

### **1.2 Worker Education Programs**

Environmental staff will provide training to every member of the construction crew regarding resource protection measures they will be expected to follow. This will include avoidance of specific areas of sensitivity and guidelines for using existing roads and areas of previous disturbance. Copies of the CMRP will also be made available during these training sessions.

## **2.0 Agency Coordination**

SWTC has coordinated with AGFD and the SHPO throughout the planning process. AGFD was sent a request for comments and recommendations on August 14, 2009 and provided comments on November 23, 2009.

The SHPO was also sent a letter on August 14, 2009 as part of the agency scoping process; however, the extent of coordination with SHPO is more extensive than just agency scoping. SWTC is a borrower of federal funds provided by the Rural Utilities Service ("RUS") and, therefore, as the lead federal agency, RUS is required to complete Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act which requires consultation with SHPO. The Section 106 process requires extensive coordination between RUS, the project proponent, and SHPO. This coordination culminates in the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement ("MOA") between the aforementioned parties. The MOA is anticipated to be executed on November 22, 2011.

### **3.0 Avoidance**

Two areas of critical concern were identified within the project area: 1) the Brawley Wash and 2) an area designated as an Important Riparian Area (“IRA”) under Pima County’s Conservation Land System. SWTC designed the Project to completely avoid Brawley Wash and no impacts will occur to the riparian vegetation associated with the Brawley Wash. There are some structures required in the area that is identified as an IRA, but impacts have been reduced as much as practicable. The original conductor stringing and tensioning plan would have required significant clearing within the IRA; however, using a combination of single- and double-spool stringing, SWTC was able to avoid these significant impacts. To the extent practicable, vehicular traffic will be limited to existing roads. Additionally, SWTC has reviewed the location of each new structure and has located them, to the extent practicable, to avoid vegetation.

SWTC has worked closely with the Pima County Department of Transportation (“PCDOT”) to analyze potential impacts to regulated vegetation within four linear miles of Pima County Road right-of-way adjacent to the project. The road right-of-way will be crossed at several locations for construction access; however, based on field review and design, SWTC has reduced the total impacts to regulated vegetation to three regulated velvet mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*) trees. The project has been designed to comply with Pima County’s Native Plant Preservation Ordinance as applied by PCDOT.

SWTC consulted with AGFD to schedule construction in late fall/early winter to avoid nesting and breeding birds. Additionally, SWTC is avoiding removal of large trees when practicable to maintain nesting habitat.

### **4.0 Construction Activities**

Vehicle access to the transmission line will be required for both construction and maintenance of the line. The Project will largely be constructed adjacent to existing roadways and on lands that have already been cleared. Where the proposed alignment traverses areas not previously cleared, clearing will be required for access. To the extent practicable, vehicular traffic will be limited to existing roads.

Clearing activities located outside the areas to be graded will focus on selective plant removal. The extent and purpose of the vegetation removal is to allow the overland travel of construction vehicles. Maintenance contractors, prior to the arrival of line construction contractors, will perform the selective clearing activities along the transmission line. The maintenance contractors will follow the direction of SWTC Land Services and Environmental personnel.

#### **4.1 Assembly Areas for Structure Construction and Equipment Storage**

Each transmission structure site will become a small assembly area as materials for foundations, structures, and assemblies are delivered and erected. Whenever practical, individual structure assembly will occur within the access road alignment. For locations that require additional clearing, an approximate 50-foot radius around each structure will be prepared. These areas will be used solely for structure assembly and erection.

A 2.75-acre equipment and storage area will be located near the middle of the transmission line corridor. The area will be used for storage of materials for line construction. The area selected for the storage area has previously been bladed and will only require minimal clearing and grading efforts.

#### 4.2 Conductor Stringing, Tensioning, and Pulling Areas

Although efforts will be made to minimize impacts to vegetation, some impact is anticipated to result from construction equipment traversing the right-of-way for conductor stringing, tensioning, and pulling activities. To reduce impacts associated with conductor stringing and tensioning, a combination of single- and double-reel pulls have been specifically designed to avoid sensitive areas. The vegetation will be trimmed and removed as needed prior to the arrival of construction contractors to minimize the amount of vegetative clearing. Impacts to vegetation resulting from stringing the conductor will be limited to SWTC's right-of-way.

### 5.0 Post-Construction Activities

For the purposes of this plan, the term "rehabilitated to the original state" refers to restoration practices outside the right-of-way that allow the rehabilitation of the land to the general conditions of the surrounding area.

The maintenance contractor will be directed by Land Services staff in all re-vegetation and seeding activities. Land Services will contact all landowners that are affected by construction activities outside SWTC's right-of-way and work closely with said affected parties to insure lands affected are rehabilitated to their original state.

#### 5.1 Re-vegetation & Seeding

The ultimate success of mitigation measures depends on the reclamation processes implemented upon completion of construction activities. The following describes stabilization and rehabilitation measures which will be followed for the Project.

The soil to receive the seed mixture will be tilled using a disc or similar implement; the seed mixture will then be applied. The seeds will then be lightly covered with soil. The onsite soil from grading that occurred on the right-of-way will be used as practical during this process. Timing of the re-vegetation activities will correspond as closely as practicable with the onset of the monsoon season.

## **6.0 Clean-Up and Inspections**

Construction sites and access roads will be properly maintained throughout the construction period. Trash will be disposed of off-site in an appropriate manner.

To ensure site conditions post-construction are clean and properly remediated, a post-construction inspection will be conducted by Land Services, Engineering and Environmental staff. Ten percent of the total contract value is held in retainer until all departments certify commitments made in the CEC are met.