

3.17 LAND USE AND RECREATION

This section addresses potential impacts on land use and recreation from the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives during construction, operations, and decommissioning. This section analyzes the land ownership affected by the Project's activities; use of designated utility corridors and existing ROW; and the potential impacts of the Project on specific land uses including commercial and residential properties, timber and fire management, Indian reservations, recreational and public interest areas, and OHV use. Impacts on forests are addressed in Section 3.6 – Vegetation Communities.

Agricultural uses (prime farmland, livestock grazing, crop production, lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, and dairy farms) are addressed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture. Visual and noise effects on land uses are discussed in Sections 3.2 – Visual Resources and 3.23 – Noise, respectively. Mines are discussed in Section 3.12 – Minerals.

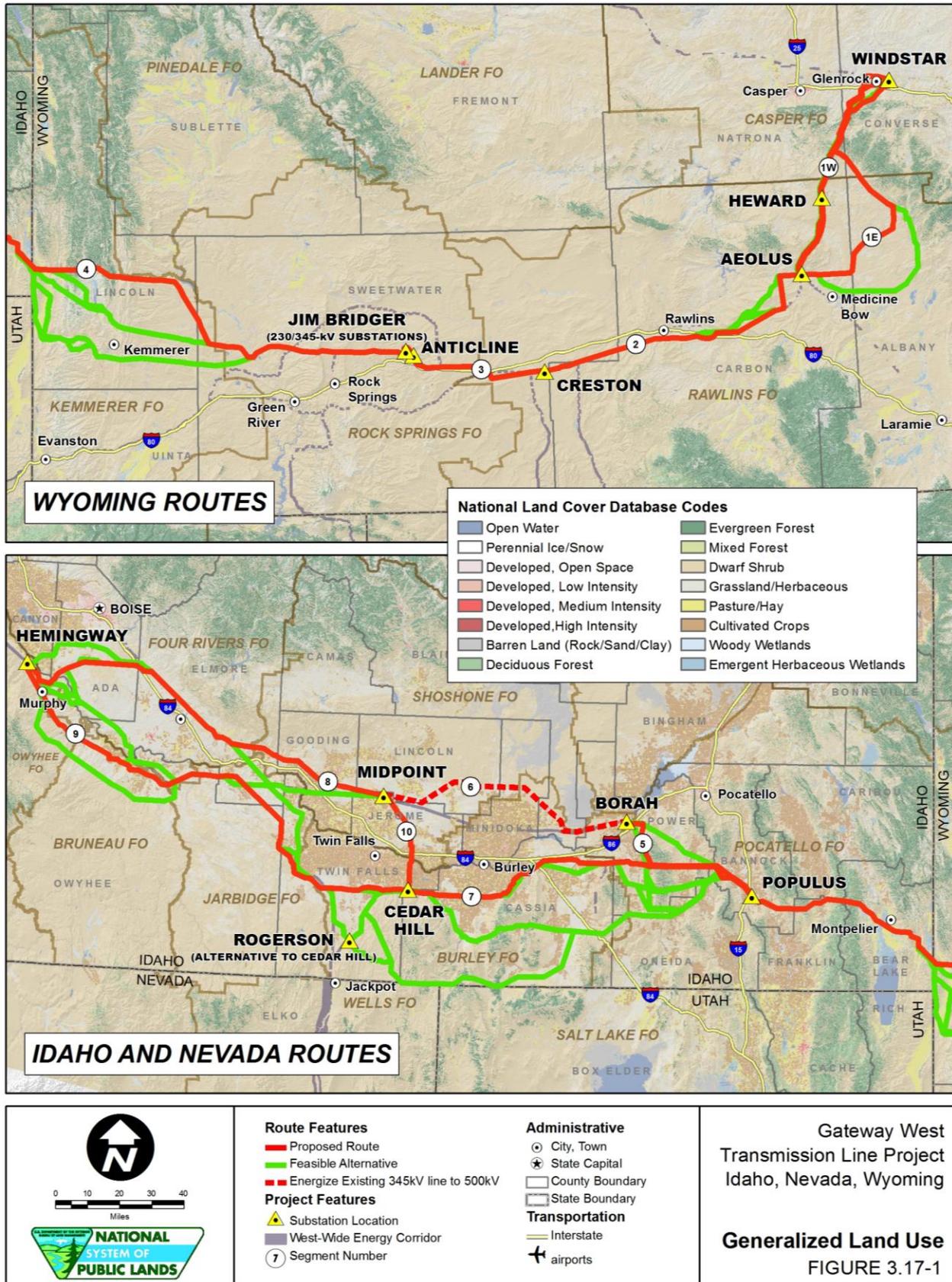
3.17.1 Affected Environment

This section discusses those aspects of the environment that could be affected by the Project. It starts with a discussion of the Analysis Area considered, identifies the issues that have driven the analysis, and characterizes the existing conditions within the Analysis Area.

3.17.1.1 Analysis Area

The Analysis Area for characterizing land use and ownership patterns extends 500 feet on either side of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives, and 25 feet on either side of access roads and includes the areas needed for new or expansions of substations as well as temporary facilities such as staging areas and fly yards. Specific land uses are identified as crossed or within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives. This area is used because the ground-disturbing activities related to the transmission line that could cause land use effects would occur within these areas. Specific land uses, such as residences, schools, and dairies, that may be affected by close proximity to a transmission line are also discussed in Sections 3.18 – Agriculture, 3.21 – Electrical Environment, and 3.22 – Public Safety.

Land uses in the area where the Project would be located generally consist of open spaces and agricultural use with an occasional town, city, or other urbanized or developed area. Much of the land in the region is managed by federal agencies, which generally provide for multiple use management or preservation of natural resources. Special uses within the vicinity of the Analysis Area include areas of prehistoric and historic significance and wildlife management areas. The eastern portion of the Project (Segments 1, 2, and 3) would be located in open range-type land uses with some topographic relief provided by major drainages (see Figure 3.17-1). Moving west, land uses continue as in the eastern portion, but the landscape becomes more forested and the terrain steeper (Segments 4, 5, and the eastern portion of 7). Farther west, the mountain ranges give way to the Snake River Plain, where land use includes irrigated crop land.



3.17.1.2 Issues to be Analyzed

The following issues related to land use were brought up by the public during public scoping (Tetra Tech 2009a), raised by federal and state agencies during scoping and agency discussions, or are issues that must be considered as stipulated in law or regulation. These issues are discussed in more detail in Section 3.17.2 – Direct and Indirect Effects, with the exception of the first two bullets below, which are discussed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture.

- Identify how the Project would affect CAFOs;
- Identify how the Project would affect current agricultural systems, including pivot irrigation and advanced positioning systems used in farm equipment;
- Identify residential areas, planned development, and specially designated uses that would be affected by the Project;
- Assess the effects of the Project on specially designated areas including NWRs, National Parks, National Monuments, SMAs, recreation sites, and roadless areas;
- Assess potential impacts to timber and fire management activities;
- Assess potential effects on Indian Reservations;
- Identify the extent to which the Project would be co-located with existing developments;
- Assess potential effects to hunting or fishing;
- Assess whether there would be any loss of recreational opportunities;
- Describe how the Project would adhere to local land use plans and policies;
- Assess potential Project impacts to military activities;
- Assess how construction of this transmission line would influence the installation of more developments and projects in the same area in the future;
- Indicate whether construction buffers around buildings would be maintained;
- Identify the permits and plan amendments that would be required for this project; and
- Describe the plan for re-entries and maintenance activities on private land that would likely continue over the life of the Project.

3.17.1.3 Regulatory Framework

This section first summarizes county plans and the one city planning area crossed, then discusses state planning requirements, and concludes with a discussion of federally managed land use planning.

County and City Plans

Local guidance provided by county and community plans and policy documents is summarized below by county and community, and route segment.

Converse County, Wyoming (Segments 1E, 1W[a], and 1W[c])

Converse County does not have a comprehensive plan or any planning and zoning regulations. The construction of transmission lines, substations, or any other structures is not regulated by Converse County.

Albany County, Wyoming (Segment 1E)

The Albany County Comprehensive Plan was approved in 2008, and designed to guide county growth for the next 20 years. In regard to utilities, the main emphasis is on telecommunications, as many rural areas of the county do not have landline or wireless telephone service. Transmission lines are not mentioned in the Albany County Plan. No conditional use permits (CUPs) are required for construction of transmission lines.

Natrona County, Wyoming (Segments 1E, 1W[a], and 1W[c])

The Natrona County Development Plan was approved in 1998 and amended in 2004. The Plan is concerned with “promoting regionalization of utilities to promote efficiency and to protect the environment.” Otherwise, transmission lines are not included in it. The Natrona County Planning Department requires CUPs for construction of transmission lines and substations in areas zoned for agriculture, ranching, and mining.

Carbon County, Wyoming (Segments 1E, 1W[a], 1W[c], and 2)

The current Carbon County Land Use Plan was adopted on April 20, 1998, and has no requirements concerning transmission lines. Carbon County has been in the process of revising the plan and a draft Carbon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan was released in August 2010. The draft Comprehensive Plan references the Gateway West Project and identifies proposed revisions to existing county regulations that include developing conditional use standards for energy development and transmission lines to limit environmental impact (WLC Engineering et al. 2010). Carbon County would require a CUP for expansion of the Aeolus and Heward Substations.

Sweetwater County, Wyoming (Segments 2, 3, and 4)

The Sweetwater County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002, consolidating the 1977 Sweetwater County Land Use Plan and the 1996 Growth Area Management Plan. A goal of the Sweetwater County Plan is to encourage the proactive, coordinated planning and delivery of public utilities and infrastructure services. Otherwise, transmission lines are not referenced in the Plan. The Sweetwater County Planning Department indicates they are currently revising their Plan to require CUPs for construction of transmission lines and substations. The proposed Anticline, Jim Bridger 230-kV, Jim Bridger 345-kV, and Creston Substations would be located in Sweetwater County. While the Anticline, Jim Bridger 230-kV, and Jim Bridger 345-kV Substations would be subject to a CUP if the proposed plan revision moves forward, the Creston Substation is wholly located on BLM-managed lands and therefore would not be subject to a County CUP.

Lincoln County, Wyoming (Segment 4)

The Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2006. The County Plan has an objective to “promote and support the development of infrastructure in and around the towns and community centers for the creation and expansion of new and existing

businesses.” An attached public land use policy lists an objective to “ensure public and private access and rights-of-way for utilities and transportation of people and products on and across public lands.” Transmission lines are not specifically mentioned in the County Plan. Lincoln County does not require a CUP for transmission lines.

Bear Lake County, Idaho (Segment 4)

Bear Lake County does not have a comprehensive plan. However, the County uses land use ordinances to guide development within the county. The ordinances establish land use zones and include a table with different land uses and associated permitting requirements. Public utilities require a CUP when in agricultural zones. The proposed Project would be located within an agricultural zone and would, therefore, require a CUP.

Franklin County, Idaho (Segment 4)

The Franklin County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007. The Plan is strongly geared toward residential and commercial development and does not discuss utility corridors. The Franklin County Planning Department does not require a CUP for construction of transmission lines.

Bannock County, Idaho (Segments 4, 5, and 7)

The Bannock County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2008. The County Plan has a public services, facilities, and utilities goal to “[p]lan for adequate public facilities and services to meet future needs.” Otherwise, transmission lines are not included in the Plan. Bannock County requires a CUP for transmission lines but not for substations. The Proponents have indicated that they would comply with the substantive information filing requirements of the County for expansion of the Populus Substation, although they are not required to by statute.

Power County, Idaho (Segments 5 and 7)

Power County prepared a Comprehensive Plan in 1975 that is currently under revision. In 2009 the County adopted utility transmission corridors ordinances to provide a set of standards for the development and installation of natural gas and electric transmission structures and related facilities. Among other provisions, it establishes siting criteria and zones limiting transmission lines with capacities of 460 volts or higher. Expansion of the Borah Substation would be covered by this ordinance. A special use permit would be required for construction of transmission lines and expansion of the Borah Substation.

Oneida County, Idaho (Segment 5 and 7)

Oneida County has a Comprehensive Plan that is currently under revision, but the County does not have a date for completion. Oneida County does not require CUPs for construction of transmission lines.

Cassia County, Idaho (Segments 7, 9, and 10)

The Cassia County Comprehensive Plan was revised in 2006 and designed to guide development for the next 20 to 25 years. Cassia County’s Plan includes a brief discussion of electrical transmission corridors and indicates that collective efforts between the County and power companies would provide better siting options within the

county. Cassia County requires a CUP for construction of transmission lines and substations.

Cassia County recently adopted a new ordinance designating an Electrical Transmission Corridor Overlay Zone. The purpose of this overlay zone is to allow for the siting of electrical transmission lines exceeding 138 kV within Cassia County's geographical boundaries and overriding any contrary provisions in current regulations for any underlying zone. The County will develop regulations governing the establishment and operation of transmission lines more than 138 kV. These regulations will be contained in Section 5, Chapter 9, Title 9 of the Cassia Code (9-5-5, Electrical Transmission Lines Siting and Performance Standards.) The Electrical Transmission Corridor Overlay Zone will be legally described and defined in Appendix 18 of Title 9 of the Cassia County Code. The proposed Cedar Hill Substation would require a CUP.

Elko County, Nevada (Segment 7)

Elko County has a General Plan that was written in 1972 and several area-specific plans. However, no specific plans exist for the area of the county that would be crossed by the Project. The County's zoning code has general provisions for siting of utilities but transmission lines would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if a CUP was necessary or not (Brown 2010).

Twin Falls County, Idaho (Segments 9 and 10)

The Twin Falls County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2008. The Plan lists a policy to "coordinate with utility companies to develop plans for energy services and public utility facilities for long term needs of the County." Twin Falls County requires a CUP for substations but not for transmission lines.

Lincoln County, Idaho (Segment 8)

The Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2008. The Plan includes, as an appendix, a map provided by Idaho Power showing future additional transmission lines. Lincoln County requires CUPs for construction of transmission lines and substations within the County's Agricultural (A-40) Zone.

Gooding County, Idaho (Segment 8)

The Gooding County Comprehensive Plan was adopted on March 8, 1999. The Plan was designed to provide development guidance until 2015. A revised Gooding County Comprehensive Plan, approved in May 2010, references the Gateway West Project and includes Goal 13.1 to "work with power companies to establish a corridor which is in the interest of both parties" and the associated implementation action to "(u)pdate County Zoning Ordinances to accommodate utility providers' application for long-term 'Special Use Permits.'" Goal 13.2 to "(p)romote public health, safety and general welfare in the designated corridors" has the following associated implementation action: "(a) 'Special Use Permit' will be required for power transmission lines" (Gooding County 2010).

Elmore County, Idaho (Segments 8 and 9)

Elmore County established the 2004 Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan adopted in 2004, and amended on October 3, 2007, mainly to address land use for planned communities. The Elmore Plan lists three goals for electrical power:

- Work with Idaho Power Company to develop three-phase power capability in all areas of the County and all communities;
- Encourage local power companies to upgrade distribution systems for reliable service to outlying areas of the County; and
- Support creation of wind energy farms in appropriate areas of the County.

A CUP would not be necessary in Elmore County for construction of transmission lines. However, other facilities, such as storage yards, would require a CUP.

Ada County, Idaho (Segment 8)

The Ada County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007. Due to population growth, much of the Ada Plan addresses managing that growth with land use guidelines and improvements to transportation and infrastructure. A stated goal in the Ada Plan is to “promote the development of energy services and public utility facilities to meet public needs”. The Plan includes a map of Idaho Power facilities, including a future 500-kV line in southern Ada County. Construction of transmission lines in Ada County would require a CUP.

City of Kuna, Idaho (Segment 8)

The City of Kuna approved a Comprehensive Plan update in 2009 that included an accompanying Future Land Use map. This Plan update includes a new electric transmission corridor component as required by Idaho State Code and in response to the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This new section includes a goal and several supporting objectives to ensure that electric transmission corridors are considered in land use planning decisions, and to minimize the adverse impacts of transmission corridors on the community. A version of the Future Land Use map was prepared to show the proposed Gateway West route through the southern reaches of the city but this map was not adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. Public utilities are subject to a Special Use Permit.

Owyhee County, Idaho (Segments 8 and 9)

The Owyhee County Comprehensive Plan was published on February 11, 2002. An economic goal is to protect and improve infrastructure so that agriculture, grazing, and industry will generate income. Transmission lines are not mentioned in the Plan but the County states that a CUP would be required. Construction of substations is permitted in the County’s Multi-use district and would require a CUP in the Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, or Industrial districts. Additions to the Hemingway Substation would occur within the existing fenced substation yard and would not require a CUP.

Jerome County, Idaho (Segments 8 and 10)

The current Jerome County Comprehensive Plan was adopted on January 1, 1997. The County’s economy is based largely on agricultural production and related

industries. The Plan indicated that dairy farming was the leading industry. From a power perspective, the Plan states a goal to “provide County facilities that are adequate for the needs of citizens.” A CUP is not necessary for construction of transmission lines and expansion of the Midpoint Substation.

City Impact Areas

According to Section 50-222 of the Idaho Code, an area of city impact must be established before a city may annex adjacent territory. Each county and city adopts by ordinance a map identifying an area of city impact within the relevant unincorporated area of the county. In defining an area of city impact, the following factors shall be considered: 1) trade area; 2) geographic factors; and 3) areas that can reasonably be expected to be annexed to the city in the future. Each city adopting an area of city impact must identify the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances that will apply within the established area of impact.

Idaho counties crossed by the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives with city impact areas include Bear Lake, Franklin, Bannock, Oneida, Power, Cassia, Jerome, Lincoln, Twin Falls, Gooding, Owyhee, Elmore, Ada, and Canyon. The Proposed or Alternative Routes cross the city impact areas for the cities of Downey (Bannock County), Melba (Canyon County), and Kuna (Ada County) (see Figure 3.17-2).

State Rules for Land Use

Wyoming

In Wyoming, land use permits must be obtained from counties and local governments initially (where applicable, see above). The siting process then proceeds through the Wyoming PSC, which has jurisdiction over transmission lines greater than 69 kV and longer than 3 miles. Lines greater than 230 kV require public notice and hearing.

If a utility wishes to construct a transmission line, it must submit an application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. As part of that process, the applicant must demonstrate the necessity of the additional service and the financial ability to complete the project. If the proposed line requires condemnation of land, the Certificate must be obtained prior to any condemnation hearings (Wyoming Statute 75-2-205[f]). There is no time limit for the PSC to make a decision once an application is submitted. Once the PSC makes a final decision, it issues or denies the certificate and, unless otherwise prescribed, any order the PSC makes is effective 30 days after its issuance (Wyoming Statute 75-2-213) (Western Interstate Energy Board 2009).

The Wyoming Board of Land Commissioners is responsible for the direction, control, leasing, and disposal of state lands. The Board currently manages approximately 3.6 million surface acres and 4.2 million mineral acres of state lands. The Board of Land Commissioners leases virtually all of the state trust lands for mineral production and grazing and agricultural use, with a small portion leased for industrial, commercial, or recreational use. Easements would be required for the transmission line where it would cross state lands. Revenues from trust land activities are used to support the state's schools and institutions (<http://slf-web.state.wy.us/admin/boards.aspx>).

