

The NEPA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, requires analysis of potential impacts of a proposed project on the natural and human environment. The NEPA process is guiding the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and USDA Forest Service in the federal review process for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project, proposed to cross portions of federally managed lands in Idaho and Wyoming.

What's happening now?

The BLM released the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on **April 26, 2013** and is available for review and comment through **June 28, 2013**. The final EIS contains the BLM's final analysis for the proposed project following comments on the draft EIS. All changes made between the draft and final EIS are summarized in section 1.1.1 of the final EIS. Some of these changes include:

- Revision of the proposed route made by the project proponents in February 2012.
- Identification of agency preferred alternatives.
- Analysis revised to reflect changes in the proposed action and alternatives, and includes new data collected or developed.
- An updated Plan of Development (POD) from Rocky Mountain Power and Idaho Power.
- Updated sage-grouse analysis, including the results of the habitat equivalency analysis and its public review.
- Additional information on economic effects on agriculture operations.
- The agencies' response to comments on the draft EIS.

Potential phased decision

Following the final EIS public comment period and comment analysis, the BLM will issue a Record of Decision (ROD), which will document the reasoning for the decision on the preferred route and a Right-of-Way (ROW) grant, which will allow construction on public lands. The BLM is considering a phased decision for this project. With a phased decision, the BLM could issue ROW grants for certain segments of the project, while providing an opportunity for various federal, state, and local permitting agencies to collaborate on final siting of the route for one or more other segments. The BLM is seeking public comment on a phased decision as part of the final EIS review. For further information on the ROD, ROW grant, and the possible phased decision, see section 1.2 of the final EIS.

BLM agency preferred alternatives

In August 2012, the BLM identified agency preferred alternatives after considering comments submitted on the draft EIS, changes to the project made in February 2012 by the project proponents, and in coordination with state, local, and federal governments and agencies. The BLM agency preferred alternatives apply only to federally-managed land.

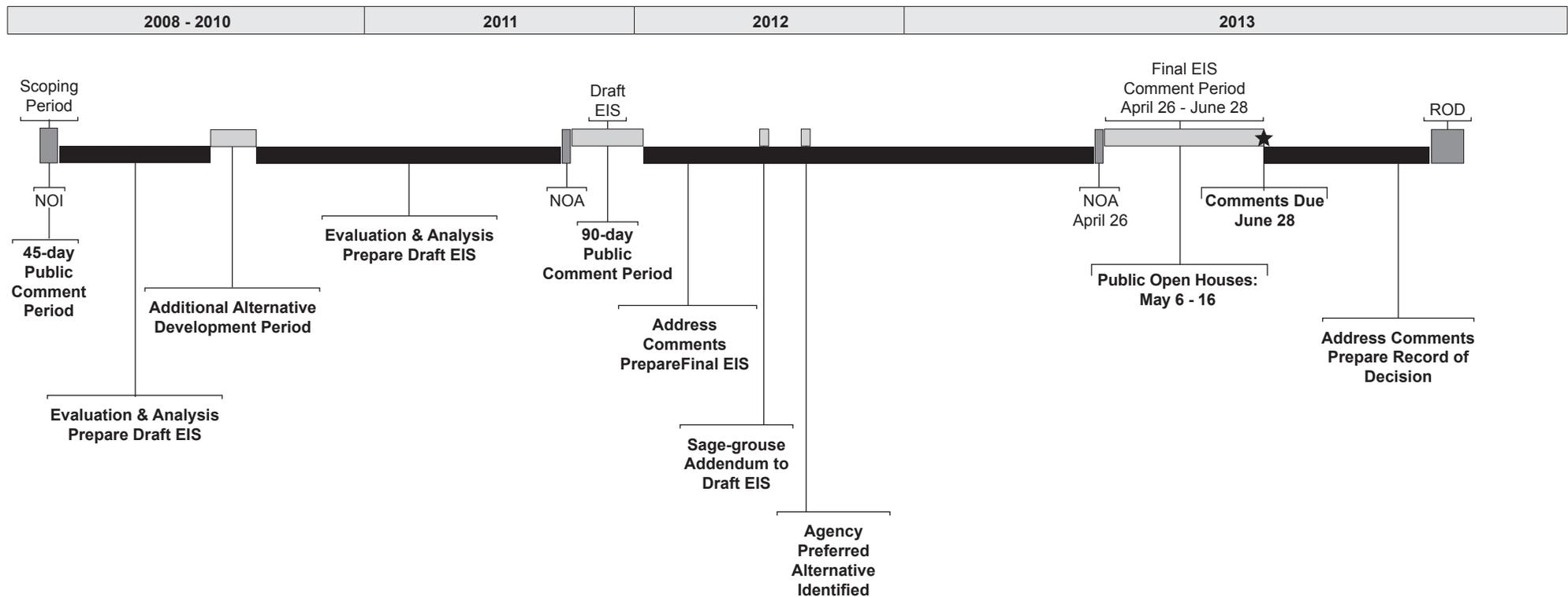
To learn more about commenting on the final EIS, please visit the project website at www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/cfodocs/gateway_west.



Gateway West Transmission Line Project

What's next?

The BLM will accept comments on the final EIS through the 60-day comment period, ending **June 28, 2013**. Following the close of the comment period, comments received will be reviewed, analyzed and responded to in the record of decision (ROD), which is expected fall 2013. The ROD will present the agency's final decision on transmission line routing for public land. The NEPA process will be complete after the release of the ROD. The project proponents will continue working to obtain state and local permits after NEPA is complete.



- NOI = Notice of Intent
- NOA = Notice of Availability
- EIS = Environmental Impact Statement
- ROD = Record of Decision