# APPENDIX A
# SCOPING PACKET

# Welcome!

Welcome to this public scoping meeting for the Gateway West Project. At this meeting the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as the lead agency, would like your input on:

- Human, natural and environmental issues that should be studied
- Proposed corridor and route alternatives that should be studied
- Ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate the effects of the project

This scoping meeting is open house format, with information and staff to help answer your questions. Please take a look at the information provided, ask questions and provide your comments.

## Information you will find at this meeting

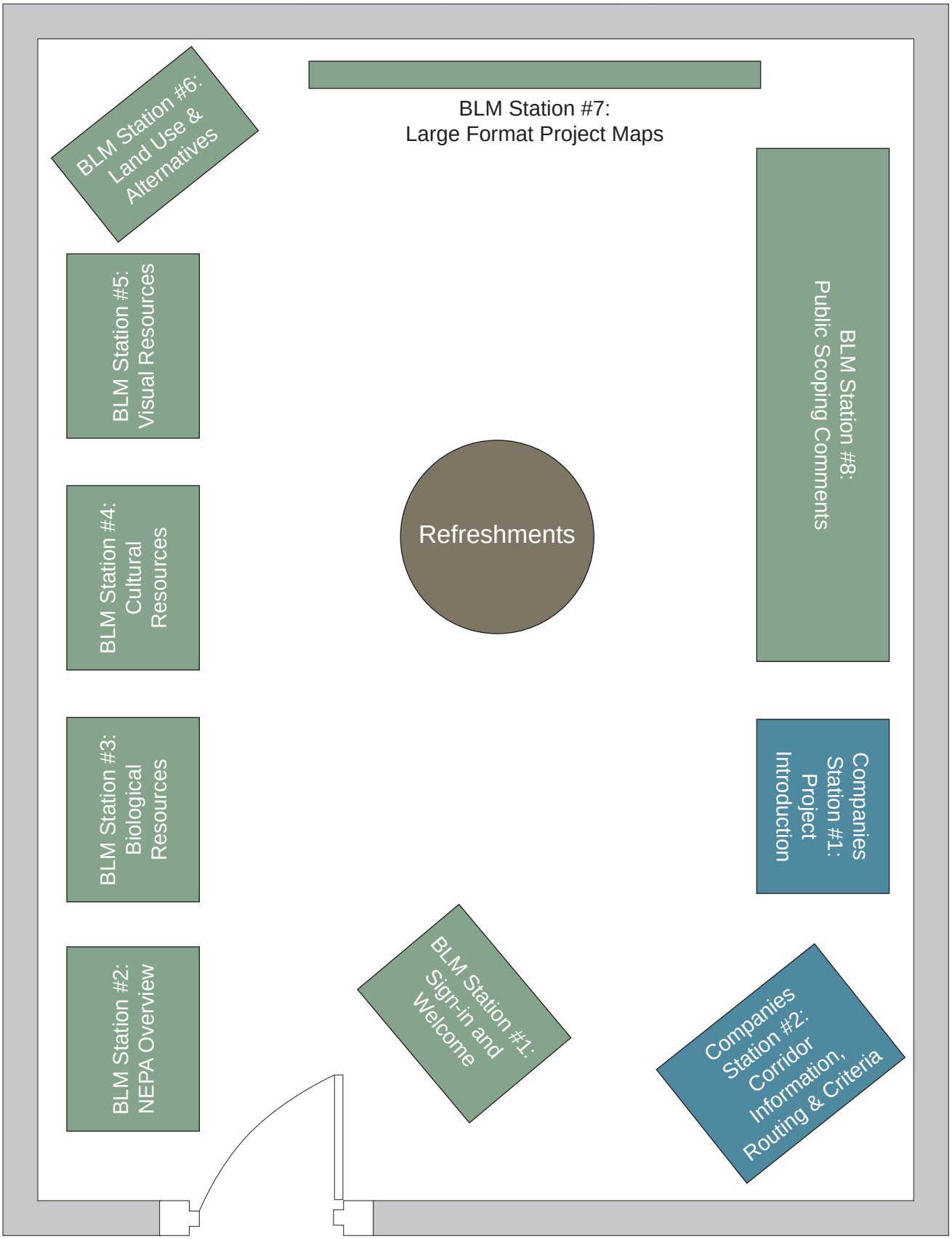
**From the BLM**

- Project roles and responsibilities
- An overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and schedule
- A preliminary list of issues and concerns that will be evaluated as part of the environmental review process
- Preliminary alternatives considered by the BLM, including the proposed corridor
- Maps highlighting preliminary issues and concerns, including biological resources, cultural resources, visual resources, land use and alternatives
- Large maps with information on land ownership, topography and landmarks in both Idaho and Wyoming
- How to provide comments on these materials and this project
- Staff on hand to answer questions regarding the project and resource-specific questions on public lands