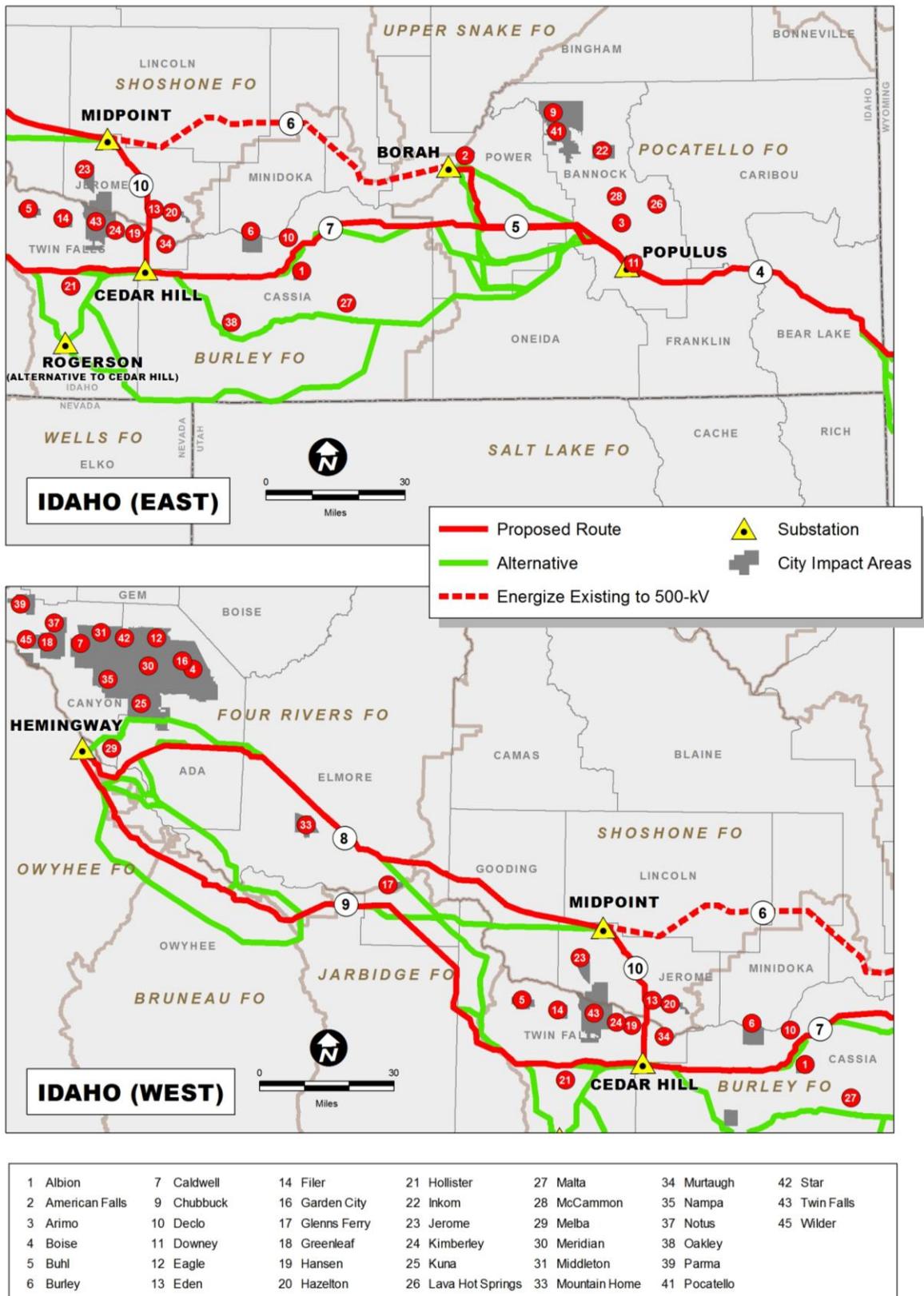


Figure 3.17-2. Idaho City Impact Areas

The WDEQ's Industrial Siting Division administers the state's Industrial Information and Siting Act. The Industrial Siting Council reviews the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of industrial facilities before issuing a permit for construction. Permits are required for all projects with a construction cost of \$175.5 million or more (Wyoming Statute 35-12, <http://deq.state.wy.us/isd/>) including collector systems (transmission lines) with voltages greater than or equal to 160 kV (<http://deq.state.wy.us/isd/>). Any facility for which a permit is required will be constructed, operated, and maintained in conformity with the permit and any terms, conditions, and modifications contained in the permit. Permit requirements may be extended to transmission lines 230 kV and higher.

Idaho

The State of Idaho owns and manages more than 2 million acres of endowment lands that provide financial support to public schools and other institutions. The IDL manages these trust lands under the governance of the Idaho Board of Land Commissioners, which consists of Idaho's Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and State Controller. The Board of Land Commissioners acts in the capacity of trustees on behalf of the beneficiary schools and other institutions to manage the state's endowment lands.

All endowment assets of the State of Idaho, per the state constitution, must be managed "in such manner as will secure the maximum long term financial return" to the trust beneficiaries. The *State Trust Lands Asset Management Plan* (Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners 2007) identifies utility and roadway ROWs as valid uses of endowment lands. However, any easement would need to be negotiated with the Land Board. Table 3.17-1 identifies the Proposed Route segments and alternatives that pass through Idaho endowment land.

Table 3.17-1. Idaho Endowment Land

Segment Number	Segment/Alternative	Total Miles
4	Proposed–Total Length	8.1
5	Proposed–Total Length	3.5
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 5A,B	3.0
	Alternative 5A	0.3
	Alternative 5B	0.3
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 5C	3.5
	Alternative 5C	0.7
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 5D	0.6
	Alternative 5D	0.8
7	Proposed–Total Length	4.3
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 7A,B	3.8
	Alternative 7C	1.0
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 7D	0.5
	Alternative 7D	1.0
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternatives 7H, I	4.3
	Alternative 7H	4.7
Alternative 7I	7.9	

Table 3.17-1. Idaho Endowment Land (continued)

Segment Number	Segment/Alternative	Total Miles
7	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 7J	4.3
	Alternative 7J	8.9
8	Proposed–Total Length	9.0
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 8A	2.0
	Alternative 8A	6.2
	Alternative 8B	2.8
	Alternative 8C	0.3
	Alternative 8D	1.0
9	Proposed–Total Length	4.6
	Proposed-Comparison Portion for Alternative 9B	1.1
	Alternative 9B	1.0
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 9C	1.1
	Proposed–Comparison Portion for Alternative 9D,E	1.1
	Alternative 9D	3.9
	Alternative 9E	2.4
	Alternative 9F	3.9
	Alternative 9G	3.9
	Alternative 9H	3.9

Rows missing from this table indicate that no Idaho Endowment Lands occur along that Segment or Alternative.

Idaho Title 67-65, Local Land Use Planning, requires all city and county governments to establish local planning procedures and land use regulations. The Local Land Use Planning Act requires every city and county to enact a comprehensive plan; zoning ordinance; subdivision ordinance; area of city impact ordinances; and regulations for confined animal feeding operations (counties only). The Act also grants cities and counties the authority to adopt certain laws and policies at the discretion of the governing board. Local authorities have siting authority for transmission lines and substations (see discussion by county above).

Nevada

NRS 740 grants the Nevada Public Utility Commission (NPUC) the authority to regulate public utilities. Utility lines proposed for construction within Nevada must file for a Utility Environmental Protection Act permit with the NPUC, as required by NRS 704.820 through 704.900. The permit application ensures that the applicant is in compliance, or will comply, with all applicable statutes and regulations of the NPUC. The permit process also creates a forum for the resolution of all matters concerning the location and construction of electric, gas, and water transmission lines and associated facilities. Other Nevada state agencies that need to be consulted during this permit process include, but are not limited to, the Nevada Environmental Commission, the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and local air pollution control boards.

Federal Lands

Land uses on federal lands in the Analysis Area are governed by various land use plans, including BLM RMPs and MFPs, and Forest Service Forest Plans. These plans typically establish goals, objectives, and standards that apply to the land and resources managed under the plan. The Forest Service and the BLM have determined that, depending on the route selected, the proposed Project would not conform to certain aspects of some of the RMPs and MFPs that guide management of the lands crossed by the Proposed Route and/or Route Alternatives. Approval of a project that has elements that are inconsistent with an applicable management plan requires consideration of an amendment at the same time that the project is being analyzed. Proposed plan amendments for the Proposed Route and/or Route Alternatives are discussed for each RMP and MFP in Appendix F-1 and each Forest Plan in Appendix F-2.

Forest Service Plans

A Forest Plan provides direction for all resource management activities on a national forest. An approved Forest Plan is the product of a process established by Congress in the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). A plan allocates land for timber production, oil and gas leasing, and other resource management activities. It designates areas for recreation and recommends the establishment of wilderness, WSRs, and other special designations. Forest Plans establish standards for resource management, either forest-wide or for specific management areas. The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives cross three NFs: the Medicine Bow-Routt, Caribou-Targhee, and Sawtooth NFs.

Medicine Bow NF Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Segments 1E, 1W)

Established in December 2003, the Medicine Bow Forest Plan (Forest Service 2003b) provides direction for the management of approximately 1.1 million acres in southeastern Wyoming. Timber harvest and livestock grazing have been historical uses on the forest since before the turn of the century. The Forest provides a wide variety of recreation activities, such as hunting, snowmobiling, skiing, hiking, and camping. The primary purpose of land and resource planning on the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs is to ensure sustainable ecosystems, provide multiple benefits to people, provide scientific and technical assistance, and provide effective public service.

Revised Forest Plan for the Caribou NF (Segment 4)

The Caribou Forest Plan (Forest Service 2003a) addresses management of the Caribou portion of the Caribou-Targhee NF. The 2003 Revised Plan updated the 1985 Caribou Forest Plan's guidance to better reflect changing public values and current science. The Caribou NF is located primarily in southeastern Idaho, within the northern extent of the Great Basin Region, with small amounts of land in Wyoming and Utah. The Caribou portion of the Caribou-Targhee NF includes land within 11 counties in 3 states. Several urban centers use the Caribou-Targhee NF for recreation and commercial uses.

The Caribou NF is an area of high, rugged mountain ranges rising sharply from semi-arid sagebrush plains and agricultural valleys. Forestlands occupy approximately 50 percent of the Caribou NF, mainly above 6,000 feet in elevation. The Caribou NF

provides a wide variety of diverse habitats for the 334 species of terrestrial vertebrate wildlife known or suspected to occur on the Forest. The Caribou Forest Plan establishes direction to ensure coordination of multiple uses (outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife, fish, minerals, and wilderness) and the sustained yield of products and services (16 U.S.C. 1604[e]). The Revised Forest Plan focuses small landscape planning on the mix of activities and projects needed to meet Forest-wide goals and implement the Forest Plan.

Sawtooth NF Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Segment 7)

The Sawtooth Forest Plan (Forest Service 2003c) guides natural resource management activities on NFS lands on the Sawtooth. The purpose of the Forest Plan is to provide management direction to ensure sustainable ecosystems that provide beneficial goods and services to the public. The Sawtooth NF is located in south-central Idaho and administers approximately 2.1 million acres of federal lands, including an estimated 218,000 acres in the Sawtooth Wilderness. A wide range of landforms, elevation, and climate occur across the Forest and provide a wide variety of vegetative conditions. Timber harvest and grazing contribute to the economic health of the region. The Forest serves as an important recreation destination, receiving approximately 1.3 million visits per year. Land management on the Forest is driven by the goals and objectives listed in Chapter III of the Forest Plan.

BLM Resource Management Plans and Management Framework Plans

BLM's land use planning process (43 CFR 1610) combines Section 202 of the FLPMA of 1976 and NEPA regulations. To ensure the best balance of uses and resource protections for America's public lands, the BLM undertakes extensive land use planning through a collaborative approach with local, state, and Tribal governments; the general public; and stakeholder groups. BLM-managed land use plans include both RMPs and MFPs. These documents provide land use planning and management direction on a broad scale and guide future actions on BLM-managed lands. Land use plan decisions consist of 1) desired outcomes (goals and objectives) and 2) allowable uses and management actions. Land use plans are used by managers and the public to: allocate resources and determine appropriate multiple uses for the public lands; develop a strategy to manage and protect resources; and set up systems to monitor and evaluate the status of resources and the effectiveness of management practices over time.

Land use plans and planning decisions are the basis for every on-the-ground action the BLM undertakes. Land use plans ensure that the public lands are managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield except in those areas that have been designated for special management such as the SRBOP. The SRBOP, for example, is managed for the specific purposes outlined in the enabling legislation, which include the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitat. As required by FLPMA and BLM policy, public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; that, where appropriate, preserves and protects certain public lands in their natural condition; that provides food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; that provides for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use; and that recognizes the nation's need for

domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands by encouraging collaboration and public participation throughout the planning process (BLM 2005a).

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives cross BLM-administered lands managed under 11 different RMPs and 5 different MFPs. These RMPs and MFPs are identified by name and segment in Table 3.17-2. The order of the plans generally proceeds from east to west.

Table 3.17-2. BLM Management Plan Jurisdiction Crossed by the Proposed Route

Resource Management Plan	Segment	Management Framework Plan	Segment
Casper	1E, 1W	Malad	5, 7
Rawlins	1E, 1W, 2, 3	Twin Falls	7, 9, 10
Green River	3, 4	Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills	8
Kemmerer	4	Kuna	8
Pocatello	4, 5, 7	Bruneau	9
Monument	6, 8, 10		
Cassia	5, 6, 7,9,10		
Wells	7		
Jarbidge	8, 9		
SRBOP	8, 9		
Owyhee	8, 9		

BLM Casper Resource Management Plan (Segments 1E and 1W)

The Casper RMP (BLM 2007a) provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Casper FO in east-central Wyoming. The RMP planning area encompasses approximately 8.5 million acres in Natrona, Converse, Platte, and Goshen Counties. Other land management agencies in the area are the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Defense, USFWS, Forest Service, and NPS.

The RMP identifies the following four key planning issues regarding management of resources or uses on BLM-managed lands within the Casper RMP planning area:

- Energy and mineral resources—suitability and level of intensity that the lands of the Casper FO should be explored for energy development and mineral extraction;
- Vegetation and habitat management—including management for the reduction of fuel loads and increase of forest and rangeland health, as well as conservation of protected species while serving all other land users;
- Land ownership adjustments, access and transportation—such as travel management to serve the public for commercial, recreational and general use, while also protecting cultural and natural resources;
- Special designation—where necessary, to protect unique sensitive resources.

The Casper RMP designates areas for limiting OHV use on BLM-managed lands. The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives would cross only through lands designated for

OHV use on existing roads and trails, with the possible exception of the Bates Hole MA, portions of which restrict OHV use to designated roads and trails only.

BLM Rawlins Resource Management Plan (Segments 1E, 1W, 2, and 3)

The Rawlins RMP (BLM 2008a) provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Rawlins FO in southeastern Wyoming. The Rawlins RMP planning area covers approximately 11.2 million acres in Sweetwater, Carbon, Albany, and Laramie Counties. Other land management agencies in the area are the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Defense, and the USFWS.

The RMP establishes and addresses the following eight key planning issues regarding management of resources or uses on BLM-managed lands within the Rawlins RMP planning area:

- Development of energy resources and minerals-related issues, including solar and wind as well as oil, gas and coal;
- Special management designations, including five WSAs, four ACECs, three Wild Horse Herd Management Areas, and three National Natural Landmarks designated by the NPS;
- Public access and transportation systems, especially with regards to the legal and physical accessibility of resources on BLM-managed lands;
- Wildland-urban interface;
- Management of special status species, including the identification of areas where resource activities conflict with threatened and endangered species habitat;
- Water quality, such as issues arising from the demand for water used in resource extraction activities, including contaminated discharge water;
- Vegetation management, especially how it relates to special status species habitat as well as livestock, big game, and wild horse grazing, and its role in erosion control; and
- Recreation and cultural resources, including potential conflicts between recreation and resource uses of the land, and the impact on the viewshed of development along historic transportation routes of the area.

The Rawlins RMP designates areas for limiting OHV use on BLM-managed lands.

Green River Resource Management Plan (Segments 3 and 4)

The Green River RMP, completed in October 1997 (BLM 1997), provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Rock Springs FO in southwestern Wyoming. The RMP planning area encompasses approximately 3.6 million acres in Sweetwater, Lincoln, Sublette, Fremont, and Uinta Counties.

The Green River RMP designates areas for limiting OHV use on BLM-managed lands, and it is not anticipated that the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives would cross the OHV exclusion areas. The Green River RMP also designates six SRMAs, which would also not be crossed by the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives for Segment 4.

Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (Segment 4)

The Kemmerer RMP (BLM 2010b) provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Kemmerer FO in southwest Wyoming. The RMP planning area encompasses 3.9 million acres in Lincoln, Uinta, and Sweetwater Counties. The 2010 RMP and resulting ROD are intended to provide land use planning and management direction at a broad scale and guide future actions. The 2010 RMP supersedes the 1986 Kemmerer RMP and subsequent amendments. Land use plan decisions consist of desired outcomes (goals and objectives) and allowable uses and management actions. Key planning issues in the preparation of the RMP include energy and mineral resources; vegetation and habitat management; land ownership adjustments; access and transportation; NHT management; and special designation for unique or sensitive resources. The RMP increases conservation of physical, biological, and heritage resources and emphasizes moderate constraints on resource issues.

Pocatello Resource Management Plan (Segments 4, 5, and 7)

The Pocatello RMP, as written in 1988, identifies resource management objectives and required management actions for the Pocatello FO. The Pocatello FO, located in southeastern Idaho, covers all or portions of Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Bonneville, Caribou, Franklin, and Power Counties, and encompasses 264,481 acres of public land, including the lands surrounding the city of Pocatello. The RMP addresses the following issues identified by planning team members, interagency consultation, public input, and review by BLM managers: land ownership adjustments; legal and physical access to public lands; rangeland management; protection of wildlife habitat; control of grasshoppers and weeds on public lands; OHV use on public lands; timber and firewood utilization; protection of riparian habitat and water quality; Shoshone-Bannock off-reservation rights; mineral development (prospecting leases, phosphate mining, geophysical, and oil and gas exploration); and availability of lands for phosphate, oil and gas leasing. Other management concerns included in the RMP are fire management, cultural resource management, threatened and endangered plants and animals, WSAs, and access.

On May 7, 2010, the Pocatello FO released a proposed Draft RMP and EIS (BLM 2010c) that analyzed four management alternatives that could be used to guide the multiple-use management of all resources and uses in the Pocatello FO. Completion of this proposed plan, once approved, will result in a revised RMP for the Pocatello FO.

Malad Management Framework Plan (Segments 5 and 7)

The Malad MFP provides direction for management of resource activities on public lands administered by the BLM within the southwestern portion of the Pocatello FO. The MFP includes objectives and recommendations for the following activities: lands, minerals, recreation, timber, wildlife, range management, and watershed management. The Malad MFP will be replaced by the revised Pocatello RMP currently being prepared by the Pocatello FO.

Monument Resource Management Plan (Segments 6, 8, and 10)

The Monument RMP (BLM 1986c) provides direction for management of public lands within the Monument Planning Area, which encompasses 2,059,441 acres of land north

of the Snake River in south-central Idaho. The Monument RMP planning area includes lands that are part of the Shoshone FO, as well as lands that are part of the Burley FO. The RMP planning area includes all of Jerome and Minidoka Counties and portions of Gooding, Lincoln, Blaine, Butte, and Power Counties. Approximately 57 percent of the planning area is public land administered by the BLM, 2 percent is land administered by other federal agencies, 3 percent is land belonging to the State of Idaho, and 38 percent is private land.

The RMP includes goals that would allow a variety of resource uses within the planning area. Production and use of commodity resources and commercial use authorization may occur, while protecting fragile resources and wildlife habitat, preserving natural systems and cultural values, and allowing for nonconsumptive resource uses. The RMP also includes management prescriptions to guide resource management activities within the planning area.

Cassia Resource Management Plan (Segments 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10)

The Cassia RMP (BLM 1985a) provides direction for management of public lands in a 1.6 million-acre planning area located south of the Snake River in south-central Idaho. This area is located entirely within the Burley FO. Approximately 97 percent of the planning area is within Cassia County, with 2 percent in Oneida County and less than 1 percent in each of Twin Falls and Power Counties. Twenty-nine percent of the planning area is public land administered by BLM; 22 percent is administered by the Forest Service, USFWS, and Bureau of Reclamation; and 5 percent is owned by the State of Idaho. The remaining land is privately owned.

The planning area's local economy is based on agriculture and agricultural-supporting industries. Domestic livestock grazing is the area's primary agricultural use involving nearly all of the public lands in the planning area. The Cassia RMP (BLM 1985a) divides the planning area into 14 management areas for the purposes of organizing and presenting its planning decisions. A management area generally contains lands having similar resources, features, and characteristics that can be effectively managed as a unit. Resource management guidelines are used to direct BLM management actions on public lands. The Cassia RMP includes policies and resource management guidelines for the management of the following specific resources: air quality; cultural resources; economic and social considerations; fire management; fish and wildlife; forest management; geology, energy and minerals management; motorized vehicle access and use; public utilities; rangeland management; recreation; transportation; visual resources management; and watershed management.

Twin Falls Management Framework Plan (Segments 7, 9, and 10)

The Twin Falls MFP (BLM 1982) provides direction for management of resource activities on public lands administered by the BLM within the western portion of the Burley FO. The MFP includes objectives and recommendations for the following activities: lands, minerals (oil and gas, geothermal, saleable), cultural resource management, forestry, recreation management, visual resource management, wilderness management, natural history resource management, range management, wildlife (big game, upland game, sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, quail, aquatics,

wetland-riparian, furbearers, waterfowl, fisheries, raptors, general, non-game), watershed management, and fire management.

