1.1 Introduction

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; Public Law 102-575, Central Utah Project Completion Act (CUPCA), as amended; the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the NEPA (40 CFR [Code of Federal Regulations] Part 1500-1508); and the revised Department of Interior (DOI) NEPA Implementing Procedures (Federal Register Vol. 69, No. 45, P. 10866-10887). The Department of the Interior (DOI) is proposing to enter into a Lease of Power Privilege contract, to provide for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a non-federal hydroelectric generation facility on Jordanelle Dam, of the Bonneville Unit, Central Utah Project (CUP), and associated power transmission lines and facilities. The DOI issued a notice of intent to accept proposals, select one or more lessees, and contract for hydroelectric power development at Jordanelle Dam. By letter dated August 16, 2000, DOI selected the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (CUWCD) and Heber Light and Power (HL&P) as the potential joint lessees for development of hydropower at Jordanelle Dam under a lease of power privilege contract.

The DOI/CUPCA Office and CUWCD are Joint Lead Agencies for preparation of this EA. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Utah Reclamation, Mitigation, and Conservation Commission (URMCC) are serving as cooperating agencies for this NEPA analysis. In accordance with NEPA implementing regulations, if this EA finds no significant issues associated with implementing the proposed project, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would be prepared by the Lead Agencies. If however, significant impacts from implementing the proposed project are found, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA would be warranted.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose of the Proposed Project

Several purposes are addressed by the proposed project. They include the following:

- Allow the execution of a Lease of Power Privilege for the Jordanelle Dam Hydroelectric Project.
- Allow the construction, operation, and maintenance of facilities and transmission lines associated with the Jordanelle Dam Hydroelectric Project.
- Meet the objective of hydroelectric power potential at Jordanelle Dam, which is a CUP facility, as authorized through the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) Act of April 11, 1956 (Ch. 203, Stat. 105).