**From Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power**

- Project overview
- Maps including service territories for both companies
- Proposed power line structures
- Power line routing and criteria
- Project schedule
- Staff on hand to answer technical questions and questions not related to public lands

# Public scoping meeting room layout




Note: Room layout may vary depending on room size

# How can you provide comments?

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) welcomes your comments regarding the Gateway West Transmission Line Project. Your input will help the BLM identify:

- Issues that should be addressed
- Potential impacts and possible mitigation measures
- Additional site-specific information regarding resources along the proposed and alternate routes
- Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action

**The scoping comment period is from May 16 to July 3, 2008.**

### You can provide scoping comments in the following ways

### At this meeting

- Complete a paper comment form and drop it in the comment box
- Note your comments on the large format maps
- Fill out an electronic comment form on one of the computers
- Use a tape recorder at the comment table

### After this meeting

- Send your comment form and/or letters by U.S. Mail to:
  Bureau of Land Management
  Gateway West Project
  PO Box 20879
  Cheyenne, WY 82003
- Deliver your comments in person or by courier to:
  Bureau of Land Management
  Gateway West Project
  5353 Yellowstone Highway
  Cheyenne, WY 82009
- E-mail your comments to Gateway_West_WYMail@blm.gov
- Submit your comment online at http://www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/cfodocs/gateway_west/

Public scoping is just the beginning of the public participation process. If you would like to be on the BLM mailing list, be sure to indicate that when you sign in, and you will receive periodic project information.

In addition, there will be a formal public comment period for 60 days following the issuance of the Draft EIS, currently planned for early 2009. During that time you can receive and comment on a copy of the document. There will also be a series of public meetings, where you will have a chance to provide further input on the project.

# Public Scoping Comment Form

Gateway West Transmission Line Project
Public scoping period: May 16 - July 3, 2008

BLM

Date: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Organization or Office Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

☐ Please check here if you wish for your personal information to remain confidential*

*If you wish for your contact information to remain confidential, BLM will protect the personal information that you submit to the extent allowed by law. However, the information may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (U.S.C. etc.)

How would you like to receive future information:

☐ Via the BLM Web site at: www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/cfodocs/gateway_west

☐ Please E-mail me with project updates.

☐ Please mail project updates to me via the U.S. Postal Service.

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Please E-mail your comments by July 3, 2008. Information submitted on this form is being voluntarily provided solely for the purpose of commenting on the Gateway West Transmission Line Project.

My concerns or comments related to the Gateway West Transmission Line Project are:

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To mail comment form please send to:
Bureau of Land Management | Gateway West Project | P.O. Box 20879 | Cheyenne, WY 82003

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# Project purpose and need

**Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service purpose and need and decision**
Idaho Power Company and PacifiCorp, collectively known as the companies, applied to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a right-of-way (ROW) grant to use public lands for portions of the Gateway West Transmission Line Project. Because the project also crosses both the Medicine Bow and the Caribou-Targhee National Forests, the companies have applied for a special use permit to each forest. Both agencies use the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process (40 CFR 1500) to assist their decision-making.

The BLM is the lead federal agency for the NEPA process and will coordinate preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) and compliance with other federal environmental laws. The BLM will evaluate the ROW application in accordance with its regulations at 43 CFR 2800. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will evaluate the special use permit applications in accordance with its regulations at 36 CFR 251.50.

The agencies' purpose and need for preparing the EIS is to:

- Disclose the potential effects of authorizing the proposed transmission line and to examine reasonable alternatives to the proposed action
- Determine if the proposed transmission line is consistent with BLM and USFS land use plans
- Decide if the ROW grant and special use permit should be issued for the transmission line
- Determine the most appropriate location for the transmission line on federal lands, considering multiple use objectives
- Determine conditions (stipulations) that should be applied to the construction, operation and maintenance of the transmission line on federal lands

**Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power purpose and need for the proposed project**
Idaho Power is responsible for providing safe and reliable electrical service to its service area, which includes most of southern Idaho and a portion of eastern Oregon. Idaho Power operates under oversight and regulatory controls of the public utilities commissions of the states of Idaho and Oregon. Rocky Mountain Power is the trade name under which PacifiCorp delivers electricity to customers in the Rocky Mountain Power service area, which includes Utah, Wyoming and Idaho. The Rocky Mountain Power division of PacifiCorp operates under oversight and regulatory controls of the public utilities commissions of the states of Wyoming, Utah and Idaho.