Wells Resource Management Plan (Segment 7)

The Wells RMP (originally prepared in 1985 [BLM 1985b], and subsequently amended in 1987, 1992, 2003, and 2004) guides BLM management of 4.1 million acres of BLM-managed land within Elko County in northeastern Nevada. The RMP includes goals and objectives for the management of lands, corridors, recreation, livestock grazing, wild horses, terrestrial wildlife habitat, riparian/stream habitat, ACECs, threatened and endangered species, woodland products, and minerals and energy.

Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills Management Framework Plan (Segment 8)

The Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (1980) provides direction for management of resource activities on public lands administered by the BLM within the western portion of the Shoshone FO. The MFP includes objectives and recommendations for the following activities: lands, minerals, recreation, wildlife, range management, and watershed management.

Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (Segments 8 and 9)

The current Jarbidge RMP (BLM 1987), which is currently being revised, is designed to guide the management of public land resources in the Jarbidge FO and ensure that the public lands and resources are planned and managed in accordance with the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The FO includes 2,100,519 acres of land in south-central Idaho and northern Nevada. Approximately 81 percent of the lands in this area are public lands administered by BLM in Elmore, Owyhee, and Twin Falls Counties, Idaho and Elko County, Nevada. Five percent of the remaining lands are state-owned.

The plan focuses on nine issues identified by the public: land tenure and adjustments; livestock grazing; management of wildlife resources (including riparian and aquatic habitats); wilderness management; recreation; soil, air, and water; energy and mineral exploitation and development; fire management; and special designations. Special management concerns also addressed in the plan include cultural resource protection, paleontologic resource protection, timber management, and social and economic changes. The Plan includes objectives and management actions for 16 separate management areas called multiple use areas (MUAs) and three ACECs.

In August 2010 the Jarbidge FO released a proposed Draft RMP and EIS that analyzes management alternatives that could be used to guide the multiple-use management of all resources and uses in the Jarbidge FO. Completion of this proposed plan, once approved, will result in a revised RMP for the Jarbidge FO.

Kuna Management Framework Plan (Segment 8)

The Kuna MFP (BLM 1983a) provides direction for management of resource activities on public lands administered by the BLM within a portion of the Four Rivers FO. The MFP includes objectives and recommendations for the following activities: lands, minerals, range management, watershed management, wildlife-terrestrial, wildlife-aquatic, cultural resource management, recreation, visual resource management, and transportation/support.

Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (Segments 8 and 9)

The SRBOP RMP (BLM 2008b) provides guidance for the public lands and resources within the SRBOP, which are managed as a part of the BLM Four Rivers FO. The SRBOP contains approximately 485,600 acres of public land extending 81 miles along the Snake River in the Idaho counties of Ada, Canyon, Elmore, and Owyhee. The SRBOP includes the approximately 142,000-acre Orchard Training Area, used by the IDANG for military training since 1953.

The SRBOP contains the greatest concentration of nesting raptors in North America and the greatest density of prairie falcons in the world. The area is a unique habitat for birds of prey because the cliffs of the Snake River Canyon provide ideal nesting sites, while the adjacent upland plateau supports unusually large populations of small mammal prey species.

The SRBOP is managed by BLM under the concept of dominant use rather than multiple use. This means that prior to authorizing uses, BLM determines the compatibility of those uses with the purposes for which the SRBOP was established. The purpose of the SRBOP is to ensure that public land uses are planned for and managed in accordance with the requirements of P.L. 103-64. The SRBOP RMP replaced portions of the 1983 Kuna MFP, 1983 Bruneau MFP, 1987 Jarbidge RMP, and 1999 Owyhee RMP that cover the SRBOP, and replaced the 1996 SRBOP Management Plan. Specific management decisions for the public lands within the SRBOP include the following:

- Protecting remaining shrub communities through aggressive wildfire suppression;
- Restoring up to 130,000 acres of shrub habitat;
- Completing up to 100,000 acres of fuels management projects;
- Modifying IDANG training activities by limiting vehicular maneuver training to non-shrub communities to protect existing shrub communities, and by providing 4,100 acres of additional training area to enhance military maneuvers impacted by restrictions; and
- Area and use designations for livestock grazing, OHV use, ROWs, visual resource management, and energy corridors.

The approved RMP emphasizes the restoration and rehabilitation of all non-shrub areas outside the Orchard Training Area to improve raptor and raptor prey habitat while imposing only moderate restrictions on recreation, military training, and commodity uses.

Bruneau Management Framework Plan (Segment 9)

The Bruneau MFP (BLM 1983b) provides direction for management of resource activities on public lands administered by the BLM within the Bruneau FO. The MFP includes objectives and recommendations for the following activities: lands, minerals, forest products, range management, watershed management, wildlife-terrestrial, wildlife-aquatic, cultural resource management, recreation, visual resource management, and wilderness.

Owyhee Resource Management Plan (Segments 8 and 9)

The Owyhee RMP (BLM 1999) is a general RMP for BLM-managed public lands in western Owyhee County in southwestern Idaho. The Owyhee FO manages 1,779,492 acres. This total includes 1,320,032 acres administered by BLM and 136,936 acres administered by the State of Idaho. The FO contains the northern extent of the Owyhee Mountain Range and lies within what is often referred to as the Columbia Plateau, an elevated plateau with mountains which are separated by canyons draining to the Pacific Ocean via the Snake and Columbia Rivers.

The Owyhee RMP establishes guidance for managing a broad spectrum of land uses and allocations including livestock grazing management; wild horse management; land tenure adjustments; OHV designations; wild, scenic, and recreational river designations; and ACECs. The RMP contains resource objectives, land use allocations, management actions, and direction needed to achieve program and multiple use goals.

The Owyhee FO is currently developing a travel management plan for motorized routes on non-wilderness public lands in Owyhee County, west of the Bruneau River. Once completed, this will result in an updated RMP for the Owyhee FO.

Military Operations Areas and Military Training Routes

A military operations area is “airspace established outside Class A airspace to separate or segregate certain nonhazardous military activities from instrument flight rules traffic and to identify for visual flight rules traffic where these activities are conducted” (14 CFR Part 1.1). Military operations areas are designed for routine training or testing maneuvers. A military operations area is a type of special use airspace, other than restricted airspace or prohibited airspace, where military operations justify limitations on aircraft not participating in those operations.

The designation of special use airspaces identifies areas where military activity occurs, provides for segregation of that activity from other fliers, and allows charting to keep airspace users informed. Local flight service facilities maintain current schedules and contacts for the agency controlling each military operations area. Military operations areas are often positioned over isolated, rural areas to provide ground separation for any noise nuisance or potential accident debris. Each designated military operations area appears on the relevant sectional charts, along with its normal hours of operation, lower and upper altitudes of operation, controlling authority contact, and using agency.

The Owyhee and Jarbidge Military Operations Areas are located in the southern portion of Owyhee County, Idaho, south of Segment 9 (see Figure 3.17-3). Mountain Home Air Force Base is located in southwestern Elmore County, Idaho, in the vicinity of Segments 8 and 9 (Figure 3.17-3).

Military Training Routes (MTRs) are aerial corridors used solely by military aviation for training flights. The routes are the result of a joint venture between the FAA and the Department of Defense to provide for high-speed, low-level military activities. MTRs are divided into Instrument Routes (IR) and Visual Routes (VR). Each route is identified by either of these two letters, followed by either four digits for routes below 1,500 feet above ground level (AGL), or three digits for routes extending for at least one leg above 1,500 feet AGL. IR routes are flown under Air Traffic Control, while VR routes are not.

Each route is defined by a number of geographical coordinates. MTRs are individually operated through one of the local military air bases.

One MTR is located within the vicinity of Segment 7. IR-302/305/VR-1304/1305 is located in Minidoka, Blaine, and Cassia Counties, Idaho; Box Elder County, Utah; and Elko County, Nevada (see Figure 3.17-3). Unless noted on the air navigation chart, aircraft may fly as low as 100-110 AGL in the Project area along these routes.

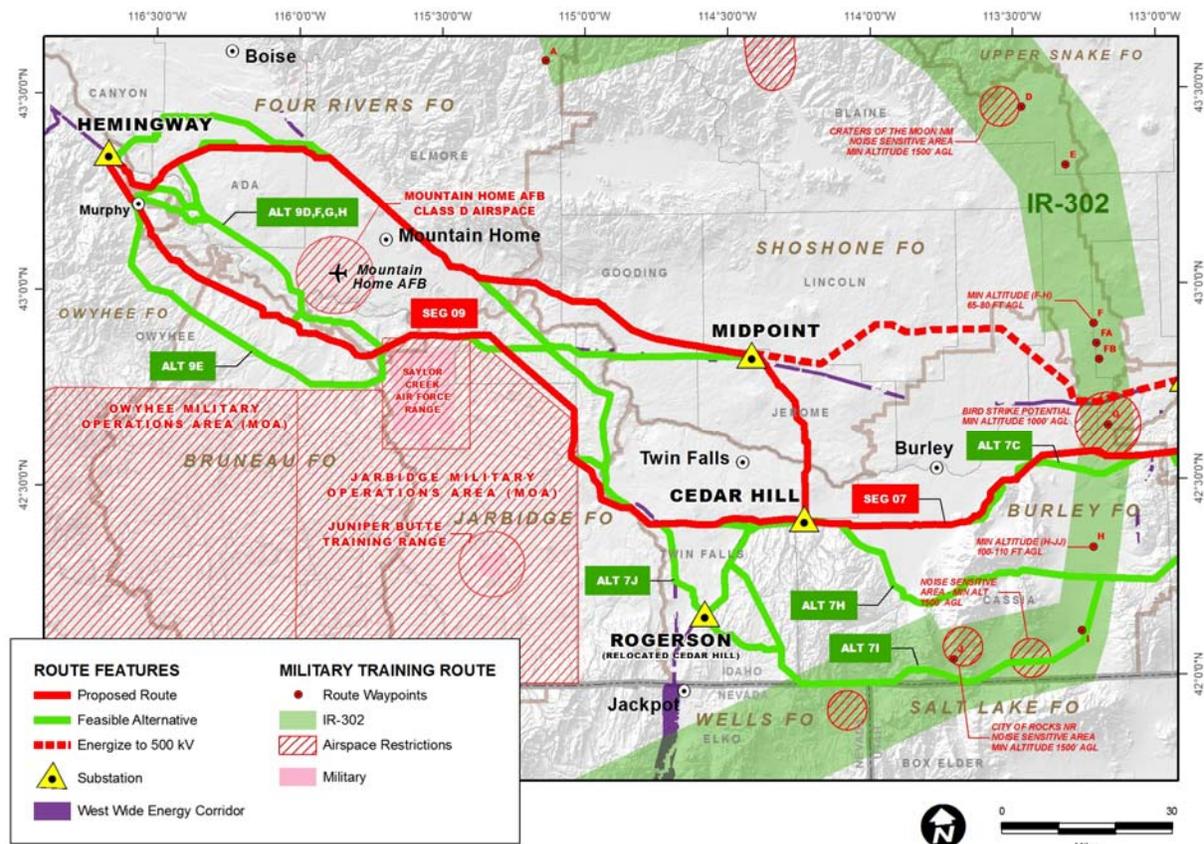


Figure 3.17-3. Military Operations Areas and Training Routes

Indian Reservations

Lands within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation are currently managed in accordance with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes 1976 Comprehensive Plan, and the draft Comprehensive Plan, as proposed in 2005. Under this plan, tribal departments work independently to plan and implement programs and projects, with various departments coordinating with one another to ensure that their actions do not impact the ability of other resource managers to attain their goals (Shoshone-Bannock 2010a). The tribes are in the process of developing a Tribal Integrated Resource Management Plan (TIRMP), which would provide guidance for natural resource management that reflects the traditional and cultural land use patterns of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (Shoshone-Bannock 2010b). The TIRMP would integrate interdisciplinary resource planning into all resource

plans and projects in order to balance resource development with natural sustainability and cultural resource protection (Shoshone-Bannock 2010a).

3.17.1.4 Methods

The environmental effects analyses completed for this assessment were conducted using readily available data and GIS files derived from preliminary centerline and component design for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives, including ROW, access roads, staging areas, and fly yards. (See Section 3.1 – Introduction for details on the development of these files.) Where impacts were identified, Proponent-proposed measures to reduce impacts were reviewed for sufficiency. Where those measures were determined to be insufficient, additional measures were identified.

Land ownership, Indian Reservations, and designated areas were determined from GIS data gathered from the Forest Service, the BLM, and the states of Wyoming and Idaho. Information about existing corridors and ROWs was gathered from USGS, field information, RMPs and MFPs, and Forest Plans.

Information on land use was obtained from GIS mapping of aerial photographs, and from federal and state agency personnel and state databases. Other GIS information collected and used for this Project included vegetation mapping prepared in accordance with NVCS, NWI wetland maps, and federal agency data on land use management plans. Land use classifications follow Anderson et al. (1976). Recreation and special interest areas were identified by reviewing USGS topographic maps; DeLorme Gazetteers for Wyoming and Idaho (DeLorme 2003, 2000); WGFD and IDFG interactive maps; BLM RMP and MFP and Forest Service Forest Plan maps of the proposed Project area; and field reconnaissance. Aerial photography was used to identify and confirm land uses within 1,000 feet of the centerline of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives.

Data on property ownership, miles of various land uses crossed, and disturbance to land use types during construction and operation were generated in GIS.

3.17.1.5 Existing Conditions

Land Ownership

Table 3.17-3 summarizes miles crossed by land ownership by Proposed Route segment. Private lands make up 46 percent of the total miles that would be crossed by the Proposed Route; BLM-managed lands account for 43 percent of the total (Table 3.17-3). Approximately 9 percent of the total miles cross state-managed lands, 2 percent cross NFS lands, and 1 percent cross Bureau of Reclamation lands.

Private lands as a share of total miles by segment range from 18 percent for Segment 9 to 73 percent for Segment 7. State-managed lands comprise a relatively large share of the land crossed by Segments 1E, 1W(a), and 1W(c), accounting for 22 percent to 24 percent of total miles crossed (Table 3.17-3).

BLM-managed lands range from 12 percent of total miles crossed by Segment 1E to 80 percent of the lands crossed by Segment 9 (Table 3.17-3). The BLM Management Plan jurisdictions crossed by the Proposed Route are identified by segment in Table 3.17-2. Segments 1E, 1W(a), 1W(c), and 4 cross NFS lands, which range from 3 to 5 percent of total miles crossed (Table 3.17-3).

Table 3.17-3. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership

Segment	Total Miles Crossed	Percent of Total Miles Crossed				
		BLM	NF	State ^{1/}	Private	Other ^{2/}
1E	100.6	12	3	22	64	–
1W(a)	76.5	35	3	24	38	–
1W(c)	70.6	34	3	22	41	–
2	96.7	38	–	6	55	–
3	56.5	51	–	2	47	–
4	203.0	40	5	5	48	2
5	54.6	24	–	7	69	–
7	118.1	24	–	4	73	–
8	131.0	65	–	7	26	3
9	161.7	80	–	3	18	–
10	33.6	39	–	–	61	–
Total	1,102.9	43	2	9	46	1

1/ State includes water.

2/ Other includes Bureau of Reclamation, USFWS, and Indian Reservation lands where crossed.

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area is primarily rangeland (84 percent), with cropland and forestland accounting for about 10 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively (Table 3.17-4). Relatively small portions of the route border or cross developed areas (including industrial, commercial, and residential areas, and existing ROWs), wetlands and open water, and “barren” areas (including disturbed and extractive mining areas) (Table 3.17-4).

Table 3.17-4. Existing Land Uses within the Analysis Area

Segment	Analysis Area Total (Acres) ^{1/}	Percent of Analysis Area						
		Rangeland	Cropland	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed ^{2/}	Other ^{3/}
1E	12,149	90	–	6	2	1	–	1
1W(a)	9,284	93	–	4	2	1	–	–
1W(c)	8,577	88	–	7	3	1	–	1
2	11,727	96	–	–	2	1	–	1
3	6,885	95	–	–	2	2	1	–
4	24,586	80	4	10	4	1	–	1
5	6,633	61	21	15	1	1	–	–
7	14,323	57	37	4	–	1	–	–
8	15,898	88	10	–	1	1	–	–
9	19,594	90	9	–	–	1	–	–
10	4,081	49	46	–	1	1	2	–
Total	133,736	83	10	4	2	1	–	1

1/ Based on a corridor 500 feet on either side of the Proposed Route. Note that the Analysis Area used for the Project varies by resource.

2/ Developed includes industrial, commercial, and residential land uses, as well as lands within existing ROWs.

3/ Other includes “barren” areas, which include disturbed and extractive mining areas.

Rangeland accounts for the majority (82 percent) of the land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route, ranging from 49 percent for Segment 10 to 96 percent for Segment 2 (Table 3.17-4). Cropland, including dryland and irrigated farming, accounts for approximately 10 percent of total land use. Cropland would only be present along the Idaho portion of the Proposed Route, and would range from 4 percent of total land use for Segment 4 (including the Wyoming portion) to 46 percent for Segment 10 (Table 3.17-4). Rangeland and agricultural lands, including prime farmland and lands in the CRP, are discussed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture.

Forestland accounts for approximately 4 percent of the lands within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route. Not all of the route segments cross forestland. Forestland as a share of total land use for the other segments would range from 4 percent for Segment 1W(a) to 15 percent for Segment 5 (Table 3-17.4). Forestland is discussed below relative to effects on timber management. Additional detail on the composition and extent of the forests found in the Analysis Area is presented in Section 3.6 – Vegetation Communities.

Water and wetlands make up about 1 percent of the total land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route, ranging from about 1 percent to 2 percent for each segment (Table 3.17-4). Water and wetlands are discussed in Sections 3.16 – Water Resources and 3.9 – Wetlands and Riparian Areas, respectively.

Developed land, including residential, commercial, and industrial development, occupies only 0.2 percent of the Analysis Area. Most of this development occurs along Segments 7, 9, and 10. Existing ROW accounts for approximately 0.8 percent of the overall Analysis Area and includes lands used for roads, transmission lines, gas pipelines, and other linear facilities.

The following sections discuss land use within the Analysis Area by segment.

Segment 1E

Rangeland accounts for the majority (90 percent) of the land use within the Analysis Area for Segment 1E. Higher elevation forestland in and around the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs accounts for about 6 percent of total land use (Table 3.17-4). There is limited development within the Analysis Area for Segment 1E. Developed land use mainly occurs in the vicinity of the Dave Johnston Power Plant just south of the Windstar Substation and includes ancillary facilities that serve the power plant, including electric transmission lines, two railroads, and two highways. The Analysis Area also includes part of an existing residential area east of Glenrock on the south side of U.S. Highway 20/26. Development from this area south through Converse, Natrona, Albany, and Carbon Counties to the Aeolus Substation is limited to a few scattered homes and ranches.

Segment 1W

Rangeland accounts for the majority (93 percent) of the land use within the Analysis Area for Segment 1W(a). Higher elevation forestland in and around the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs accounts for about 4 percent of total land use (Table 3.17-4). Segment 1W(a) trends west from the Windstar Substation, north of the town of Glenrock, before

heading south west of town. Development within the Analysis Area is limited to a few scattered homes and ranches.

Land use within the Analysis Area for Segment 1W(c) mainly consists of rangeland (88 percent) and forestland (7 percent). Development within the Analysis Area is limited to scattered homes and ranches.

Segment 2

Segment 2 would generally follow the existing SR 72 and U.S. Highway 30 corridors west from the Aeolus Substation. Land use within the Analysis Area for this segment is primarily rangeland (96 percent) (Table 3.17-4). This segment begins in the vicinity of an existing wind farm. Approximately 12.5 miles southwest of the Aeolus Substation it would cross about 2 miles of former strip mines. Farther west, south of the city of Rawlins, the segment would pass within 1 mile of oil and gas development that continues for about 10 miles to the proposed Creston Substation site.

Segment 3

Segment 3 would generally follow the existing U.S. Highway 30 corridor. Land use within the Analysis Area for this segment is primarily rangeland (95 percent) with existing ROWs accounting for about 2 percent of the total Analysis Area for this segment (Table 3.17-4). Oil and gas development occurs in the general vicinity of both the proposed Creston and Anticline Substation sites. Several areas of strip mining are also located in the vicinity of the Anticline Substation site. These land uses are not within 500 feet of Segment 3.

Segment 4

Land use within the Analysis Area for Segment 4 consists of rangeland (80 percent), cropland (4 percent), and forestland (10 percent) (Table 3.17-4). The cropland occurs in three main areas: near the two proposed crossings of the Bear River and near the city of Downey. The forestland occurs within and in the vicinity of Caribou-Targhee NF in Idaho, as well as along the Proposed Route in western Wyoming. Development is limited within the Analysis Area. Residential development in the general vicinity of the Analysis Area tends to be located in proximity to communities like Kemmerer and Cokeville in Wyoming and Montpelier and Downey in Idaho. The area between the Jim Bridger Power Plant and the town of Cokeville has substantial oil and gas development and coal mining.

Segment 5

Rangeland accounts for more than half (61 percent) of the land use in the Analysis Area for Segment 5, with cropland and forestland accounting for 21 percent and 15 percent, respectively (Table 3.17-4). Dryland farming occurs mostly west of the Deep Creek Mountains. Irrigated cropland is scattered along the Analysis Area. Forestland within the Analysis Area is mainly concentrated in the Deep Creek Mountains. Residential development within the Analysis Area is limited to scattered rural residences.

Segment 6

No new transmission line construction would be required along Segment 6 to operate this line segment at 500 kV, except in the vicinity of the existing Borah and Midpoint

Substations, where approximately 10 new structures would be required, 5 at each substation. Modifications would also be required at both substations. The Borah Substation is located approximately 0.5 mile north of the Snake River. Land use in the surrounding area consists of rangeland with some areas of irrigated cropland. The existing Midpoint Substation is located approximately 0.2 mile east of U.S. Highway 93. Land use to the north, east, and west is primarily rangeland. The area south of the substation is irrigated cropland.

Segment 7

Rangeland accounts for more than half (57 percent) of the land use in the Analysis Area for Segment 5, with cropland and forestland accounting for 37 percent and 4 percent, respectively (Table 3.17-4). Cropland within the Analysis Area may be broadly divided into irrigated cropland and dryland farming (see Section 3.18 – Agriculture). Irrigated cropland accounts for an estimated 16 percent of the Analysis Area for this segment; dryland farming accounts for an estimated 21 percent. The irrigated cropland within the Analysis Area occurs predominantly south of Burley and at scattered locations east and west of the Deep Creek Mountains. The Burley area is part of the Mini-Cassia community of Minidoka County and Cassia County in south-central Idaho, which includes some of the best agricultural land in the region. Forestland mainly occurs in higher elevation areas. Development includes a number of residences, farms including dairy operations, and feedlots along much of the Analysis Area except in the more mountainous locations.

Segment 8

The Analysis Area for Segment 8 is primarily rangeland (88 percent), with irrigated cropland accounting for 10 percent. Irrigated agriculture is found mostly in the first 40 miles from the Midpoint Substation and the last 25 miles before Hemingway Substation. This segment parallels existing transmission facilities for much of its length. Farms and residences occur along the Analysis Area and more intensive residential development is planned in the area south of Boise.

Segment 9

The Analysis Area for Segment 9 is mainly rangeland (90 percent) with approximately 9 percent used for irrigated crop production (Table 3.17-4). Irrigated cropland in the vicinity of the Analysis Area is concentrated in three main areas: west of the proposed Cedar Hill Substation, west of Castleford, and between the communities of Bruneau and Grandview. The majority of the irrigated acres within the Analysis Area are located between Bruneau and Grandview. Development in the Analysis Area for this segment includes a small number of scattered residences and farms. More concentrated residential development exists near the town of Murphy and near the proposed Hemingway Substation.

Segment 10

The Analysis Area for Segment 10 is approximately 49 percent rangeland and 46 percent cropland (Table 3.17-4). In the vicinity of Jerome and from Eden south to the Cedar Hill Substation, the entire Analysis Area is irrigated agricultural lands with

scattered farms and residences. From Jerome north, the area is mostly rangeland with some crop production.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROWs

Corridors are established in BLM and Forest Service land use plans and, most recently, by the West-Wide Energy Corridor ROD (see Section 1.6.2; BLM 2009a). There is a robust system of east-west high-voltage (230-kV and above) transmission lines across Wyoming and Idaho. Locations of existing electric transmission lines near the Project are noted on figures in Appendix A. The length and percentage of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives that align with the WWE corridor and existing transmission lines is summarized in Table 2.4-2 and discussed below in Section 3.17.2.3 by segment.

Timber and Fire Management Activities

Timber Management

Timber management includes the commercial and non-commercial harvest of forest wood products. Forest products may include lumber, poles, posts, firewood, and Christmas trees. Timber harvest is governed by the Wyoming State Forest Practice Act in Wyoming and by the Idaho State Forest Practice Act in Idaho. In addition, RMP requirements apply to BLM-managed lands and Forest Plan standards and guidelines and regional BMPs apply to NFS lands. Four of the proposed segments—1, 4, 5, and 7—cross forested lands. See Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics and Section 3.6 – Vegetation Communities for further discussion of forest economics and communities.

NFS lands crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives include the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs, crossed by Segments 1E and 1W, and the Caribou-Targhee NF crossed in Segment 4. The Proposed Route would not cross the Sawtooth NF but alternatives to the Segment 7 Proposed Route would cross the Sawtooth NF. Both the Caribou-Targhee and Sawtooth NFs have suitable timber lands that would be affected by the Proposed Route or a Route Alternative.

BLM-managed forested lands crossed include those lands managed by the Pocatello FO and Burley FO that are crossed by Segments 5 and 7.

Fire Management

Across Wyoming and Idaho, areas have been designated for initial fire suppression responsibility to eliminate confusion about who is in charge during a fire emergency. Primarily, initial suppression authority falls to either a federal (Forest Service or BLM) or state (Wyoming State Forestry Division or IDL) department, and less commonly, fire protective associations have this responsibility. Fire protective associations are set up by groups of landowners to provide wildland fire protection. Participating landowners contribute funding to the association who hires firefighters and provides services in a designated area. These agencies work across land ownership boundaries.

Individual land management agencies or landowners have responsibility for managing lands to reduce fire hazards and provide fire suppression access prior to the event of a fire.

Wildland fire operations in Nevada are managed by the Great Basin Multi-Agency Coordination group, which includes representatives of the BLM, Forest Service, NPS, USFWS, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the states of Nevada, Utah, and Idaho. The portion of the analysis area in Nevada is within the Elko Dispatch Zone, one of five dispatch zones in the Western Great Basin established for the purpose of local interagency fire management coordination and mobilization of wildland firefighting resources (Western Great Basin Coordination Center 2011).

The Project area often experiences fire ignitions that quickly escalate to large fires, due to fuel types including annual grasses and brush, combined with summer temperatures in the 90°F to 105°F range, and relative humidity in the 10 to 25 percent range. The fire season typically starts in May and ends in mid-October. Fires occur as early as March and as late as December depending on weather and ignition activities (lightning, vehicles, sparks from railroads, fireworks, debris burning, arson, etc.). Power lines that are downed during high wind events may also be a potential ignition source (BLM 2005b).

Indian Reservations

The Fort Hall Indian Reservation, which is crossed by Segment 5, is the only Indian Reservation crossed by the proposed Project; this crossing accounts for approximately 0.4 percent of the total miles crossed by the Proposed Route for Segment 5. The Fort Hall Indian Reservation was established for the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes, as well as one Northern Paiute band, as part of the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868 (Shoshone-Bannock 2009). Today, the reservation consists of approximately 521,519 acres, and is included in parts of four counties within southeastern Idaho: Bingham, Power, Bannock, and Caribou Counties. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were an estimated 5,762 individuals living within the Fort Hall Reservation and on Off-Reservation Trust Lands (U.S. Census 2000e), with approximately 70 percent of these people living within the boundary of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation (Shoshone-Bannock 2009).

Recreational and Public Interest Areas

Recreation on federal and other public lands in Wyoming, Idaho, and Nevada involve developed sites and also dispersed activities, such as hiking, OHV use, hunting, and fishing, which occur in and outside designated use and public interest areas. Recreation opportunities are offered to the public on all NFS lands and BLM-managed lands where legal access exists. Existing recreation resources in the general vicinity of the proposed Project were avoided during the initial route selection studies wherever possible in order to limit the potential impact of the Project on these areas. Recreation, and other specific land uses crossed or within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives, are identified by segment in Table D.17-1 of Appendix D.

Recreation activities on federal lands in the Analysis Area are managed under the applicable resource management plans (see Section 3.17.1.3), which specify the locations and times when many of these activities can occur, as well as applicable State regulations. Hunting in the Analysis Area, for example, varies by season and location, as permitted by the WGFD, IDFG, and Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Designated recreation resources within the Analysis Area include SRMAs and other special management areas designated by the BLM, historic trails, and scenic byways, as well as developed recreation facilities. Recreation management is guided on NFS lands by the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) system. Management on public lands for OHV use also has important implications for recreation use.

FLPMA recognizes recreation as an important component of multiple use management and BLM Manual 8300 (Recreation) “directs the BLM to designate administrative units known as SRMAs where there is a need for a higher level of managerial presence or investment than is typical of most public land. BLM-managed land outside of SRMAs is designated as an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA) where limited resources are required to provide extensive, unstructured recreational activities” (BLM 2008b). SRMAs that would be crossed by or are within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives are discussed by segment in the following section.

Historic trails within the Project area include trails that have been designated as NHTs by Congress under the National Trail Systems Act of 1968, as amended 1978. These include the web of pathways that are variously known as the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, or Pony Express Trails. These pathways were historically a network of trail segments, river crossings, and landmarks that stretched across 1,800 miles of territory and linked the western frontier to the settled lands of the east. Most components of these four historic trails have been designated as NHTs and are part of the National Trails System. The Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express NHTs coincide and share a common corridor across many, but not all, portions of the Project area. Shortcuts that developed along the Oregon-California-Mormon Pioneer trail system were called “Cutoffs” by emigrants. The Project would also cross a number of Cutoffs, including Child’s Cutoff, Slate Creek Cutoff, Sublette Cutoff, Hams Fork Cutoff, and Hudspeth’s Cutoff (see Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

There are also a number of scenic byways within the Analysis Area that would be crossed by the Proposed Route and/or Route Alternatives. Scenic byways are generally roads that have historic, recreational, scenic, or other qualities that make them attractive for recreationists and others interested in driving for pleasure. Developed recreation facilities within the Analysis Area are also identified by segment below. These facilities include a ski area and two developed campground sites with boat ramps.

The following sections provide an overview of recreational resources within the Project Analysis Area by segment. OHV use on BLM-managed and NFS lands and the ROS system are discussed in separate sections that follow the segment-by-segment summaries.

Segment 1E

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 1E are regulated by the Medicine Bow Forest Plan and the Casper and Rawlins RMPs. Recreational activities identified in the Medicine Bow LRMP include camping, horseback riding, fishing, snow mobile use, OHV use, boating, and hunting. Recreational activities on the Casper and Rawlins BLM districts that are identified in their respective RMPs include those listed

above for the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs, as well as the use of historic trails, wildlife viewing, hiking, cave exploration, use of WSRs, and the use of areas established for special events. Note that these are the recreational resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area.

There are no SRMAs crossed or located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives for this segment. One designated Management Area (MA), the Bates Hole MA, is located within the Analysis Area and would be crossed by the Proposed Route along Segment 1E, as well as Alternative 1E-C. The Bates Hole MA was established in the 2007 ROD and Approved Casper RMP to “protect highly erosive soils, fragile watersheds, and important and crucial wildlife habitat” (BLM 2007a). The area encompasses 375,221 acres, including 158,023 acres of BLM-managed lands.

Segment 1E would cross a segment of the Oregon/California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer NHTs, where they all share the same alignment, and would also cross the Child’s Cutoff to the California NHT. Alternative 1E-B would also cross the Rock Creek and Fort Fetterman Road trail twice (see Table 3.3-7 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

There are no developed recreation facilities located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 1E.

The Proposed Route along Segment 1E would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs and BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreation opportunities. Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route include Rainbow Canyon, Moonshine Canyon, and North Fork Cottonwood Creek (Table D.17-1). Reed Pass and Little Pinto Creek are located within 1,000 feet of Alternative 1E-B, and Alternative 1E-C would pass within 1,000 feet of Smith Creek Reservoir and an ice cave that the BLM considers a locally historic feature (Table D.17-1).

Segment 1W

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 1W are regulated in part by the Medicine Bow NF LRMP and the Casper and Rawlins RMPs. Recreational activities that are identified in these plans are listed above under Segment 1E.

There are no SRMAs crossed or located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives for this segment. Like Segment 1E, there is one MA, the Bates Hole MA, located within the Analysis Area for this segment. Summary information is provided for this area under Segment 1E.

Segment 1W(a) would cross a segment of the Oregon/California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer NHTs, where they all share the same alignment, and would also cross the Child’s Cutoff and the Bozeman Trail (see Table 3.3-8 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

There are no developed recreation facilities located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 1W.

The Proposed Route along Segment 1W would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs and BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route include Sensebaugh Canyon, Smith Creek Rim, Banner Mountain, Negro Creek Park, and Perey Reservoir (Table D.17-1). Willow Creek is located within 1,000 feet of Alternative 1W-A. In addition, the Proposed Route along Segment 1W would cross through the Shirley Basin, which is an important area used by recreationists to hunt pronghorn antelope.

Segment 2

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 2 are regulated in part by the Rawlins RMP. Recreational activities that are identified in the Rawlins RMP include camping, hiking, fishing, boating, sightseeing, OHV use, cave exploration, and use of WSRs. Note that these are the recreational resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area. Segment 2 would cross through “checkerboard lands,” where every square mile section of federal land alternates with non-federal lands in a checkerboard pattern. This pattern of land ownership complicates recreation management on public lands.

There are three SRMAs and one Wildlife Habitat MA located within the Analysis Area for this segment. These are the North Platte River, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and OHV SRMAs and the Red Rim-Daley Wildlife Herd Management Area (HMA).

The North Platte River SRMA consists of 5,060 acres of lands located in discrete and separate areas along the river. The management goal for this SRMA is to “ensure the continued availability of outdoor recreation opportunities associated with the North Platte and Encampment Rivers” (BLM 2008a: 2-27). This area is managed to provide high quality recreation opportunities, especially for floating, fishing, camping, and sightseeing. Surface-disturbing activities on public lands within 0.25 mile on either side of the river are intensively managed to maintain the quality of the visual resource.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail SRMA consists of 600 acres based on a 0.25-mile corridor that follows the trail on lands managed under the Rawlins RMP. The management goals for this SRMA are to emphasize interpretive and educational opportunities and ensure the availability of associated outdoor recreation opportunities (BLM 2008, p. 2-26).

The OHV SRMA includes 480 acres set aside for OHV use, southwest of the city of Rawlins. The management goal for the OHV SRMA is to provide opportunities for safer OHV riding opportunities and OHV use for local residents and visitors to the area (BLM 2008, Rawlins ROD and RMP, p. 2-28).

The Red Rim-Daley Wildlife HMA consists of 11,100 acres of BLM-managed lands located in 640 acre sections interspersed with other landowners in a checkerboard pattern. The management goals for this wildlife HMA include the protection of crucial winter habitat for pronghorn antelope and nesting habitat for raptors (BLM 2008a: 2-39). This area is open to management activities including oil and gas leasing, locatable

mineral entry, and mineral material disposal, with intensive management of surface disturbing and disruptive activities (BLM 2008a).

Segment 2 would not cross any NHTs, but would cross the Rawlins to Baggs Stage Road and would also cross the Lincoln Highway several times (see Table 3.3-9 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). Alternatives 2A and 2B pass close to the Fort Fred Steele Historic Site, which is a historic site managed by Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails.

Landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route include Hanna Draw, Barrel Spring, Antelope Dam and Reservoir, and Whitehorse Canyon. Eagle Rock is located within 1,000 feet of Alternative 2A (Table D.17-1).

Segment 3

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 3 are regulated in part by the Rawlins and Green River RMPs. Recreational activities identified under the Rawlins RMP are discussed above, for Segment 1E. Recreational activities that are identified in the Green River RMP include camping, fishing, hunting, OHV use, mountain biking, use of snow mobiles, use of historic trails, and viewing of wild horses. Note that these are the recreational resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area.

Segment 3 would also cross through “checkerboard lands.” The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 3 would not cross any special MAs identified in these plans.

Segment 3 would not cross any NHTs but would cross the Overland Trail and the Point of Rocks to South Pass Stage Road, as well as the Lincoln Highway (see Table 3.3-10 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

There are no developed recreation facilities located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 1W.

The Proposed Route along Segment 3 would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas of BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. There are few named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route; Tenmile Draw is the only named landscape feature identified in Table D.17-1 of Appendix D for Segment 3.

Segment 4

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 4 are regulated in part by the Caribou Forest Plan and the Green River, Kemmerer, and Pocatello RMPs. Recreational activities identified in the Caribou Forest Plan include skiing, fishing, boating, swimming, and scenic viewing. Recreational activities identified in the Green River RMP are identified above under Segment 3. Recreational activities identified in the Kemmerer and Pocatello RMPs include the use of historic trails, OHVs, and snowmobiles. Note that these are the recreational resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 4 would cross the Oregon Trail, Pine Creek Canyon, and Dempsey Ridge SRMAs, as well as the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide SMAs and the Cokeville Meadows NWR. These areas are briefly described below.

The Oregon NHT SRMA includes Class I portions of the Oregon-California NHT on BLM-managed lands that are managed under the 2010 Kemmerer RMP. The management goal for this SRMA is to “manage trails to provide an opportunity to visit and learn about trail history and use, while maintaining setting character and present condition of trails and associated historic sites” (BLM 2010b: 2-47). Cultural resource and NHT prescriptions apply and no motor vehicle use is allowed on NHT trail trace.

The Pine Creek Canyon SRMA encompasses the Pine Creek Canyon area managed under the Kemmerer RMP. The management objective for this SRMA is to “enhance recreation opportunities while protecting the riparian, water, and wildlife values that exist in the area” (BLM 2010b: 2-46). This area serves the camping and dispersed recreation niche and offers the following primary recreation activities: hunting, camping, snowmobiling, and driving for pleasure. Motor vehicles are limited to designated roads and trails.

BLM-administered lands in the vicinity of Dempsey Ridge (33,445 acres) are managed as an SRMA. The management objective for this SRMA is to “manage the area to provide quality dispersed recreation opportunities in a natural setting” (BLM 2010b: 2-47). Primary recreation activities identified for this area include hunting, driving for pleasure, and heritage tourism. Management prescriptions allow mineral development and other construction activities with the goal of no further loss of habitat from these activities.

The Rock Creek/Tunp SMA consists of 45,863 acres managed under the 2010 Kemmerer RMP with the objective of preserving and enhancing the critical wildlife habitats and cultural values that occur in the area. Off-trail motor vehicle travel is not allowed and all new ROW actions are restricted to existing disturbance zones (BLM 2010b: 2-53).

The Bear River Divide SMA consists of 74,954 acres managed under the 2010 Kemmerer RMP. Like the Rock Creek/Tunp SMA, the objective of this SMA is to preserve and enhance the critical wildlife habitats and cultural values that occur in the management area. Off-trail motor vehicle travel is not allowed and ROW actions are considered on a case-by-case basis, with proponents encouraged to use existing disturbance zones (BLM 2010b: 2-54). The Bear River Divide SMA is located directly south of the Rock Creek SMA.

The Cokeville Meadows NWR is centered around a 20-mile stretch of the Bear River and its associated wetlands and uplands, south of Cokeville, Wyoming. Wetlands within the NWR provide high quality habitat for migratory and resident wildlife species and support high densities of nesting waterfowl. Established in 1992, the NWR is currently managed by the USFWS as a satellite of the relatively nearby Seedskafee NWR. The approved acquisition boundary for the refuge encompasses 26,657 acres. To date,

9,259 acres have been purchased or are protected through conservation easements (USFWS 2011).

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 4 would cross a number of NHTs and other trails, including stage and wagon roads, that have potential historic significance (see Table 3.3-11 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). These include the Oregon, Pony Express and Mormon Pioneer trails, and the California NHT Sublette Cutoff, Slate Creek Cutoff, and Bartleton-Bidwell Route. Alternative 4F would also cross the Dempsey-Hockaday Cutoff. The Proposed Route along Segment 4 would also cross the Overland Trail and the 1849 Evans Cherokee Trail, as well as a number of historic stage and wagon roads (see Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

The Analysis Area for Segment 4 also crosses a number of scenic byways. The Proposed Route along Segment 4 would cross the Oregon NHT/Bear Lake Scenic Byway southeast of Montpelier, Idaho; the Pioneer Historic Byway approximately 0.3 mile south of Thatcher, Idaho; and the Big Spring Scenic Backway directly south of the Bridger NF and again north of Cokeville, Wyoming. Alternatives 4A and 4F would cross the Big Spring Scenic Backway between the Kemmerer Reservoir and Lake Viva Naughton, while Alternative 4F would also cross this backway a second time north of Cokeville, Wyoming (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources).