Idaho Power and PacifiCorp are public utilities under the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and obligated to expand their transmission systems to provide requested firm transmission service and to construct and place in-service sufficient capacity to reliably deliver electrical resources to customers.

Since 2001 there have been several regional initiatives that evaluated the cost and benefits of the transmission additions from Wyoming to load centers in the west. Two specific studies are the Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study (RMATS)[1] of 2004 and WECC Seams Steering Group-Western Interconnection (SSG-WI)[2] of 2005. These studies show that the combined cost of generation and transmission investments in Wyoming is typically much less than the cost of providing energy from other locations.

A 2006 U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) study identified the region from Wyoming to the west as a conditional constrained area, meaning that any incremental resources developed in Wyoming would require additional transmission. The DOE study also supports the Gateway West Project concept by stating:

> *"This area is rich in coal and wind resources that, if developed, could provide important sources of low-cost energy and fuel diversity while improving domestic energy self-sufficiency and enhancing the economic development in the resource areas. This resource development scenario has been thoroughly explored in analyses sponsored by the Western Governors Association."*

Additional planning studies were performed in 2007 through the Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG) Fast Track Project Process.[3] The NTTG is a group of transmission providers and customers that are actively involved in the sale and purchase of transmission capacity of the power grid that delivers electricity to customers in the northwest and mountain states. This coordinated regional planning effort indicated a strong need for a series of independent transmission segments, each of which addresses an independent purpose, though all are part of the larger grid.

The Gateway West Project is proposed as a result of that planning effort as one of the components of the needed grid expansion. This project is designed to provide for the delivery of up to 3,000 megawatts (MW) to the service areas of the two companies based on forecast demand. These forecasts are based on the integrated resource plans (IRP) prepared by each company as required to fulfill the regulatory requirements and guidelines established by the public utilities commissions of the states served by the two companies.[4] Each IRP addresses the obligations of each company pursuant to its Open Access Transmission Tariff (OATT) to plan for and expand their respective transmission systems in a non-discriminatory manner based on the needs of their native load customers, network customers and all eligible customers that agree to expand their transmission systems. This includes entities that generate or plan to generate electricity, including coal-fired, natural-gas-fired and renewable energy sources (wind and geothermal).

The Gateway West Project is independent of, and would be built regardless of, any particular new generation project. The transmission grid of which it will become a part can be thought of in terms of "hubs," "spokes," and a "backbone" connecting the hubs. Each substation is a "hub" and receives or sends electricity along the "spokes." For this system to work, a "backbone" high-capacity series of transmission lines are needed to connect the hubs and transport the electricity from where it is or can be generated (in this case, mostly Wyoming but also Idaho and Montana), to where it is needed (in this case, mostly Idaho and Utah, though other markets may also be served).

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[1] Visit http://psc.state.wy.us/htdocs/subregional/FinalReport/rmatsfinalreport.htm to download sections of the RMATS Phase 1 Report.

[2] Visit http://wecc.biz/modules.php?op=modload&name=Downloads&file=index&req=viewsdownload&sid=179

[3] The Northern Tier Transmission Group's Fast Track Study can be found on their website at http://nttg.biz/site/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

[4] Idaho Power's 2006 IRP is found at http://www.idahopower.com/energycenter/irp/2006/2006IRPFinal.htm and PacifiCorp's 2007 IRP is found at http://www.pacificorp.com/Navigation/Navigation23807.html

# Project description

Please use this written material, the attached table and a project map to help you understand the proposed locations of the project segments and associated alternatives.

The Gateway West Transmission Line Project is composed of 11 segments of high voltage transmission lines that run between proposed or existing substations. These segments start at the proposed Windstar substation close to the Dave Johnston Power Plant near Glenrock, Wyoming and continue west until reaching the Hemingway substation, proposed approximately 20 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. In addition, the project will include nine substations or expansions of substations and ancillary facilities such as cathodic protection and communication systems.