Alternative 4F would pass within 1,000 feet of the Pine Creek Ski Area. The Pine Creek Ski Area is a ski resort located on BLM-managed land south of Cokeville, Wyoming, between the Pine Creek and Dempsey Ridge SRMAs. The ski area includes 30 ski runs and 60 acres of skiable terrain.

The Proposed Route along Segment 4 would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route include North Fork Roney Creek, West Fork Beaver Creek, Birch Gulch, Dixon Slough, Garrett Creek, Cook Canal, Sago Spring, Ledge Hollow, Humberg Spring, Portneuf Marsh Valley Canal, Quealy Reservoir, Sheep Creek Dam and Reservoir, Banks Valley (Table D.17-1).

There are a number of developed recreation facilities located outside but near the Analysis Area for Segment 4. The trailheads for Meacham Hollow Trail and Emigration Camping Trail are located about 0.5 mile from the Proposed Route. In addition, the Fontenelle Creek Recreation Area is located about 2 miles from the Proposed Route. The Fontenelle Creek Recreation Area is located on the south side of Fontenelle Reservoir (on Bureau of Reclamation-administered land), and contains developed camping areas.

Segment 5

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 5 are regulated in part by the Pocatello and Cassia RMPs and the Malad MFP. Recreational activities identified in the Pocatello RMP include use of historic trails, OHVs, and snowmobiles. Recreational activities identified in the Malad RMP include OHV use and visiting historic sites. Recreational activities identified in the Cassia RMP include trail use, skiing, hunting, fishing, biking, OHV use, and snowmobile use. Note that these are the recreational

resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 5 would not cross any special management areas identified in these plans.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 5 would cross the Oregon NHT in Idaho and the North Alternate Oregon Trail (see Table 3.3-13 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

The Proposed Route along Segment 5 would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on the Caribou-Targhee NF and BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. The Proposed Route would cross the Snake River and pass within 1,000 feet of the Pipeline Recreation Site. Located on the Snake River about 3 miles southwest of American Falls, Idaho, the Pipeline Recreation Site is a developed campground with eight campsites and a boat ramp. This site is managed by the BLM Pocatello FO.

Alternative 5B would pass within 1,000 feet of the Hawkins Reservoir Campground. Located about 9 miles west of Virginia, Idaho, on the Hawkins Reservoir, this campground is managed by the BLM Pocatello FO and includes 10 campsites and a boat ramp.

Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route include Potter Creek, Warner Flat, East Fork Canyon, Hutchinson Canyon, and Green Canyon (Table D.17-1).

Alternatives 5D and 5E both cross the Snake River at different locations to the Proposed Route. Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Route Alternatives to Segment 5 include Sawmill Creek, Cold Creek, Warm Creek, Deep Creek Mountains, Mill Canyon, Portage Canyon, and Cold Creek Canyon (Table D.17-1).

Segment 7

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 7 are regulated in part by the Sawtooth Forest Plan; the Pocatello, Malad, Cassia, and Wells RMPs; as well as the Twin Falls MFP. Recreational activities identified in the Pocatello, Malad, and Cassia RMPs are listed above under Segment 5. Recreational activities identified in the Sawtooth Forest Plan include mountain biking, cross country and downhill skiing, hunting, rafting, boating, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing. Recreational activities identified in the Cassia RMP include trail use, skiing, hunting, fishing, biking, OHV use, and snowmobile use. Recreational activities identified in the Wells RMP include camping and OHV use. Recreational activities identified in the Twin Falls MFP include camping, hunting, fishing, boating, target shooting, hiking, trail use, OHV use, and rock collecting. Note that these are the recreational resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 7 would not cross any SRMAs or other SMAs identified in these plans. Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J would, however,

cross the Raft River/Curlew Valley IBA. This area consists of approximately 490,000 acres of sagebrush/grass rangelands within the Raft River and Curlew-Juniper Valleys in south-central Idaho. The area was designated an IBA by the National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy to protect the large population of ferruginous hawks found in the area (National Audubon Society 2011). IBAs may include public or private lands, or both, and they may be protected or unprotected.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 7 would cross a number of NHTs and other trails that have potential historic significance (see Table 3.3-14 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). These include the Oregon Trail, California National Historic Trail–Hudspeth Cutoff, and Kelton Road. Alternative 7I would also cross the California National Historic Trail – Salt Lake Alternate.

The Proposed Route and Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J would also each cross City of Rocks Backcountry Byway twice; Alternatives 7E and 7F would cross this byway once each. The byway is a 49-mile loop around the Albion Mountain Range that includes parts of Idaho SRs 27 and 77.

The Proposed Route along Segment 7 would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on the Sawtooth NF and BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. The Proposed Route would also pass within 1,000 feet of the Hawkins Reservoir Campground, which, as noted above under Segment 5, is managed by the BLM Pocatello FO and includes 10 campsites and a boat ramp.

Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route include Cold Spring Creek (Table D.17-1). Alternatives 7A through 7G would cross within 1,000 feet of additional named landscape features, including Bull Canyon, South Fork Bull Canyon, Stewart Canyon, and Goddard Canyon (Alternative 7B), and Water Canyon Spring (Alternative 7E) (Table D.17-1). Named landscape features cross or within 1,000 feet of Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J include Middle Fork Hannah's Fork, North Fork Hannah's Fork, South Hannah's Fork, Buckhorn Canyon, Monument Canyon, Mahogany Butte, and Willow Spring Creek. A more complete list is provided in Table D.17-1.

There are a number of developed recreational facilities located outside of, but near, the Analysis Area for Segment 7. Both Bear Gulch and the Shoshone Wildlife Pond are located about 2 miles from Alternative 7I (on the Sawtooth NF). Bear Gulch provides facilities/opportunities for camping, picnicking, and fishing. The Shoshone Wildlife Pond has an information center, fishing opportunities, and scenic viewing opportunities.

Segment 8

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 8 are regulated in part by the Monument, Jarbidge, SRBOP, and Owyhee RMPs, as well as the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills and Kuna MFPs. Recreational activities identified in the Monument RMP include fishing, shooting, archery, picnicking, boating, sightseeing, cave exploration, and motorcycle racing, as well as use of ORVs and trails. Recreational activities identified in the Jarbidge RMP include hiking, collecting fossils, and use of OHVs and trails. Recreational activities identified in the SRBOP RMP include camping, rock climbing, paintballing, hunting, fishing, and OHV use.

Recreational activities identified in the Owyhee RMP include OHV use, river recreation, hiking, and horseback riding. Recreational activities identified in the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP include camping, fishing, boating, hunting, rock collecting, and use of OHVs and snowmobiles. Recreational activities identified in the Kuna MFP include horseback riding, hunting, bird watching, fishing, and use of OHVs and trails. Note that these are the recreational resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 8 would cross the SRBOP and three SRMAs managed under the SRBOP RMP: the Oregon NHT, Owyhee Front, and Snake River Canyon SRMAs.

The Oregon NHT SRMA consists of approximately 7,900 acres along a 1-mile-wide (0.5 mile either side) corridor of the South Alternate of the Oregon NHT. The purpose of the Oregon NHT SRMA is to protect the visual and historic values of the NHT.

The Owyhee Front SRMA consists of 6,300 acres located west of SR 78. The purpose of this SRMA is to provide enhanced management of recreational resources in the area.

The Snake River Canyon SRMA consists of 22,300 acres in the Snake River Canyon downstream from Grand View, Idaho, that are managed for the protection of cultural and scenic values.

Other special management areas crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for this segment are the Birds of Prey Avoidance Area, the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District, the Black Mountain HMA, the Halverson Bar Non-motorized Area, and the Wees Bar Non-motorized Area.

The Birds of Prey Avoidance Area is a 43,000-acre ROW avoidance area established in the 2008 SRBOP RMP to protect the visual corridor along the Oregon NHT and resources along the Snake River Canyon. This avoidance area includes parts of Oregon NHT and Snake River Canyon SRMAs.

The Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District includes approximately 26,300 acres of public land that extends upstream along the Snake River Canyon from Guffey Bridge to Grand View. This district was listed on the NRHP in 1978 to protect over 200 known prehistoric sites in the area.

The Black Mountain HMA is managed under the Owyhee RMP and consists of 50,611 acres of public and other land south of the Snake River, between Murphy and U.S. Highway 95 to the west. The area is generally characterized by rolling hills and sagebrush steppe (BLM 2011b).

The Halverson Bar Non-motorized Area includes a 1,150-acre area. Wees Bar Non-motorized Area encompasses a 1,200-acre area that has been closed to motorized use and where non-motorized use (e.g., horseback riding and biking) is encouraged.

The Proposed Route along Segment 8 and route alternatives to this segment would cross a number of NHTs and other trails such as stage and wagon roads that have potential historic significance (see Table 3.3-15 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

These include the Oregon NHT, the Oregon NHT South Alternate, the Northside Alternate Oregon NHT, the North Alternate Oregon NHT, Kelton Road, Dorsey's Road, and the Boise City-Silver City Road.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 8 would also cross three scenic byways: the Western Heritage Historic Byway, the Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway, and the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources).

The Western Heritage Historic Byway is 47 miles long and includes parts of SR 69 and Swan Falls Road (Idaho Transportation Department 2011). This byway mainly passes through the SRBOP. The Proposed Route along Segment 8 would cross this byway south of Initial Point, while Alternative 8B would cross it south of Kuna, Idaho (directly east of Kuna Butte). Alternative 8B would also cross the Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway on Map Rock Road, north of Walters Island. Alternative 8A would cross the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway between Hagerman, Idaho, and Lower Salmon Falls (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources).

The Proposed Route along Segment 8 would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives include Bell Mare Creek, Cedar Spring, Buckbrush Draw, and Walker Draw (Table D.17-1).

Segment 9

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 9 are regulated in part by the Cassia, Jarbidge, SRBOP, and Owyhee RMPs, as well as the Twin Falls and Bruneau MFPs. Recreational activities identified in the Cassia RMP are listed above under Segment 5. Recreational activities identified in the Twin Falls RMP are listed above under Segment 7. Recreational activities identified in the Jarbidge, SRBOP, and Owyhee RMPs are listed above under Segment 8. Recreational activities that are identified in the Bruneau MFP include camping, fishing, boating, rock collecting, motorcycle racing, and OHV use. Note that these are the recreational resources identified in the applicable federal plans, and it is possible that some of these recreational activities take place within or near the Project area.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 9 would cross the SRBOP and four SRMAs: the Oregon NHT, Owyhee Front, Snake River Canyon, and C.J. Strike Reservoir SRMA. Summary information is presented for the Oregon NHT, Owyhee Front, and Snake River Canyon SRMAs under Segment 8.

The C.J. Strike SRMA consists of 20,000 acres surrounding C.J. Strike Reservoir along the Snake River. The purpose of the SRMA is to provide enhanced recreation management associated with the reservoir, and protection of the Oregon NHT adjacent to the reservoir.

Other SMAs that would be crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for this segment are the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC, the Birds of Prey Avoidance Area, the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District, and the Black Mountain and Saylor Creek HMAs. Summary information is presented for the Birds of Prey Avoidance Area,

the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District, and the Black Mountain HMA under Segment 8.

The Salmon Falls Creek ACEC consists of 2,700 acres of public land managed with the goal of protecting Salmon Falls Creek Canyon for its natural and scenic values.

The Saylor Creek HMA consists of 94,992 acres, located approximately 15 miles south of Glens Ferry, Idaho, in Owyhee and Elmore Counties (BLM 2011c).

The Proposed Route along Segment 9 and Route Alternatives to this segment would cross several NHTs and other trails such as stage and wagon roads that have potential historic significance (see Table 3.3-16 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). These include the Oregon NHT, California NHT, Toana Freight Wagon Road, and Boise City-Silver City Road. Alternative 9D would also cross the Oregon NHT South Alternate several times.

In addition, the Proposed Route and Alternative 9E would cross the Owyhee Uplands Backcountry Byway, directly north of Rock House Ranch (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources).

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 9 would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. Named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives include McMullen Creek Dam, Lower Salmon Falls Creek, Deadman Falls, Bieroth Canal, Beeroth Canal, Feeny Wells, and Browns Creek. Additional named features within 1,000 feet of the alternatives include Magic Water Canal (Alternative 9B); Sinker Butte and Cove Non-motorized Area (Alternative 9D); Buckaroo Dam and Harris Dam (Alternative 9E); and Locust Park (Alternative 9G).

In addition, Alternative 9E would cross a motorcycle raceway area located on lands managed by the BLM's Bruneau FO. Alternative 9E would cross this area between the Grandview area (around Shoofly Creek) and Castle Creek. This motorcycle raceway is an undeveloped raceway (e.g., there are no restroom facilities or staging areas present). The majority of people that utilize this area are looking for a less developed racing experience, and one of the major events at this facility is a long-distance endurance race. This area is already disturbed due to the previous land use in this area (it was historically a missile base).

Segment 10

Recreational resources on federal lands along Segment 10 are regulated in part by the Monument and Cassia RMPs, as well as the Twin Falls MFP. Recreational activities identified in the Monument and Cassia RMPs and the Twin Falls MFP are listed above under Segment 8, Segment 5, and Segment 7, respectively. The Proposed Route for Segment 10 would not cross any SMAs identified in these plans.

Segment 10 would cross the Oregon NHT, Northside Alternate Oregon NHT, and Kelton Road (see Table 3.3-17 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources).

The Proposed Route along Segment 10 would either cross or pass within 1,000 feet of areas on BLM-managed lands that offer dispersed recreational opportunities. No

named landscape features that offer potential recreation opportunities were identified within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route (Table D.17-1).

OHV Use on BLM-managed and NFS Lands

The OHV designations for the majority of travel routes on public lands are currently either “open,” “closed,” “seasonally closed,” or “limited” (use is limited to existing travel routes designated as open to OHV use). The Analysis Area includes numerous trails that are maintained by the land management agencies, some of which are designated as open to OHV use and some as closed to OHV use (Table 3.17-5).

Table 3.17-5. OHV Designations on Federal Lands for the Proposed Route (miles)

Segment	Total Route Length	Assumed Closed (Sawtooth NF)	Closed	Limited	Limited Designated Roads	Limited Existing Routes	Seasonal Closure	Winter Limited Designated Routes	Open	Undesignated
1E	100.6	-	-	-	-	2.8	4.2	-	-	-
1W(a)	76.5	-	-	-	-	3.8	3.9	-	-	-
1W(c)	70.6	-	-	-	-	2.9	3.4	-	-	-
2	96.7	-	2.4	-	-	36.9	-	-	1.0	-
3	56.5	-	-	-	-	12.0	-	-	-	-
4	203.0	-	-	5.0	1.5	-	15.6	2.0	7.2	1.2
5	54.6	-	2.2	2.3	-	-	-	-	-	8.7
6	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	118.1	-	3.1	3.9	-	-	-	-	15.9	5.3
8	131.0	-	-	34.6	-	-	-	-	30.2	24.4
9	161.7	-	3.3	37.2	-	-	-	-	89.1	-
10	33.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.3
Total	1,103.4	0.0	11.0	83.0	1.5	58.4	27.1	2.0	143.4	52.9

Travel by snowmobiles is permitted off existing routes and in all open or limited areas (unless otherwise specifically limited or closed to snowmobiles) if the snowmobiles are operated in a responsible manner without damaging the vegetation or harming wildlife.

The non-highway road networks within the planning area consist of a series of county roads, BLM- and Forest Service-maintained roads, private (ungated) roads, two-track routes, and snowmobile trails. These travel ways are used for both recreational and nonrecreational purposes. The three NFs potentially crossed by the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives have completed travel management plans that designate which roads are open for use. All areas on these national forests are closed to motor vehicles, including OHVs, unless designated open.

Typical recreational OHV activities within the planning area include enduro races, trial competitions, all-terrain vehicle and motorcycle trail riding, and snowmobiling. OHV use, in itself, has become a popular method for exploring public lands. In addition, OHV use provides access for other recreational purposes, such as fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and primitive camping opportunities.

Nonrecreational OHV use includes agricultural management, energy development, and land management activities. OHVs may also be used for the noncommercial collection of decorative rock and native plant materials. Employees of government agencies, ranchers, timber companies, energy companies, and utility providers are permitted users who utilize OHVs to access and maintain the infrastructure required for the continued operation and maintenance of their facilities. OHVs are used for range inspections, vegetation treatments, surveying and mapping, inventories, monitoring, fire suppression, project construction, and maintenance.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The Forest Service developed the ROS land classification system to help identify and describe possible combinations of recreation activities, settings, and experiences for management purposes. The ROS system portrays the appropriate combination of activities, settings, and experiences along a continuum that ranges from highly modified to primitive environments. Six factors describe the range along the spectrum of available opportunities: access, other non-recreational resource uses, on-site management, social interaction, acceptability of visitor impacts, and acceptable level of regimentation. Classifications typically identified along this continuum include Urban, Rural, Roaded Modified, Roaded Natural, Semi-Primitive Motorized, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, and Primitive. These classifications may be summarized as follows:

- **Urban (U)** – This class is characterized by a substantially urbanized environment, although the background may have natural-appealing elements. High levels of human activity and concentrated development, including recreation opportunities are prevalent.
- **Rural (R)** – This class provides highly developed opportunities. Visitor use levels are high, facilities accommodate greater numbers of visitors, management is more obvious, and visitors can expect opportunities to interact with others.
- **Roaded Modified (RM)** – This class is predominantly influenced by human management activities, such as road building and timber production. It provides opportunities for dispersed recreation without any formal structure.
- **Roaded Natural (RN)** – This class is found around developed sites where the setting is managed for outdoor recreation. These areas provide scenic driving opportunities, trailheads, dispersed campsites, and fishing and hunting areas. They are natural appearing settings that may have modifications that range from being easily noticed to strongly dominant to observers within the area.
- **Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)** – This class is a natural appearing setting with 2-track roads or motorized trails. It provides for a more solitary experience. This setting may challenge survival skills. Lands within this classification should be at least 2,500 acres in size, but the shape can be linear (along a motorized trail, with a buffer for noise absorption). The areas have natural appearing settings that may have moderately dominant alterations but do not draw the attention of motorized observers on trails and primitive roads within the area. This class is more restrictive than RN because structures are rare and isolated.

- **Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized (SPNM)** – This class offers solitude. It is an unaltered natural setting with only non-motorized trails. This class may require a high level of survival skill because there's a lower probability of meeting other users. This class should cover at least 2,500 acres.
- **Primitive (P)** – This class includes areas that are at least 5,000 acres and provides for solitude with a very low likelihood of encountering other users. This is backcountry where survival skills are required. This class is at least three miles from roads with traffic (Forest Service 2003b).

Changes in ROS classification are used to evaluate the potential recreation effects on NFS lands due to the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives on NFS lands.

The BLM's Owyhee FO also uses the ROS system, as does the SRBOP RMP; therefore, potential changes in ROS classification on lands managed under the Owyhee and SRBOP RMPs are also used to evaluate potential impacts of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives.

3.17.1.6 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

The FLPMA requires the BLM to maintain inventories of lands with wilderness characteristics and both FLPMA and NEPA require disclosure of impacts on wilderness characteristics from proposed projects. Direction for conducting wilderness characteristics inventories is included under Section 201 of the FLPMA. The inventory evaluates wilderness characteristics as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act, and incorporated in the FLPMA. In order for an area to have wilderness characteristics, it must possess sufficient size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. In addition, it may also possess supplemental values.

For an area of land to be characterized as wilderness, it must be over 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM-managed land that does not contain maintained roads or other developments. Parcels of BLM-managed land connected only at the junction of two corners (i.e., checkerboard land ownership) are not considered continuous. Areas with less than 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM-managed land can still be considered wilderness if they are contiguous with one or more of the following: designated wilderness, BLM WSAs, USFWS areas proposed for wilderness designation, Forest Service WSAs or areas of recommended wilderness, and NPS areas recommended or proposed for designation. Areas of land less than 5,000 acres that still have wilderness characteristics and are large enough to be managed for preservation may also be considered. Examples of these areas include islands, buttes, and isolated canyons.