## Segment descriptions

### Segment 1W

The proposed segment is a single-circuit 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line (energized at 230 kV) from the new Windstar substation, located approximately two miles north of Dave Johnston Power Plant at Glenrock, Wyoming, to the new Aeolus substation, located approximately 10 miles west of Medicine Bow, Wyoming. The entire segment is in a proposed Section 386 Energy Act corridor.

### Segment 1E

A second single-circuit 500 kV transmission line (energized at 230 kV) is proposed between the Windstar and Aeolus substations. This segment is located to the east of Segment 1W. The segment passes through the Medicine-Bow National Forest but does not cross any federal lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The proposed route is along new alignment.

### Segment 2

This segment consists of a single set of lattice structures configured as 230 kV on one side and 500 kV on the other from the Aeolus substation to the new Creston substation, located approximately five miles south of Wamsutter, Wyoming. The route generally follows U.S. Highway 30 and Interstate Highway 80, passing near the towns of Hanna, Sinclair and Rawlins, Wyoming. The proposed route follows an existing 230 kV transmission line for the entire length of this segment. The entire route is generally in a proposed Section 386 Energy Act corridor, diverging only to avoid concentrations of sage grouse leks found within and in close proximity to the corridor.

**Segment 3**

This segment continues the double-circuit 500 kV transmission line (initially one side will only be energized at 230 kV), from the Creston substation to a new substation just east of the Jim Bridger Power Plant. The route continues to follow an existing 230 kV transmission line for the entire length of the segment, diverging only to avoid areas of wildlife concerns. The route parallels Interstate Highway 80 to the south and generally follows the alignment of a proposed Section 368 Energy Act Corridor. A new substation would be constructed at Jim Bridger prior to the Gateway West Project and then expanded for Gateway West.

**Segment 4**

This segment consists of a double-circuit 500 kV transmission line from the new substation at the Jim Bridger Power Plant to the new Populus substation west of Downey, Idaho. The proposed route follows existing (either paired or triple) 345 kV transmission lines and passes these points of interest:

- Ten miles north of Rock Springs, Wyoming
- Immediately south of Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge
- Through the northern part of a trona mining area
- Five miles north of Kemmerer, Wyoming
- Two miles north of the Fossil Butte National Monument
- One half-mile south of Cokeville, Wyoming
- Crosses 0.1 mile of the Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
- Three miles south of Montpellier, Idaho
- Across ten miles of the Bear River Range in the Caribou-Targhee National Forest

West of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, the proposed route leaves the existing 345 kV corridor going west and then angling northwest to the proposed Populus Substation located about one mile west of Downey, Idaho.

Three alternatives are currently identified in this segment. After crossing the Green River, Alternative 4.1 moves approximately five miles south of the proposed route, passing seven miles south of Kemmerer, Wyoming and the Fossil Butte National Monument. This alternative crosses the Utah/Wyoming state line immediately south of Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. The route traverses approximately four miles in Utah (0.7 miles of public land) before re-entering Wyoming. This alternative then goes north into Idaho were it rejoins the proposed route. The alternative is approximately 106 miles long (102 miles in Wyoming, four miles in Utah).

Alternative 4.2 leaves the proposed route approximately five miles southeast of U.S. Route 89, east of Montpelier, Idaho and proceeds parallel to an existing 345 kV single-circuit line. Approximately three miles north of Montpelier, this alternative turns west and crosses U.S. Route 30 and the Bear Valley before proceeding west and rejoining the proposed route. This alternative is approximately 18 miles in length and is located entirely on private land. This alternative is being considered to avoid wetlands in the Bear River Valley and to reduce visual impacts.

Alternate 4.3 is located in Idaho where the route crosses the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in the Montpelier Ranger District. This alternative proposed by the USFS is in close proximity to the proposed segment and has a more direct route through the national forest.

**Segment 5**

This segment consists of a single-circuit 500 kV transmission line from the new Populus substation near Downey, Idaho to the existing Borah substation near American Falls, Idaho. The proposed route follows three existing 345 kV transmission lines northwest toward the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, then turns west along a new alignment, south of the Indian Reservation. West of the Indian Reservation the route turns north (still on a new alignment) to the existing Borah substation.

**Segment 6**

This segment involves increasing the voltage on an existing line from 345 to 500 kV. No new construction will occur. This segment is between the existing Borah and Midpoint substations.

**Segment 7**

This segment consists of a single-circuit 500 kV transmission line along mostly new alignment from the existing Populus substation near Downey, Idaho to the new Cedar Hill substation southeast of Twin Falls, Idaho. This segment follows the proposed route for Segment 5 from the Populus substation to a point approximately 13 miles south of American Falls, Idaho. From this point, the segment crosses Cassia County and the Raft River Valley continuing along the western toe of the Albion Mountains then across irrigated agricultural lands and into the Cedar Hill substation.

Two alternatives are proposed for this segment. Alternative 7.1 swings south of the proposed route beginning approximately 10 miles west of Rockland, Idaho to avoid sage grouse leks along the proposed route. The length of this alternative is approximately nine miles. Alternative 7.2 is located further to the west as the proposed route turns to the southwest, and is proposed to avoid sage grouse leks. The length of this alternative is less than a mile.

**Segment 8**

This segment consists of a single-circuit 500 kV transmission line from the existing Midpoint substation to the new Hemingway substation, approximately 20 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. The proposed route follows existing 230 kV transmission lines the entire length, except for the last 25 miles which is new alignment. This route travels north of Gooding and Mountain Home, Idaho. It turns west just southeast of Boise, Idaho and comes into the Hemingway substation from the northeast. Approximately 50 miles of this proposed segment is in a proposed Section 368 Energy Act Corridor.

Four alternatives are proposed for this segment. Alternative 8.1 crosses the Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) area rather than go around it to the north as does the proposed route. This alternative deviates from the proposed route east of the Birds of Prey NCA and continues west, parallel to the north by 1,500 feet an existing 500 kV line, all the way to the Hemingway substation. Alternative 8.1 was developed as a means of avoiding developing residential areas north and west of the Birds of Prey NCA.

Alternative 8.2 involves rebuilding of a portion of an existing 138 kV line to 230 kV (planned for another project) plus the 500kV Gateway West Project line onto a double-circuit 230/500kV tower. This alternative would be shorter than the proposed segment, but crosses a portion of the Birds of Prey NCA.

Alternative 8.3 and 8.4 are more direct routes as the proposed segment approaches the Hemingway substation. They were proposed to minimize impacts to residential and agricultural development in the area.

**Segment 9**

This segment consists of a single-circuit 500 kV transmission line on new alignment from the new Cedar Hill substation southeast of Twin Falls, Idaho to the new Hemingway substation southwest of Boise, Idaho. The proposed route follows a proposed Section 368 Energy Act Corridor, passing between the northern end of the Saylor Creek Air Force Bombing Range and the southern boundary of Bruneau Dunes State Park. The line then turns northwest and follows the Section 368 Energy Act Corridor through portions of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Snake River Birds of Prey NCA before terminating at the Hemingway substation.

One alternative is proposed in this segment. Alternative 9.1 is located in the constriction point between Bruneau Dunes State Park and Saylor Creek Bombing Range. This alternative is about six miles in length, more direct than the proposed route, but falls outside the Section 368 Energy Act Corridor. It is proposed to minimize visual impacts from Bruneau Dunes State Park and avoid crossing a portion of Bruneau Dunes State Park.

**Segment 10**

This segment consists of a single-circuit 500 kV transmission line from the existing Midpoint substation near Jerome, Idaho south to the new Cedar Hill substation southeast of Twin Falls, Idaho. It follows an existing 345 kV transmission line and a proposed Section 368 Energy Act Corridor the entire length.

## Construction phase

In addition to the linear right-of-way (ROW) there will be staging areas located at the middle, end and several locations in between on each segment and conductor pulling sites located every one to four miles along the right-of-way. Construction of the proposed 500kv facilities will proceed as follows:

- **Access road development** - Existing roads will be used where practical. Where necessary, Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power will develop new access roads ranging in width from 14 to 20 feet wide, preferably within the proposed right-of-way to each structure location. Temporary access may also be required. Where access roads would create excessive disturbance or be excessively expensive, helicopter based construction, operation and maintenance will be employed.

- **Cleaning and grading** - The proposed right-of-way will be cleared and access roads, structure work areas (approximately 100 feet by 100 feet) and staging areas will be graded.

- **Foundation installation** - Typically lattice structures will have four drilled concrete pier foundations, one for each leg. In rock conditions, rock anchoring or mini pile systems will be employed. For the majority of structures, concrete will be delivered by truck.