An area is considered to be in a natural condition if it is affected only by the dominant forces of nature, with limited influence of human beings on the land. Examples of human-made features that may be considered unnoticeable include trails, historic properties, archaeological resources, minor radio repeater sites, air quality monitoring devices, some types of fencing, spring developments, and stock ponds. A wilderness area may also have ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

As part of the wilderness characteristics inventory conducted for the Project, existing wilderness inventory findings for BLM-managed lands crossed by the Proposed Route or Route Alternative completed prior to December 2010 were reviewed. The completed forms are included in the project record. None of the existing inventories identified lands crossed by the Project with wilderness characteristics. However, many of the areas crossed did not have existing inventories on record.

The following steps were taken to identify areas crossed by the Project that may have wilderness characteristics:

- Blocks of BLM-managed land that are over 5,000 acres or contiguous to wilderness areas, WSAs, or other federal lands recommended for wilderness designation were mapped.
- Railroads, highways, county, BLM, or other maintained roads, transmission lines, and pipelines that cross a block were identified.
- Blocks crossed by any of these features were separated into smaller units using the roads and utility lines as boundaries. (Roads that enter into but do not fully cross a unit, referred to as cherry stem roads, do not subdivide a unit.)
- Maps documenting this process were distributed to the applicable FOs, along with shape files and layers of existing features for review and approval.
- BLM staff at each FO used local knowledge and records to identify additional roads maintained by mechanical means and other evidences of human presence not already identified. Additional information provided by each FO was included on the maps. Areas that did not meet the criteria were dropped from the inventory.
- Remaining areas were reviewed in the field to determine if they met the criteria. Some areas were not accessible due to snow or access restrictions.
- Reports for each area were submitted to the FO manager for review and approval.

Areas identified as having wilderness characteristics (or areas that are assumed to have wilderness characteristics pending completion of a field inventory) are identified by route segment below.

Segment 1E

Inventory Unit WY-C-1F is partly within Natrona and Converse Counties (Township 29 N., Range 77 West) in the Casper FO and partly within Carbon and Albany Counties (Township 28 North, Range 77 West) in the Rawlins FO. The area is bounded by the Old Casper Medicine Bow Road on the west and by private lands to the north, east, and south. The portion east of the road is approximately 8,009 acres. The portion west of the road would not be crossed by the Project. Field inventory identified a road that splits the eastern subunit in half. The northern portion is approximately 5,400 acres; the southern portion is less than 5,000 acres and does not meet the size criteria.

Inventory Unit WY-R-3A is in Albany County, Wyoming (Township 27/28 N., Range 76 W.). It is part of a BLM inventory unit that is nearly 30,000 acres. This unit is broken

into four units by roads. The three portions south of the Holiday Road would not be affected by the Project. The portion north of the road has approximately 5,073 acres of BLM-managed land. The northern portion of the inventory unit is bounded by the Holiday Road on the south and by state and private lands to the north, east, and west. Topography in the unit is characterized by open prairie. The inventory unit is not crossed by the Proposed Route based on indicative engineering; however, it is within 0.5 mile of the Proposed Route. This is within the 1-mile study area used in this Draft EIS to analyze potential effects.

Inventory Unit WY-R-4A is a 5,745-acre block of BLM-managed land in Albany County, Wyoming (Township 28 N., Range 75/76 W.) that is surrounded by non-federal land. The unit includes several non-federal parcels totaling approximately 440 acres. The inventory unit lacks public access and no field inventory was completed. The topography in the unit includes steep slopes in the northern section. South Prong Creek and the Medicine Bow River run through the central portion of the unit, while North Prong Creek flows southwest through the northern portion of the unit. These topographic features indicate that the unit would provide for both solitude and primitive recreation. Based on BLM records and aerial imagery, it does not appear to contain maintained roads or other developments. Therefore, this inventory unit is assumed to contain wilderness characteristics.

Alternative 1E-C

Inventory Unit WY-R-1C includes approximately 8,964 acres managed by the BLM in Carbon County, Wyoming (Township 28 N., Range 78/79 W.). The inventory unit is bounded by State Highway 487 in the south, by CR 2 in the west, and by an existing transmission line (1W[c] proposed to rebuilt) on the east. Segment 1W(a) of the Proposed Route and Alternative 1E-C cross along the eastern boundary of the unit, 1,500 feet and 3,000 feet from the existing transmission line, respectively. The unit is just north of WY-R-1D, separated from that unit by Highway 487.

Inventory Unit WY-R-1D includes approximately 56,265 acres managed by the BLM in Carbon County, Wyoming (Township 26/27/28 N., Range 78/79/80 W.). There are approximately 5,300 acres of non-federal land within the inventory unit. The unit is within the Shirley Basin; the topography is characterized as open prairie. It is an important hunting area for antelope. Shirley Basin Reservoir is within the southeastern boundary of the unit and Measel Spring Reservoir is in the northern section of the unit. There is a “cherry stem” maintained road in the south part of the unit (photos ID-10, ID-11). BLM Route 3141 is a “cherry stem” road from CR 2 south to Measel Spring Reservoir. A powerline in the northeast part of the site forms the third cherry stem. An existing transmission line (1W[c] proposed to rebuilt) forms the eastern boundary of the unit. Segment 1W(a) of the Proposed Route and Alternative 1E-C cross along the eastern boundary of the inventory unit, 1,500 feet and 3,000 feet from the existing line, respectively.

Inventory Unit WY-R-1E is part of a 9,674-acre inventory unit east of WY-R-1D. It is in Carbon County, Wyoming (Township 26/27N., Range 76 W.). The unit includes several non-federal parcels totaling approximately 2,500 acres. Field inventory identified a powerline running north/south that divides the unit in two. The western half is

approximately 5,461 acres (the eastern half is less than 5,000 acres). The remaining unit is characterized as open prairie with some topographic relief. This inventory unit is not crossed by the Proposed Route or Route Alternative based on indicative engineering; however, it is within 0.3 mile of the Proposed Route and a Route Alternative. This is within the 1-mile study area used in this Draft EIS to analyze potential effects.

Segment 1W

Inventory Unit WY-R-1C. See the description under Alternative 1E-C above.

Inventory Unit WY-R-1D. See the description under Alternative 1E-C above.

Segment 2

No areas with wilderness characteristic are crossed in this segment.

Segment 3

No areas with wilderness characteristic are crossed in this segment.

Segment 4

Inventory Unit WY-K-6I is a large unit on both the Kemmerer and Pinedale FOs in Lincoln County, Wyoming. It lies to the west of Fontenelle Reservoir. The unit includes several non-federal parcels totaling approximately 1,120 acres. Additional field inventory is needed to finalize the unit boundaries, which include state and private land, along with numerous roads divide the unit into many subunits, two of which are crossed by the Proposed Route (WY-K-6I-2 and WY-K-6I-3). Subunit WY-K-6I-2 (Township 23/24/25 N., Range 114/115/116 W.) is bound by maintained roads, state and private land, and an existing transmission line. This subunit consists of 43,282 acres. Subunit WY-K-6I-3 (Township 23/24/25 N., Range 115 W.) consists of 12,588 acres. This subunit is bound by private land and maintained roads, including the Sublet-Pomeroy Basin CR 306.

Inventory Unit WY-K-6L is a large unit in Lincoln County, Wyoming, divided in two by Trail Creek Road, which runs north/south through the unit. Subunit WY-K-6L-1 (Township 23/24 N., Range 115/116 W.) is bound by Trail Creek Road, CR 306, an existing transmission line, and state and private land. It has approximately 17,642 acres. This subunit includes two non-federal parcels totaling approximately 680 acres. Subunit WY-K-6L-2 (Township 24/25 N., Range 115/116 W.) is bound by Trail Creek Road, State Highway 233, and state, private, and NFS land. It has approximately 17,709 acres. This area is a high mountain-rimmed desert plateau with an extensive terrace system creating numerous canyons and drainages. Commissary Ridge runs along the eastern boundary of unit WY-K-6L-2. South Fork Mountain lies along the western boundary of unit WY-K-6L-1 and the eastern boundary of WY-K-6L-2.

Inventory Unit WY-K-6S is a large unit in Lincoln County, Wyoming. The unit includes several non-federal parcels totaling approximately 6,500 acres. A county maintained road separates the unit into two sections. The eastern portion, WY-K-6S-1, would be crossed by route alternatives. The subunit (Township 20/21 N., Range 117/118/119 W.) is bound by an existing transmission line in the north and east, and maintained county roads in the south and west. The subunit has approximately 37,617 acres. Topography

includes numerous ridges sloping into valleys and drainages. Fossil Ridge occupies the northwest portion of the subunit and Bear River Divide follows the south border. Smaller drainages and creeks are found throughout. The vegetation community is dominated by sagebrush. Gas wells are found along a ridge near the western boundary. A field inventory was not completed due to snow.

Inventory Unit WY-K-8A is in Lincoln County, Wyoming. It is approximately 33,293 acres (Township 25/26/27/28 N., Range 119/120 W.). The unit includes several non-federal parcels totaling approximately 1,520 acres. It is bounded by a maintained county road and by state and private land. Sublette Range runs the length of the unit (north/south). There are numerous drainages in the unit. Lodgepole pine is dominant on the eastern slopes of the range and Douglas-fir is dominant on the western slopes of the range. The inventory unit includes the Raymond Mountain WSA (Decision 7001 in the Kemmerer RMP). This inventory unit is not crossed by the Proposed Route or Route Alternative based on indicative engineering; however, it is within 0.25 mile of the Proposed Route. This is within the 1-mile study area used in this Draft EIS to analyze potential effects.

Segment 5

No areas with wilderness characteristic are crossed in this segment.

Segment 6

Segment 6 involves the rebuilding an existing transmission line. No areas with wilderness characteristic are affected in this segment.

Segment 7

Inventory Unit ID-B-18A (Jim Sage) is part of a large block (42,000 acres) in Cassia County, Idaho. It is bounded by an existing transmission line and State Highway 81 in the east and by state and private lands in every other direction. Irrigated agricultural lands are found to the east of the unit. The Sawtooth NF is to the west and south of the unit. The topography in the area is dominated by the north/south oriented Jim Sage Mountain Range. Cassia Creek is to the north of the unit and Raft River runs along the southern boundary of the unit. The vegetation is comprised primarily of a forested community. The boundary was modified to follow natural contours and exclude portions that lack naturalness. The revised unit (Township 25/26 N., R 13/14/15 W.) is approximately 31,062 acres.

Inventory Unit ID-B-22A (Mountain Meadow) is in Cassia County, Idaho (Township 12 N., R 20 W.). It is approximately 5,442 acres. The unit is bounded by maintained roads and by private and state lands. The Sawtooth NF lies to the south. The topography is steep and rugged. Mountain Meadow Creek flows through the middle of the unit. The unit requires field inventory to verify whether it has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

Segment 8

No areas with wilderness characteristic are crossed in this segment.

Segment 9

No areas with wilderness characteristic are affected in this segment.

Segment 10

No areas with wilderness characteristic are affected in this segment.

3.17.2 Direct and Indirect Effects

This section is organized to present the effects to land use and recreation from construction, then operation, followed by decommissioning activities for the proposed Project. Route Alternatives are analyzed in detail below in Section 3.17.2.3. There is a Design Variation involving use of two single-circuit structures proposed by the Proponents for Segments 2, 3, and 4 (see Section 2.2 for details), which is analyzed below in Section 3.17.2.4, and a Structure Variation that is analyzed in Section 3.17.2.5. The Proponents have also proposed a Schedule Variation, analyzed in Section 3.17.2.6, in which one of the two single circuits to be constructed in Segments 2, 3, and 4 and a portion of Segment 1W would be built on an extended schedule with construction beginning approximately 2.5 years after completion of the initial construction.

Mitigation measures or EPMS are presented in detail within this section only if it is the first time they have been discussed in Chapter 3; all other measures are referenced or summarized. A comprehensive list of all Proponent-proposed EPMS and Agency-required mitigation measures can be found in Table 2.7-1 of Chapter 2.

3.17.2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed Project would not be constructed or operated. No Project-related impacts would occur to land use or recreation resources or the management of public or private lands.

3.17.2.2 Effects Common to Action Alternatives

Construction

Land Use and Ownership

During scoping, some commenters expressed strong opinions on whether it is better to place transmission lines on private or public lands.

Private lands are owned by individuals or groups, and, therefore, fewer potential users are directly affected. Properties owned by individuals or groups tend to be smaller than publicly managed lands. Effects to private lands may be felt more intensely by the affected landowner because affected lands typically represent a larger relative share of their property and may affect existing or proposed land uses on those lands. Some private landowners may find ROW compensation adequate or beneficial and may actually request placement of transmission line facilities on their property, while other private owners may not feel that they can be adequately compensated for loss of the use of their land and inconvenience.

Public lands are managed for all citizens, under various laws and plans. Therefore, everyone gets the benefit and consequences. Public lands provide resources that could

be affected by the location of the transmission line (see other resource analyses, such as wildlife, visual, cultural, historical, etc.). Both the Forest Service and the BLM derive their authority to locate transmission lines on public land under the FLPMA (BLM and Office of the Solicitor 2001). This act explicitly permits the issuance of ROWs under Title V, Section 503. Decisions on issuing a ROW grant or a Special Use Permit must also consider national and state land use policies, environmental quality, economic efficiency, national security, safety, and good engineering and technological practices.

The direct and indirect effects of a transmission line crossing rangeland, pasture, and other low vegetation are generally minor, beyond the localized impacts of structure installation and the construction of roads and other facilities, because the surrounding vegetation is low-growing and generally compatible with the proposed transmission line (i.e., the existing vegetation would not be affected). Potential impacts in forested areas would, however, be greater because in addition to the effects of roads and structures, the entire ROW would need to be cleared of trees tall enough to endanger the line. Construction clearing limits in forested environments are illustrated in Figure 3.6-1 in Section 3.6 – Vegetation Communities. Chapter 2 provides a detailed description of the construction ROW, access roads, and other Project facilities.

As discussed in Section 3.17.1.5 – Existing Conditions, land use within the Analysis Area is primarily rangeland (84 percent), with cropland and forestland accounting for about 10 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively (Table 3.17-4). Relatively small portions of the route border or cross developed areas (including industrial, commercial, and residential areas, and existing ROWs), wetlands and open water, and “barren” areas (including disturbed and extractive mining areas) (Table 3.17-4).

Potential impacts to rangeland and cropland during construction and operation of the Proposed Route and Alternative Routes are assessed in detail by segment in Section 3.18 – Agriculture. Impacts to vegetation including forestland are addressed in Section 3.6 – Vegetation.

Land Use Plans

The potential effects of the Project on public resources are considered by evaluating conformance with land use plans administered by the BLM and Forest Service. Effects on private lands are influenced through a combination of comprehensive plans and zoning; for example, CUPs and associated conditions would have to be obtained and met as a condition of approval on private lands (see Section 3.17.1.3). In the initial siting of the Proposed Route by the Proponents and subsequent evaluation of alternatives by the IDT, an attempt has been made to meet all plan requirements.

The IDT reviewed the Forest Service standards and guidelines and BLM requirements (stipulations) that would be applicable to the proposed Project and identified whether the Project would be consistent with these standards (and, in some cases, guidelines) or requirements. The results of this analysis are summarized in a series of tables that are included in the Administrative Record for this Project. Cases where the proposed Project would not be consistent with the identified standards or stipulations would in most cases require that the management plan (Forest Plan, RMP, or MFP) that contains these standards or stipulations be amended. Proposed plan amendments are

summarized in Table 2.2-1 and discussed in more detail for BLM and Forest Service plans in Appendices F-1 and F-2, respectively. Appendices G-1 and G-2 provide analyses of visual resource impacts of BLM and Forest Service plan amendments, respectively. Inconsistencies of the Project with the applicable plans include:

- Developing a new ROW outside of approved corridors,
- Building additional roads where motorized access is limited,
- Crossing NHTs,
- Crossing ACECs,
- Crossing National WSR-eligible segments,
- Modifying wildlife habitat requirements,
- Allowing surface disturbance near scenic rivers,
- Allowing new roads near special status plant species,
- Changing VRM classifications, and
- Allowing incompatibility with established VRM classes.

Plan amendments that are directly related to land use or recreation (i.e., the need for these amendments is directly related to the Project's impacts on land use or recreation) or visual resources (due to the close relationship between visual resources and recreation) are identified by Segment in Section 3.17.2.3.

In addition, there are plan amendments proposed that, although not specifically related to land use or recreation, would result in alterations to current land management practices and would allow the permitting of this Project in areas that are currently managed in such a way as to exclude projects of this type (see Appendices G-1 and G-2 for maps of areas with visual resource management class changes). These types of proposed plan amendments could have an indirect impact on the allowable use of lands as well as recreational experiences. For example, proposed amendments to the federal wildlife stipulations could alter the composition of wildlife species found near the Project (see Sections 3.10 – General Wildlife and Fish and 3.11 – Special Status Wildlife and Fish Species), which could in turn affect hunting and wildlife viewing in these areas (as discussed in more detail later in this section).

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

Major portions of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives would use one or more of the proposed WWE corridors (DOE and BLM 2008). Other portions are located within or adjacent to Forest Service- or BLM-designated utility corridors. Use of these corridors was considered a siting opportunity during the route selection process and these corridors were used whenever feasible considering all the resource categories and when the WECC 1,500-foot separation for reliability reasons could be met. Table 2.4-2 presents the length and percentage of Proposed Route and Route Alternative segments that are within the proposed WWE corridor (federal lands only), within the projected WWE corridor (private land segments between WWE corridor segments), adjacent to the WWE corridor (within 1/3 mile of the WWE corridor), and

within or adjacent to existing transmission corridors (including the WWE corridor and existing transmission lines).

For reliability reasons, the Proponents have proposed to site the facilities an average of 1,500 feet from existing transmission lines 230 kV or higher (see Section 1.3.3.3 of Chapter 1). During final design the separation distance could be greater if the distance between the tower of the existing line is greater than 1,500 feet. ROWs typically are wide enough only to accommodate the existing facility safely, and none of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives would occupy any existing 230-kV or higher utility transmission ROW except as they approach substations. An exception is the 5.3-mile-long Alternative 5E proposed by Power County, which would be located adjacent to an existing 345-kV line and would, therefore, not be consistent with the 1,500-foot separation criteria established for the Project.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives would also cross numerous federal, state, county, and local highways and railroads, electric transmission lines, gas and oil pipelines, sewer lines, and irrigation pipes and canals. The exact alignment and design configurations of the crossings would be in accordance with applicable regulations and codes. Special construction protection measures would be undertaken at road and other ROW crossings, and would include measures such as the use of protective wood poles to prevent conductors from interfering with road traffic.

Existing, Proposed, and Planned Commercial or Residential Areas

Existing commercial and residential structures located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified by segment in Table D.17-1 and discussed below by segment in Section 3.17.2.3.

The effects on commercial farm and dairy operations are discussed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture and 3.21 – Electrical Environment. All existing improvements, such as fences, gates, irrigation ditches, cattle guards, and reservoirs would be maintained during construction and repaired to pre-construction conditions or better. If pipelines or canals transporting water for livestock, wildlife, and crops were damaged by construction activities, the Proponents would repair them to the landowner or land management agency specifications.

Other commercial operations located in the vicinity of the proposed Project could be temporarily affected during construction by the presence of construction workers and equipment, noise from construction, and areas where access is temporarily prohibited for safety reasons. Some areas may be disturbed by access roads, fly yards, and staging areas. In some cases, access to commercial operations may be hindered periodically during construction. The Proponents have designed EPMs to minimize traffic and transportation-related impacts. These measures, described in Appendix C-1, Attachment A, and further discussed in Section 3.19 – Transportation, would help reduce potential construction-related impacts to commercial operations. Any residual construction-related impacts would be short-term, occurring for the few months that construction activities occur in any one area.

Potential construction impacts on nearby residences could include dust and noise from construction activities, additional traffic, and emergency access. Residences within

1,000 feet and 300 feet are identified for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives by segment in Section 3.17.2.3 below. Effects from noise and traffic are addressed in Section 3.23 – Noise, and Section 3.19 – Transportation, respectively. The EPMS designed to minimize traffic and transportation-related impacts would help reduce potential construction-related impacts to existing residences (see Appendix C-1, Attachment A, and Section 3.19 – Transportation).

Planned commercial and residential developments would only be affected during construction if the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives precluded access to lots intended for other uses or if the schedule for development coincided with the Gateway West Project construction schedule. In that case, the Proponents and the development construction operators would need to coordinate their efforts to minimize the effects on each other.