- **Erecting structures and stringing conductors** - Once foundations are in place, construction crews will erect the proposed structures along the right-of-way. Steel members of the lattice structures will be delivered to each site, assembled using a truck mounted crane and then lifted onto the foundations. Next, insulators will be installed and stringing sheaves (rollers) attached to the insulators.

  The conductors will be strung by pulling a sock line through the stringing sheaves and then pulled and tensioned. Stringing sites located every one to four miles along the right-of-way will provide space for tractors, trailers with spools and tensioning equipment.

- **Clean-up and restoration** - The post-construction right-or-way would be restored as required by the property owner or land management agency. All practical means would be made to restore the land to its original contour and to restore natural drainage patterns along the right-of-way. Because re-vegetation would be difficult in many areas of the project because of low amounts of precipitation, Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power will work to minimize surface disturbance.

# Route mileage summary table

| *Segment* | *Start/End Points* | *Segment Lengths (miles)* | | | | *Line Voltage* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Federal | Private | State | Total | |
| 1W | Windstar/Aeolus | 27 BLM<br>2 USFS | 29 | 14 | 72 | single-circuit 500 kV (energized at 230 kV) |
| 1E | Windstar/Aeolus | 13 BLM | 66 | 8 | 88 | single-circuit 500 kV (energized at 230 kV) |
| 2 | Aeolus/Creston | 37 BLM | 52 | 5 | 94 | 230/500 kV circuits on one structure |
| 3 | Creston/Jim Bridger | 23 BLM | 25 | 1 | 49 | double-circuit 500 kV (one side initially energized at 230 kV) |
| 4 (proposed) | Jim Bridger/Populus | 65 BLM<br>10 USFS<br>2 BOR | 106 | 14 | 198 | double-circuit 500kV |
| 4.1 (alternate) | | 55 | 45 | 6 | 106 | double-circuit 500kV |
| 4.2 (alternate) | | 1 | 15 | 2 | 18 | double-circuit 500kV |
| 4.3 (alternate) | | 8 | 2 | 0 | 10 | double-circuit 500kV |
| 5 | Populus/Borah | 11 | 38 | 4 | 53 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 6 | Borah/Midpoint | 45 BLM<br>0.6 BOR | 30 | 3 | 79 | Re-energize existing 345 to 500 kV - - no new construction, no ground disturbance |
| 7 (proposed) | Populus/Cedar Hill | 28 BLM | 85 | 4 | 117 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 7.1 (alternate) | | 7 | 13 | 1 | 21 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 7.2 (alternate) | | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 7.3 (alternate) | | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 8 (proposed) | Midpoint/Hemingway | 64 BLM<br>2 BOR | 59 | 5 | 130 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 8.1 (alternate) | | 16 BLM | 15 | 1 | 32 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 8.2 (alternate) | | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 230/500 kV circuits on one structure |
| 8.3 (alternate) | | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 230/500 kV circuits on one structure |
| 8.4 (alternate) | | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 230/500 kV circuits on one structure |
| 9 (proposed) | Cedar Hill/<br>Hemingway | 117 BLM<br>2 BOR | 39 | 2 | 160 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 9.1 (alternate) | | 7 | 0 | 1 | 8 | single-circuit 500 kV |
| 10 | Cedar Hill/Midpoint | 13 BLM | 20 | 0 | 33 | single-SSEcircuit 500 kV |

# Corridor and route selection methodology

The project proponents, Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power (the companies), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other federal agencies identified potential proposed and alternative two-mile wide corridors for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project through a series of internal meetings and analysis. These corridors are shown on maps provided at the scoping meetings, and on the BLM's project Web site. These corridors represent the probable alignment, within the two-mile corridor, of the proposed route and alternative corridors that BLM feels, at this time, likely contain routes for full analysis in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS).

The scoping process provides an opportunity for the public and cooperating agencies to provide input to the BLM on these corridors and to suggest other alignments that could be analyzed in the draft EIS. The BLM and the companies will use this information to select 300-foot wide proposed and alternative routes for analysis in the draft EIS.

The three-step process to identify routes for analysis is:
1. Define a study area and collect data
2. Identify and evaluate corridors
3. Identify and evaluate routes within corridors

## 1. Study area

The BLM and the companies identified a study area based upon proposed substation connections (Windstar, Aeolus, Creston, Jim Bridger, Populus, Borah, Midpoint, Hemingway and Cedar Hill substations), and the existing transmission grid. In total, the study area includes portions of eight counties in Wyoming and 19 in Idaho. Corridor and segment descriptions are identified in the table below.

| Corridor/route segment | Segment number |
|---|---|
| Windstar – Aeolus East | 1E |
| Windstar – Aeolus West | 1W |
| Aeolus – Creston | 2 |
| Creston – Jim Bridger | 3 |
| Jim Bridger – Populus | 4 |
| Populus – Borah | 5 |
| Borah – Midpoint | 6 |
| Populus – Cedar Hill | 7 |
| Midpoint – Hemingway | 8 |
| Cedar Hill – Hemingway | 9 |
| Midpoint – Cedar Hill | 10 |

For the entire study area, the BLM and the companies collected information on a wide array of natural resources, land use, land ownership and other attributes characterizing the areas traversed by the proposed 230 kV and 500 kV transmission lines.

## 2. Corridor evaluation

The BLM and the companies used the collected data and other information to map and characterize resources and conditions representing both opportunities and constraints to the location of potential two-mile wide transmission line corridors in the study area. The proposed and alternative corridors were identified by completing the following steps:

**Step 1:** Evaluation and mapping of constraints and opportunities using ArcGIS geographic information systems (GIS) software. Data sources included federal agencies such as the BLM, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the National Park Service (NPS); Wyoming and Idaho wildlife management agencies, counties and other official sources.

**Areas of constraints include**

- Jurisdictional land ownership (e.g., special federal and state lands, military facilities, national monuments, special management areas, parks, national wildlife refuges, etc.) and land use (e.g., developed areas, residential areas, agricultural land, mining, oil, gas development and airports)
- Important biological areas (e.g., habitats for special status species, wetlands and riparian areas, habitats for important game species)
- Visual resources (e.g., sensitive areas with high resource value as determined by the BLM and USFS, and sensitive viewing areas)
- Important cultural resource areas (National Historic Trails, National Register of Historic Places sites and other areas with significant and sensitive cultural resources)
- Sensitive soils resources (e.g., soils with high erosion potential, prime farmlands)
- Geological hazard areas (e.g., areas with slope instability) and geologic features

These resources represent constraints because construction of a new transmission line in their vicinity or across them could result in potential impacts, require substantial mitigation or present difficult permitting conditions.

Examples of opportunities include possible corridors adjacent to existing linear facilities (such as other electric transmission lines, pipelines, roads and highways), lower construction cost areas, and location within utility planning corridors identified by entities such as the BLM, USFS, states, counties and in the Draft West-Wide Energy Corridor (WWEC) Programmatic EIS.

**Step 2:** Identify potential corridors for each segment, with the goals of maximizing the use of opportunities and minimizing crossings of areas with higher-level constraints. This step took into account corridors defined by existing transmission lines and other linear facilities as well as any additional corridors identified to date by the BLM and the companies and the WWEC study.
The BLM and the companies evaluated each corridor for a variety of environmental and engineering factors to identify the proposed and alternate corridors in each segment. This approach included development and use of an attribute matrix and, as appropriate, analysis tools including, GIS based routing and weighting, aerial photography, topographic maps and limited field reconnaissance.

Corridor evaluation resulted in the companies' proposed corridor and alternative corridors that the BLM feels contain likely routes for full analysis in the draft EIS.