Timber Management

Construction through timber management areas would require the removal of trees within the ROW and adjacent hazard trees that could fall into the structures, conductors, and/or access roads. Land within the ROW, as well as land occupied by new permanent roads, would no longer be available for timber production. When these activities occur, the merchantable value of the timber is determined and the landowner or land management agency would be compensated for the timber taken and for the loss of timber production on that land. Impacts from other construction-related ground disturbance, such as staging areas and fly yards, would be temporary and sited to avoid timbered areas, where possible.

Section 3.6 – Vegetation Communities contains information on the acres of forest that would be affected by construction. Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics discusses the associated economic impacts.

Fire Management

A transmission line can influence fire management in the following ways:

- Construction equipment starting a fire;
- Transmission lines being the cause of fires, resulting from downed power lines, birds or airplanes striking a line and starting a fire upon hitting the ground, sparking at substations and transformers or, during smoky or humid conditions, electric arcs hitting the ground;
- Interfering with aerial suppression or fuel reduction operations, including helicopters, single-engine air tankers, air tactical aircraft, utility aircraft, aerial supervision modules, heavy air tankers, smokejumper aircraft, and large transport aircraft; and
- Delaying firefighters as they wait for the line to be de-energized for safety.

Construction would increase the potential for ignition in the proposed ROW corridor due to operation of equipment capable of producing heat and sparks in the presence of wildland fuel. The states of Wyoming, Idaho, and Nevada, along with the Forest Service and BLM, have requirements for fire preparedness for construction equipment

operating during fire season, including the availability of a bucket and shovel, spark arrestors, mufflers, spill control, and brush disposal. During extreme fire danger, state and federal agencies would implement operating restrictions during specified hours. To reduce the potential for construction-related fires, the BLM has identified 11 measures to be taken by the Proponents and its contractors to ensure that fire prevention and suppression measures are carried out in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. These measures are described in Section 3.22 – Public Safety.

Safety hazards would increase in localized areas of the ROW corridor presenting challenges for fire managers whose first priority is safety. The effect of these safety hazards on fire management would depend on the particular hazard encountered. Potential effects could range from a simple alteration in fire suppression tactics—in the case of an overhead hazard—to outright avoidance, in the case of hazardous materials or fuel storage tanks. The potential for fire managers to alter suppression tactics or avoid suppression operations in the ROW corridor altogether due to safety hazards is low due to the low probability that a fire would coincide with fueling activities or occur at a fuel station.

Motor vehicle traffic mobilizing into and out of the proposed ROW area could increase emergency response times if fire responders encounter construction related traffic en-route to an incident. There is a low potential for fire responders to encounter traffic associated with ROW construction on low capacity roads. Traffic bottlenecks would not be expected to affect firefighter safety or fire size unless responders encounter convoys of ingress / egress traffic on low capacity roads. BLM and the cooperating agencies have identified a mitigation measure regarding fire management (VEG-5).

Recreation and Public Interest Areas

Existing recreation and public interest areas found within the general vicinity of the Project are discussed by segment in Section 3.17.1.5. Construction of the Project is not expected to permanently preclude the use of or access to any existing recreation areas or activities; however, some short-term impacts to these resources would occur during the construction phase of the Project.

Hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities could be impacted by the Project if wildlife species are displaced from areas near construction activities to suitable habitats adjacent to, but beyond the extent of, construction disturbances. Alternately, some wildlife may be attracted to disturbed areas (see Section 3.10 – General Wildlife and Fish). This could improve hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities in some areas while reducing or temporarily eliminating opportunities in other areas. These impacts would be limited to the immediate area of construction activity and short-term in nature.

Construction of the Project would also affect dispersed recreation activities, such as river rafting, fishing, hiking, camping, that are influenced by the presence of construction noises, visual disturbances, or other humans. The presence of these construction-related disturbances would likely diminish the quality of these recreation activities for the duration of the construction phase of the Project. These impacts would be localized and short-term in nature.

Construction of the Project may require the temporary closure of access roads for public safety reasons, while construction crews move large equipment in and out of remote areas. Recreation areas that have only limited access options may become inaccessible for short periods of time during construction. Road closures would be conducted in accordance with the Proponents' Traffic and Transportation Management Plan (Appendix C-1, Attachment A) and agency requirements. The movement of vehicles and heavy equipment could also temporarily affect the recreation experience of visitors traveling the scenic byways that pass through the Analysis Area.

As construction activities are not expected to occur during winter months, winter sports and recreation activities (such as skiing and snowmobiling) are not expected to be affected during the construction phase of the Project.

OHV Use

Construction of the Project would create additional access routes, which may facilitate OHV use in areas that are currently designated as closed to OHVs or where OHV use is limited. In addition, where a ROW or new access road crosses trails not designated as open to OHV use, the Project may lead to unauthorized use of these trails by OHVs. Therefore, as indicated in EPM TR-7, vehicles within the construction ROW or along roadsides near the ROW will not be allowed.

TR-7 Unauthorized vehicles will not be allowed within the construction ROW or along roadsides near the ROW.

Some unauthorized OHV use may occur during construction when workers are not on site (such as weekends or between the time that a section is completed but not activated) but unauthorized use is more likely to occur after construction is completed. Therefore, unauthorized OHV use is discussed under Operations (see below). Effects of unauthorized OHV use during construction, if any, would be similar to those discussed under Operations.

Operations

Land Use and Ownership

Placement of towers, development of access roads, and construction of substations, and substation expansions would affect existing land uses as described elsewhere in this section and document, but would not substantially affect overall existing or future land use or ownership patterns along most of the route. On a per mile basis, a 250-foot ROW would require 30.3 acres of easement. Structure bases would occupy about 0.3 acre of this area and access roads about 1.7 acres, for a total of 2.0 acres or 6.6 percent of the total ROW area. It is recommended that the Proponents work with landowners, as required, to locate roads and structures to minimize impacts to existing and planned subdivisions.

Existing land use or ownership would not change along the majority of the ROW but easements (private land) and authorizations (public land) would encumber the ROW area with some land use limitations. During operations, the Proponents would require access to the ROW for operations and maintenance purposes, including vegetation management and routine, periodic maintenance, and emergency repairs to the

transmission line, should they be required. The easement would also specify that the ROW be kept clear of trees and buildings or structures, and prohibit storage of flammable material of any kind within the boundaries of the ROW or bringing equipment or vehicles to the ROW that would exceed 14 feet in height. The ROW may be used for roads, agricultural crops, other purposes not inconsistent with the above limitations, and special circumstances in mining and agricultural areas where necessary to maintain existing practices, as negotiated with the landowner. It is recommended that the Proponents, where appropriate, work with local communities to avoid creating barriers between various types of development. On federal lands, authorizations would specify vegetation management and other activities within the ROW.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

In some locations, the presence of a 230- or 500-kV transmission line ROW could be considered a corridor. Some federal and county land use plans require use of existing ROW or designated utility corridors for new utility projects. Section 503 (43 U.S.C. § 1763) of the FLPMA encourages the BLM and Forest Service to use existing corridors to the extent practical to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate ROWs.

Power County and Cassia County have initiated efforts to designate transmission line corridors in response to the Gateway West proposed routes and in anticipation of other transmission lines that have been publicly disclosed (see <http://swipps.com/overland-intertie.htm> and <http://www.trancanada.com/company/zephyr-chinook.html>). Both counties have expressed concern that permitting the Gateway West Project could result in the establishment of a de facto corridor and in additional requests for locating additional transmission lines in close proximity. As a practical matter, many factors influence the feasibility of using common corridors. These include beginning and ending points, intermediate substation interconnections, reliability criteria dictating minimum separation distances, physical pinch points such as concentrations of oil and gas wells or sensitive natural resources such as nesting habitat, land use exclusion areas such as wilderness areas or NWRs, and intensively developed commercial, residential or agricultural uses. Route Alternatives proposed by Power and Cassia Counties are discussed below in Section 3.17.2.3 under Segments 5 and 7, respectively.

Existing, Proposed, and Planned Commercial or Residential Development

Effects of transmission line operations on commercial dairies, farms, and feedlots are discussed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture. The impact of operations of the proposed Project on other commercial facilities is expected to be minimal in most cases.

Effects on existing and planned residential development would vary. Potential effects on residential property values and visual quality are discussed in Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics and Section 3.2 – Visual Resources, respectively. The presence of a transmission line may be viewed negatively by residents living nearby. As discussed with respect to potential impacts to property values, proximity to electric transmission lines can have negative effects on residential property values. These effects tend to decrease with distance and over time, with short-term impacts usually greater than long-term effects (see Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics). Proposed and Alternatives Routes to

avoid existing and planned residential development are discussed in Section 3.17.2.3 under Segments 2 and 8.

Timber Management

Impacts to forested areas from clearing the ROWs and constructing new roads, transmission structures, and substations would be permanent and would continue through operations. Section 3.6 – Vegetation Communities contains information on the acres of forest that would be affected by the Project.

The existence of the transmission line structures and conductors could interfere with any aerial logging operations, such as helicopter or skyline logging. These potential impacts would be limited to forested areas managed for timber and are not expected to be extensive.

The use of new roads and the maintenance and operation of a new transmission line would increase the risk of wildland fire. Fires could spread to adjacent forestland and could damage or kill existing timber.

The construction of new access roads could be beneficial to timber harvest activities. These roads would provide access to timber resources where access did not previously exist and could also support future management of other resources. However, as noted above, land occupied by new permanent roads would no longer be available for timber production.

Fire Management

The proposed transmission line would increase the potential for ignitions along the corridor, particularly during summertime red flag warnings, which bring low humidity, low fuel moisture, and high winds (BLM 2005b; Orr 2008). Maintenance and routine inspection of the lines would minimize the potential for abnormal arcing or overheating to cause a wildfire. The potential for ignitions along the ROW corridor would remain low during the operational life of the Project due to scheduled maintenance of equipment and vegetation within the ROW corridor.

The proposed ROW would become a high-priority suppression and fuels management area where it traverses undeveloped areas. Clearing of trees and large brush and treating weeds within the proposed ROW would decrease the continuity of ladder fuels and increase the fire-free interval in the vicinity of the proposed ROW corridor (Deanne et al. 1998).

One commenter suggested the use of green strips (grass areas managed to prevent annual weeds) as a fire suppression technique along the ROW. In concept, green strips in combination with the ROW would provide an enhanced fire suppression management tool. However, implementation of this approach would have significant land use and wildlife habitat impacts. Additional land use controls would be needed in areas of adjacent native vegetation. This vegetation, which would otherwise be unaffected, would be converted to grass and maintained with herbicides to prevent weed infestations.

Structures and facilities proposed for the ROW could narrow the range of appropriate management response to future wildfires in the vicinity. “Wildland fire use” fires or containment fires could become inappropriate where excessive heat and smoke might damage structures or prevent effective transmission of electricity. Prescribed fire would also be limited in the vicinity of the proposed ROW for the same reasons. This would reduce opportunities to reintroduce fire into localized ecosystems along the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives but the overall reduction would be minor because fire is undesirable along a majority of the routes due to existing resource conditions and structures. In the Caribou-Targhee NF, 2.5 miles of the 9.2 miles crossed are in the “fire use” prescription. This area would not be allowed to burn should an ignition occur. This change is not considered significant because much of the Caribou-Targhee NF is prescribed as “wildland fire use” or “prescribed fire” (Forest Service 2003a) and, therefore, the area affected by the Project is a minor component of these areas.

Some suppression tactics in the ROW vicinity may become inappropriate due to the safety hazard that the infrastructure represents to firefighters and the potential for damage to the infrastructure in the ROW. Aerial operations may become inappropriate near the ROW corridor because they would endanger pilots and firefighters and cause potential damage to infrastructure in the ROW. Direct suppression using engines and hand crews may also become inappropriate where it exposes firefighters to an unacceptable level of risk during periods of high wind and smoke. These limitations could have a cumulative effect where the ROW passes areas of sensitive resources, such as historic portions of the Oregon NHT, where heavy equipment to construct fire line is already limited. Limitations on fire suppression tactics in the vicinity of the ROW corridor could result in a minor increase in the extent of fires that occur there.

In forested environments such as the Medicine Bow-Routt and Caribou-Targhee NFs, broadcast burning may become an inappropriate tool to dispose of slash near the ROW.

Recreation and Public Interest Areas

Operations of the Project are not expected to preclude the use of or access to any existing recreation areas or activities. The primary operations impact to recreation resources would likely result from the visual effect of the transmission line and associated facilities on recreation activities near the Project (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources). The visual presence of the proposed Project could have a detrimental effect on the recreation experience associated with recreation activities that typically benefit from a lack of human disturbance, including dispersed camping, hunting, wildlife viewing, and rafting.

The visual impact of the Project could also potentially affect the quality of the recreation experience in locations where the proposed Project would cross or be located near NHT and other trails including stage and wagon roads that have potential historic significance. NHTs are typically established to preserve the conditions historically experienced along these trails and, depending on existing conditions, the presence of a transmission line and its associated facilities could diminish the “historical experience” along those portions of the NHT located within sight of the Project. Visual impacts to historic trails are evaluated in detail in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources. The Project

could also have detrimental impacts on scenic byways by reducing the quality the natural or rural landscapes that typically characterize these highways.

The extent of these effects would, however, depend on existing visual conditions in the affected areas, with impacts lower in those areas where high-voltage transmission lines and other types of development are already present. Impacts would also vary based on the distance of the recreation area from the proposed transmission line and potential effects would tend to be greater in locations where the Project would be visible on the horizon. Site-specific visual impacts are evaluated in detail in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Additional impacts could also result from operations and maintenance activities; however, these activities are expected to be infrequent and localized and are, therefore, not expected to substantially affect recreation areas or the experiences of those who use these areas (see Chapter 2 for a description of the operation and maintenance activities that would occur).

OHV Use

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives would create additional access routes across areas that are currently closed to OHVs. In addition, where a ROW or new access road crosses trails that are closed to OHV use, the Project may lead to unauthorized use of these trails by OHVs. Unless signage and effective barriers are in place, it is likely that the access roads would provide additional points of OHV entry into new areas, particularly areas that have low vegetation and are in relatively flat or gentle terrain. Therefore, the Agencies have identified the following mitigation measure to assist agency and county law enforcement in minimizing unauthorized OHV use on public and private lands:

- LU-1 To assist agency and county law enforcement in minimizing unauthorized OHV use on public and private lands, monitor OHV use and post signs along access roads where OHV activity has increased in areas on public lands where OHVs are regulated by a land use plan, and on private, state, and Tribal lands at the request of the landowner, agency, or Tribal government. Signs shall indicate the restriction or regulation, location, penalty for violation, and appropriate contact information for reporting violations. Signage shall be maintained and replaced as part of the routine maintenance of the transmission line and facilities. Consult with appropriate Agencies on additional measures to block unauthorized OHV use.

Decommissioning

Decommissioning would create another temporary disturbance of the area and land uses along the ROW, and vegetation, including trees, could be removed to provide safe work areas for decommissioning activities. Once structures and facilities are removed, former uses could resume and forested areas would be replanted. It is unlikely that decompaction of soils would be 100 percent effective, so it is possible that forests reestablished in some areas would not be as productive as areas that had never been a road or facility location. These impacts would remain until the soil naturally recovers.

Once decommissioning is complete and areas restored to their previous condition, fire management activities would no longer be affected.

3.17.2.3 Proposed Route and Alternatives by Segment

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the Proposed Route and the Route Alternatives in terms of land ownership, designated corridors and existing ROWs, anticipated federal land use plan amendments, and specific land uses and recreational resources.

Specific land uses, including residences, commercial buildings, barns, other structures, wind farms, mines, gravel pits, wells, center-pivot agricultural fields, and historic trails that are either crossed or within 1,000 feet of the centerline of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table D.17-1 in Appendix D. The following segment-by-segment discussion also addresses SMAs, historic trails, and OHV use.

Other potential land uses including wetlands, mineral resources, water resources, and agriculture are discussed in Sections 3.9, 3.12, 3.16, and 3.18, respectively. Potential impacts related to visual resources, transportation, and noise are noted in this section, as appropriate. Detailed analyses of impacts to these resources are included in the visual resources (Section 3.2), transportation (Section 3.19), and noise (Section 3.23) sections.

Segment 1E

Segment 1E, as proposed, would link the Windstar and Aeolus Substations in south-central Wyoming with a 100.6-mile 230-kV single-circuit transmission line. Twenty acres of the expansion of Windstar and Aeolus Substations and 0.5 acre for one regeneration site are attributed to Segment 1E. Alternative 1E-A is a 16.1-mile alternative along the north end of Segment 1E, which was the Proponents' initial proposal before moving the Proposed Route at the suggestion of local landowners to avoid the more settled area around Glenrock. Alternative 1E-B is 21.4 miles longer than the Proposed Route but is being considered by the Proponents because it would avoid a Wyoming-designated sage-grouse core area to the east. The BLM has required the consideration of Alternative 1E-C, which parallels the proposed and rebuilt Segment 1W 230-kV lines into the Aeolus Substation (see Appendix A, Figure A-2).

Land Ownership

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 2.8 miles of the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs, 11.6 miles of BLM-managed land, and 22 miles of state-owned land; the rest is privately owned (Table 3.17-6). Alternative 1E-A is 1.5 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route¹ and would cross approximately 3.5 miles more private land. Alternative 1E-B would be 21.4 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 15.5 miles more private land. Alternative 1E-C would be approximately 26.8 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This route would cross fewer miles of private (-38.3 miles) and NFS land (-1.5 miles) and more (12.3 miles) of BLM-managed land (Table 3.17-6).

¹ The portion of the Proposed Route that starts and ends at the same nodes as the Route Alternative.

Table 3.17-6. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 1E

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	100.6	11.6	2.8	–	22.0	64.0
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1E-A	17.6	–	–	–	11.4	6.1
Alternative 1E-A	16.1	–	–	–	6.6	9.5
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1E-B	37.9	3.8	–	–	3.9	30.1
Alternative 1E-B	59.3	8.7	–	–	4.9	45.6
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1E-C	75.4	11.2	2.8	–	8.2	53.2
Alternative 1E-C	48.7	23.5	1.3	–	9.0	14.9

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

The Proposed Route for Segment 1E would be adjacent to Segment 1W(c) for 9 miles and Segment 1W(a) for 14 miles. In addition, 6.6 miles (6.5 percent of the Proposed Route for Segment 1E) would be within the projected WWE corridor and 6.7 miles (6.7 percent) would be adjacent to (within 1/3 mile of) the projected WWE corridor.

The northern end of the Proposed Route was sited by the Proponents to minimize the occurrence of multiple transmission lines on privately owned land. Alternative 1E-A, which would be 1.5 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, would substantially parallel (offset by 1,500 feet) the existing 230-kV transmission proposed to be rebuilt as Segment 1W(c). Approximately 14.2 miles or 88 percent of this 16.1-mile alternative would be adjacent to of an existing transmission corridor or transmission line. Approximately 7.2 miles (45 percent) of Alternative 1E-A would be located within the projected WWE corridor and 6.3 miles (39.1 percent) would be adjacent to the projected WWE corridor (Table 2.4-2).

The comparison portion of the Proposed Route and Alternative 1E-B are similar in that they would both create new ROW corridors. The comparison portion of Alternative 1E-C would be entirely within a common corridor with the Proposed Routes for Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) (Table 2.4-2).

Overall, Alternatives 1E-A and 1E-C would make more use of existing transmission line corridors and would be within or adjacent to more WECC and projected WWE corridors than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route.

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

This section and the corresponding sections for the other segments below discuss the plan amendments that directly impact land use or recreation. However, as discussed in the Effects Common to All Action Alternatives section, proposed plan amendments found in Appendix F could have indirect impacts to land use and recreation. These remaining plan amendments are discussed in the EIS sections that address the resource that is directly related (e.g., wildlife amendments are discussed in Sections 3.10 and 3.11) as well as Chapter 2 and Appendix F.

Medicine Bow Forest Plan

The Proposed Route and Alternative 1E-C would both cross the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs (Figure 3.17-4). The Project, as currently designed along the Proposed Route and Alternative 1E-C, would not be consistent with a Management Prescription as well as a Scenery Standard found in the Medicine Bow Forest Plan (see Table 2.2-1). Segment 1E would require the construction of roads and a transmission line in the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs in an area allocated to MA 3.31 (Backcountry), which is inconsistent with the plan standards; therefore, an amendment to the plan has been proposed (see Appendix F). If the Proposed Route for Segment 1E is selected, the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs propose to change all of Sections 13, 14, 23, and 24, Township 30 North, Range 78 West, that are not currently designated as a utility corridor and the west half of Sections 18 and 19, Township 30 North, Range 77 West, to MA 8.3 (Utility Corridors and Electronic Sites).