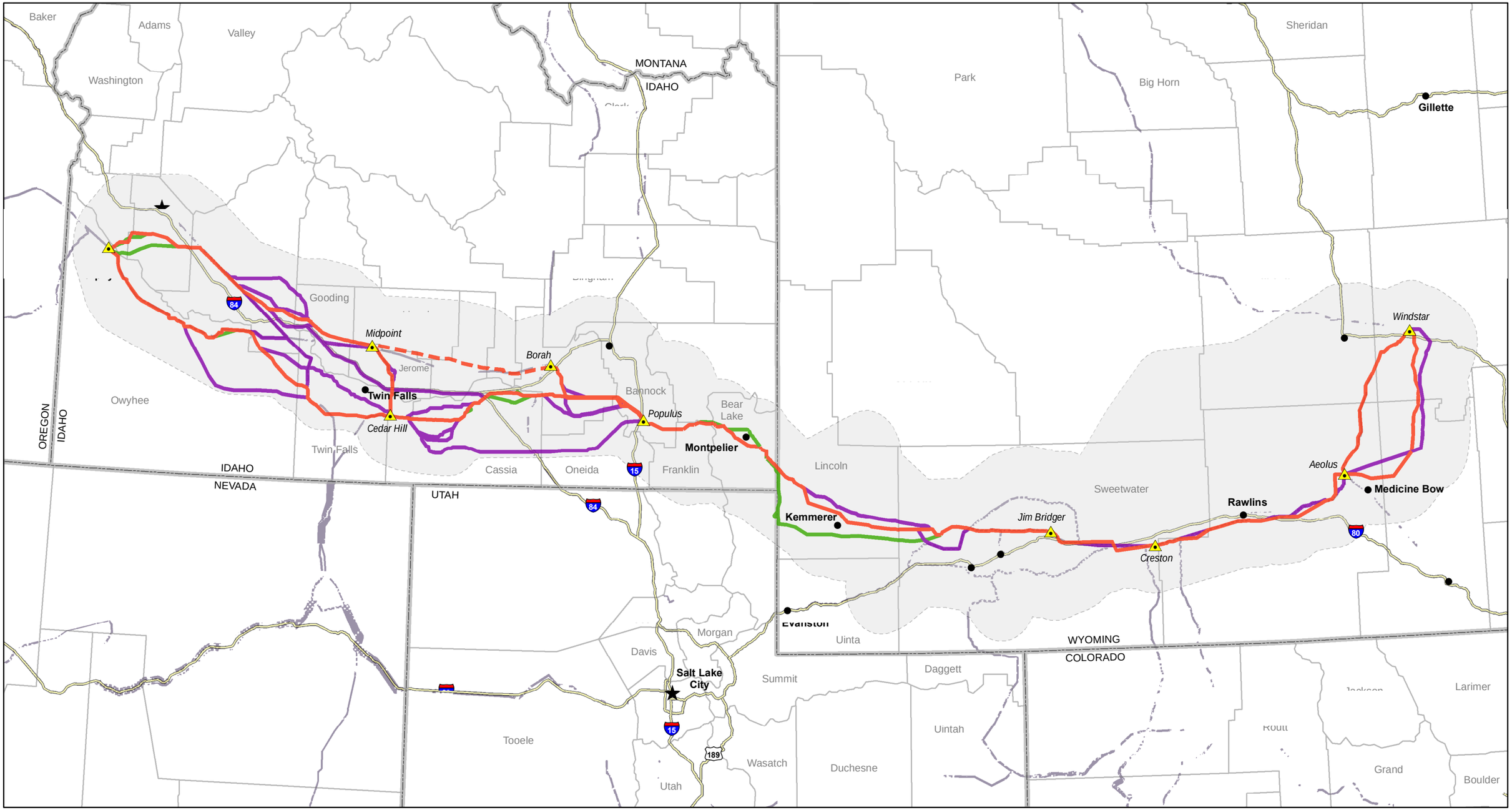
## 3. Route selection

Public scoping will identify additional siting constraints, opportunities and alternative route alignments not previously considered. Using scoping information and additional route analysis, the BLM will determine which alternatives to carry forward into detailed analysis, and will conduct the environmental analysis on the proposed route and the chosen alternatives. This analysis will be presented for public comment in a draft EIS. The draft EIS will contain rationale for alternative routes not analyzed in detail.

## Issue areas

The BLM has preliminarily identified the following issues and concerns, to be evaluated in the environmental impact statement (EIS):

- Effects on wildlife habitat, plants and animals including threatened, endangered and sensitive species
- Effects on visual resources and existing view sheds
- Effects on National Historic Trails and view sheds
- Effects on Native American traditional cultural properties and respected places
- Effects on soils and water from surface disturbing activities
- Land use conflicts and consistency with land use plans
- Effects on public health, safety and reliability
- Effects on public access and recreation
- Effect of the project on local and regional socioeconomic conditions
- Management of invasive plant species and effective reclamation
- Avoidance of sensitive areas such as national monuments, wildlife refuges, and state parks
- Routing through chokepoints
- Cumulative impacts

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Revised 05-25-08

Enlarged Area
This Sheet

**Project Features**

- Approximate Substation Location
- Preliminary Proposed Corridor
- Preliminary Alternative Corridor
- No New Transmission Facilities Required
- Considered, Not Proposed
- Study Area Boundary
- Potential West Wide Energy Corridor

**Administrative**

- City
- County Boundary
- State Boundary

**Transportation**

- Limited Access Highway

# Gateway West Transmission Line Project
# Preliminary Corridors Considered