Approximately 2,252 acres would change from an ROS of SPM to RN as a result of the transmission line and new road construction. NFS land within the WWE corridor (948 acres) currently has an ROS of RN. In addition, an amendment to the Scenery Standards would be required for the Proposed Route and Alternative 1E-C to be approved, because the Project would not be consistent with the SIOs established according to the SMS for this portion of the NF (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources; as well as Table 2.2-1).

Alternative 1E-C would also require construction of a transmission line and new roads in the Medicine Bow Forest Plan MA 3.31 (Backcountry), which (as noted above) is inconsistent with the plan standards; therefore, an amendment to the plan has been proposed (see Appendix F). All of Sections 13, 14, 23, and 24, T30N R78W that are not currently designated as a utility corridor would be allocated to MA 8.3 (Utility Corridors and Electronic Sites). Under this Route Alternative, approximately 1,612 acres would change from an ROS of SPM to RN as a result of the transmission line and new road construction. Alternative 1E-C would require construction of approximately 1.7 miles of new roads in the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs, compared to approximately 8 miles under the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Segment 1E would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Casper and Rawlins RMPs (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table 2.2-1.

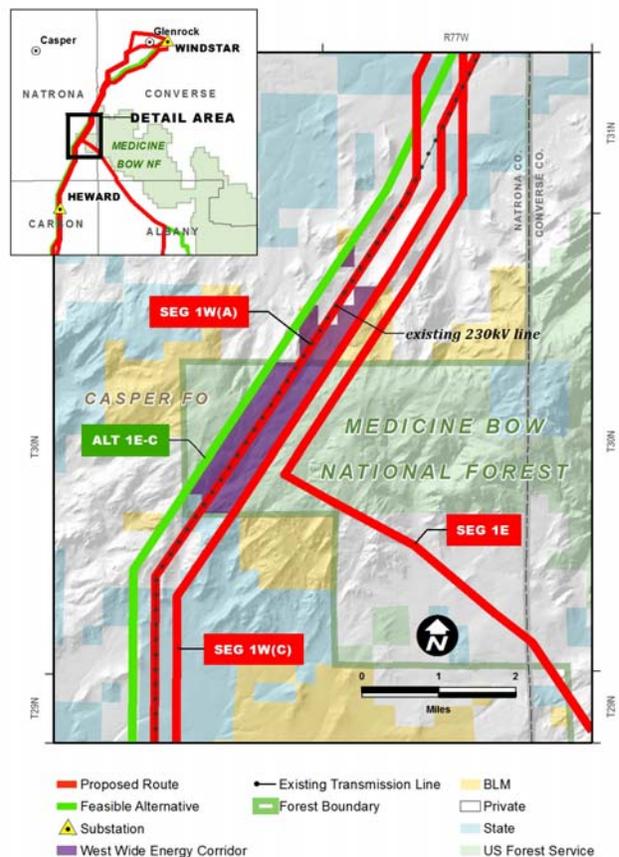


Figure 3.17-4. Medicine Bow-Routt NF Proposed Route and Route Alternatives

Casper RMP

The Casper RMP would need to be amended for the Proposed Route to be approved; this amendment would be required to allow the reclassification of 630 acres of VRM Class II to VRM Class III in the Deer Creek area. It would also require that the Project be allowed as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for approximately 2 miles in the Dugway Rim area. The Proposed Route for Segment 1E would also require that the Laramie RMP be amended to allow the Project as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for approximately 2.8 miles in the Laramie South area.

The Casper RMP would need to be amended for Alternative 1E-C to be approved; this amendment would be required to allow the Project as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for about 0.5 mile in the Spruce Creek and Bates Creek areas as well as for approximately 0.4 mile just north of the Deer Creek area.

Rawlins RMP

The Rawlins RMP would need to be amended for the Proposed Route and Alternative 1E-B to be approved; this amendment would be required to allow the Project as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for about 0.9 mile in the Laramie South area, and amended to allow the reclassification of 177 acres of VRM Class II to VRM Class III, also in the Laramie South area.

Plan Amendment Summary

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to ROS settings, SIO, or VRM classes to more developed classifications have the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationists using the affected areas and would, in some cases, afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in more detail in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, the Proposed Route for Segment 1E would primarily cross rangeland (90 percent), with the remainder of the route crossing forest (7 percent) and water and wetlands (2 percent). Alternatives 1E-A through 1E-C would range from approximately 22 miles shorter than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route to 27 miles longer, with generally equivalent changes in the amount of rangeland crossed. Alternative 1E-C would also cross approximately 3 miles less forest than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-7).

There is limited development within the Analysis Area for Segment 1E. Developed land use mainly occurs in the vicinity of the Dave Johnston Power Plant just south of the Windstar Substation and includes ancillary facilities that serve the power plant, including electric transmission lines, two railroads, and two highways. The Analysis Area also

Table 3.17-7. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 1E

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Total Length	100.6	90.7	–	6.5	2.1	0.5	–	0.8
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1E-A	17.6	17.0	–	–	0.4	0.3	–	–
Alternative 1E-A	16.1	15.5	–	–	0.4	0.1	–	0.1
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1E-B	37.9	36.2	–	0.6	0.7	0.1	–	0.2
Alternative 1E-B	59.3	58.2	–	–	0.8	0.2	–	0.2
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1E-C	75.4	67.5	–	5.2	1.7	0.2	–	0.8
Alternative 1E-C	48.6	45.0	–	2.2	0.7	0.3	–	0.5

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

includes part of an existing residential area east of Glenrock on the south side of U.S. Highway 20/26. Development from this area south through Converse, Natrona, Albany, and Carbon Counties to the Aeolus Substation is limited to a few scattered homes and ranches.

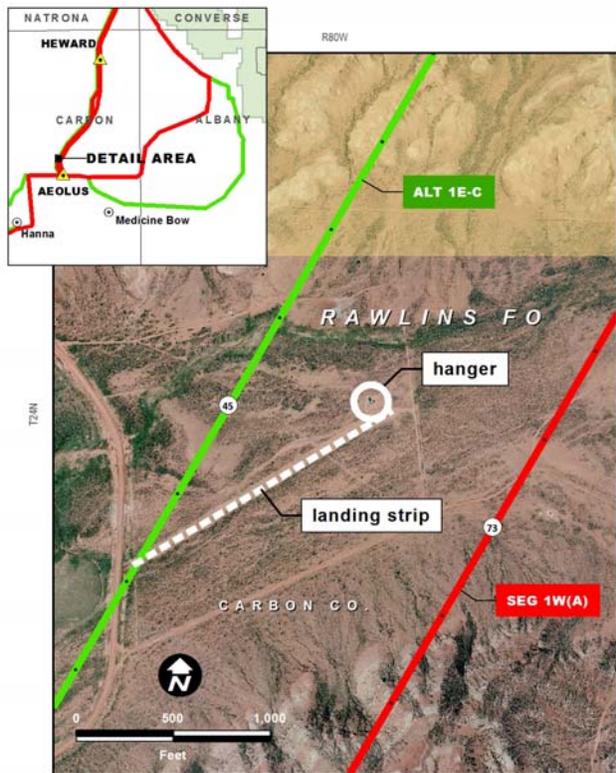
Approximately nine residences would be located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route; none would be located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline. No residences would be located within 300 feet of Alternatives 1E-B and 1E-C; one residence would be located approximately 200 feet from the centerline of Alternative 1E-A.

The Proposed Route would cross the boundary of a planned wind energy facility at approximately MP 79. No use conflicts are anticipated between the Proposed Route and this planned facility. Alternatives 1E-B and 1E-C would both also pass near proposed wind developments and would not be expected to affect these developments.

Alternative 1E-C would cross the end of the Foxley Airstrip at MP 45.2, as well as pass within 1,000 feet of an airport outbuilding (Figure 3.17-5). The impact on the airstrip needs to be carefully evaluated. The Agencies have identified the need for the Proponents to coordinate with the airstrip owner to realign the location of Alternative 1E-C to eliminate the impact to the airstrip or in some manner compensate for any loss of use:

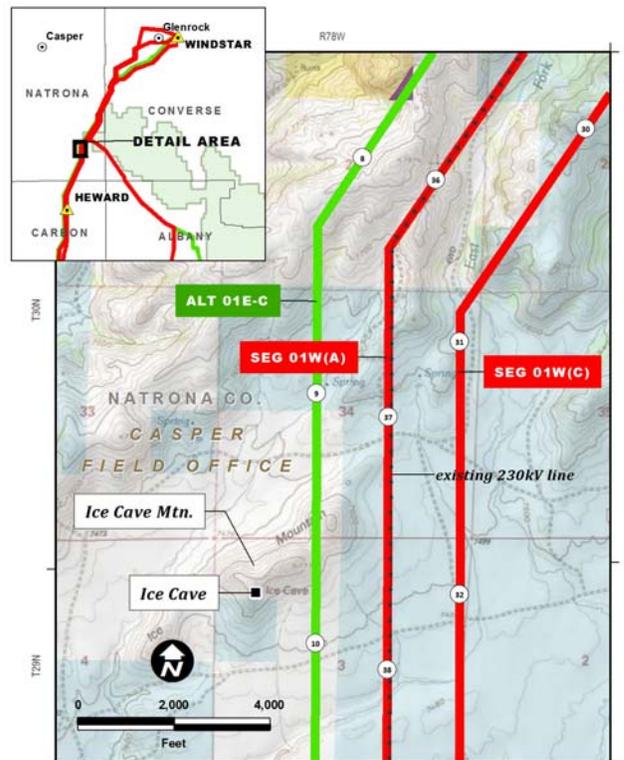
- LU-2 Coordinate with the Foxley Airstrip owner to realign the location of Alternative 1E-C to eliminate the impact to the airstrip or in some manner compensate for any loss of use.

Alternative 1E-C would also pass within 1,000 feet of an ice cave that BLM has identified as a locally historic feature (Figure 3.17-6). The Agencies have identified the



Proposed Route
Feasible Alternative
Substation
BLM
Private

Figure 3.17-5. Foxley Airstrip – Alternative 1E-C



Proposed Route
Feasible Alternative
Substation
Existing Transmission Line
West Wide Energy Corridor
BLM
Private
State

Figure 3.17-6. Ice Cave – Alternative 1E-C

need to consider micrositing of the facilities during final design with the overall goal of substantially reducing potential effects on this feature:

- LU-3 Work with the private landowner of the ice cave along Alternative 1E-C and microsite the facilities during final design to reduce effects.

Special Management Areas

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 2.4 miles of the Bates Hole MA, which has a restriction against new utility corridors unless there are no other feasible options. The portion of the Proposed Route for Segment 1E that would cross the Bates Hole MA would be adjacent to, but offset 1,500 feet from, an existing line (that would be rebuilt as Segment 1W[c]) and the Proposed Route for Segment 1W(a).

Alternative 1E-C would cross approximately 10.3 miles of the Bates Hole MA. This alternative would be adjacent to, but offset 1,500 feet from, the existing line for its entire length, including the section that would cross the Bates Hole MA.

Wilderness Characteristics

Segment 1E

Segment 1E of the Proposed Route would cross two areas identified as containing wilderness characteristics and come within a mile of a third area.

Inventory Unit WY-C-1F contains approximately 5,400 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. Approximately 0.8 mile of Segment 1E crosses the eastern arm of the inventory unit. If approved and constructed, this route would reduce the inventory unit by approximately 911 acres, shifting the boundary to the west. The remaining unit would no longer meet the size requirement; therefore, the unit would no longer have wilderness characteristics.

Inventory Unit WY-R-3A contains approximately 5,073 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. The inventory unit is not crossed by the Proposed Route based on indicative engineering; however, it is within 0.5 mile of the Proposed Route. This is within the 1-mile study area within which micro-siting may be implemented to reduce effects on resources, for example to avoid crossing a visually sensitive area. If the route remains to the northeast of the inventory unit, it would not affect the area's wilderness characteristics.

Inventory Unit WY-R-4A is approximately 5,745 acres of BLM-managed land surrounded by non-federal land that likely has wilderness characteristics. The inventory unit lacks public access and no field inventory was completed; however, based on BLM records and aerial imagery, this inventory unit is assumed to contain wilderness characteristics.

Segment 1E of the Proposed Route crosses the southeast corner of the unit. If approved and constructed, this route would reduce the size of the unit by approximately 150 acres. The remaining unit would still meet the size requirement. Since there is no public access, recreational users would not be adversely affected by the Project. If access across surrounding private land were obtained, the transmission line in an otherwise undisturbed setting would have an adverse effect of the wilderness experience. Due to the rugged topography, users in other portions of the inventory unit would still find a natural condition with outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Alternative 1E-C

Inventory Unit WY-R-1C contains approximately 8,964 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. Alternative 1E-C crosses the entire eastern side of the inventory unit, approximately 3,000 feet from the existing transmission line that forms the current boundary of the unit. If approved and constructed, this route would reduce the inventory unit by approximately 1,690 acres, shifting the boundary approximately 3,000 feet to the west. The remaining unit would still meet the size requirement. Construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude. In the long term, people seeking solitude or primitive recreation would find opportunities for both, but would have to travel an additional 3,000 feet to the west, away from the transmission line which forms the current boundary.

Inventory Unit WY-R-1D contains approximately 56,265 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. Alternative 1E-C crosses the entire eastern side of the inventory unit, approximately 3,000 feet from the existing transmission line that forms the current boundary of the unit. If approved and constructed, this route would reduce the inventory unit by approximately 2,617 acres, shifting the boundary approximately 3,000 feet to the west. The remaining unit would still meet the size requirement. Construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude. In the long term, people seeking solitude or primitive recreation would find opportunities for both, but would have to travel an additional 3,000 feet to the west, away from the highway which lies just east of the current boundary.

Inventory Unit WY-R-1E contains approximately 5,461 acres managed by the BLM which lies between two transmission lines. This area has been identified as having wilderness characteristics. None of the proposed or alternative routes cross this inventory unit. However it is within the 1-mile study area within which micro-siting may be implemented to reduce effects on resource. If the route remains to the west of the inventory unit, it would not affect the area's wilderness characteristics. If Alternative 1E-C were moved to the east of the existing transmission line and State Highway 487 and into this inventory unit, the unit would no longer be large enough to qualify as an area with wilderness characteristics. Conversely, 1E-C would no longer cross through all or part of WY-R-1D, reducing effects on that inventory unit.

Historic Trails

Segment 1E would cross a segment of the Oregon/California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer NHTs, where they all share the same alignment, and would also cross the Child's Cutoff to the California NHT. Child's Cutoff is located on private property and not marked. Alternative 1E-B would also cross the Rock Creek and Fort Fetterman Road trail twice. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 2.8 miles of NFS land where OHV use is limited to existing routes and 4.2 miles of BLM-managed lands with seasonal closure. The Proposed Route would cross three trails designated as closed to OHV use and new road construction associated with the Proposed Route would result in one additional trail crossing. In open areas (the majority of the route), it would be difficult to physically close these access points to unauthorized OHV use. OHV use on non-motorized trails could disrupt existing uses, such as hiking and horseback riding, and may result in adverse effects to trails not designed or maintained for motorized use. The Proponents would post signs identifying the area as closed to OHV use and implement blocking measures where practical.

Alternative 1E-A would be 1.5 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but it would cross a similar amount of area with a seasonal closure. Both Alternative 1E-A and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross one trail designated as closed to OHV use. The number of trail crossings due to new roads would also be the same (one each for Alternative 1E-A and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route). However, since nearly 85 percent of Alternative 1E-A

would follow existing transmission lines compared to about 2 percent for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, Alternative 1E-A would likely result in less new opportunity for unauthorized OHV access to trails and disruption of existing uses.

Alternative 1E-B would be 21.4 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and it would cross an additional 5.2 miles where OHV access is limited. This would result in a greater potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited. Alternative 1E-B would cross three trails designated as closed to OHV use and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross one. There would be three additional trail crossings due to new road construction (versus one for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route). Overall, there would be a greater opportunity for unauthorized OHV access to these trails under Alternative 1E-B, increasing the potential for disruption of existing uses.

Alternative 1E-C would be 26.7 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but it would cross an additional 1.4 miles where OHV access is limited compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. However, the portion of Alternative 1E-C that would cross an area with seasonal closure would be 1.5 miles less than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 1E-C would not cross any trails designated as closed to OHV use while the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross two trails designated as closed to OHV use. There would be one additional trail crossing due to road construction compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Therefore, there would be less opportunity for unauthorized OHV access to these trails under Alternative 1E-C, decreasing the potential for disruption of existing uses.

Segment 1W

The Proposed Route 1W(a) would consist of a new transmission line from the Windstar Substation to about MP 30 (approximately 2 miles north of where the route enters the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs) and again from near MP 39 to the Aeolus Substation (see Appendix A, Figure A-2). Between these two points it would consist of a rebuild of an existing 230-kV line. This switch is proposed in order to avoid Ice Cave Mountain. The rebuild portion of this route would involve replacement of the existing wood H-frame structures with steel pole H-frame structures, similar in height and appearance to the existing line. The route (including the new portion of the line and the rebuild portion together as one route) would extend from the Windstar Substation south and west to the planned Aeolus Substation (points 1, 1Wa, 1Wb, 1Wc, 1Wd, 2). Beginning at Windstar, the proposed line would proceed to the northwest and west staying just north of an existing 230-kV line and about 1 mile north of the North Platte River. At MP 7.4, the line would turn to the south, crossing two historic trails, an oil and gas well field, Burlington Northern Railroad, North Platte River, Wyoming Highway 87/20, and I-25. The route would cross one raptor nest buffer north of the interstate. At MP 11.2, the line would turn to the southwest for approximately 10 miles, at which point the route would be parallel to and west of Segment 1W(c). The routes would maintain a minimum of separation of 1,500 feet to meet reliability criteria.

Proposed Route 1W(c) would consist of a rebuild of an existing 230-kV line from the Dave Johnston Power Plant to about MP 24 and then again from about MP34 to the

Aeolus Substation. Between these two points, the route would consist of a new 230-kV line transmission line. (This switching of the rebuild from 1W[c] to 1W[a] was planned in order to avoid Ice Cave Mountain in the alignment of the Proposed Route.) The rebuild portion of this route would involve replacement of the existing wood H-frame structures with steel pole H-frame structures, similar in height and appearance to the existing line. The route (including the new portion of the line and the rebuild portion together as one route) would leave the existing substation at the Dave Johnston Power Plant and proceeds south and west to the vicinity of the Aeolus Substation, a distance of approximately 70.6 miles (points 1x, 1x.1, 1x.2, 2). Upon reaching the Aeolus Substation, the new 230-kV line would be looped in and back out of the Aeolus Substation continuing through intermediate substations to the Rock Springs Substation.

Land Use and Ownership

The Proposed Route for Segment 1W(a) would cross approximately 26.6 miles of BLM-managed land, 2.3 miles of NFS land, 18.5 miles of state land, and 29.1 miles of private land (Table 3.17-8). Alternative 1W-A would be approximately 4 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would affect less state-managed land (Table 3.17-8).

The Proposed Route for Segment 1W(c) would cross approximately 24.2 miles of BLM-managed land, 2.3 miles of NFS land, 15.4 miles of state land, and 28.7 miles of private land.

Table 3.17-8. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 1W

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other	State	Private
1W(a) Proposed – Total Length	76.5	26.6	2.3	–	18.5	29.1
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1W-A	20.3	–	–	–	10.3	10.0
Alternative 1W-A	16.2	–	–	–	5.6	10.7
1W(c) Proposed – Total Length	70.6	24.2	2.3	–	15.4	28.7

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

Segment 1W(a) would be adjacent to Segment 1W(c) for 61.1 miles of its 76.5-mile length. About 18.8 miles of Segment 1W(a) (25 percent of its total length) would be within the WWE corridor, 14.1 miles (18 percent) would be within the projected WWE corridor, and 21.9 miles (29 percent) would be adjacent to the projected WWE corridor (Table 2.4-2).

Approximately 5.3 miles of the 16.2-mile Alternative 1W-A (33 percent) is adjacent to the existing transmission line and 10.7 miles is adjacent to the projected WWE corridor. Viewed in terms of designated corridors and existing ROW, Alternative 1W-A makes better use of proximity to existing utility lines and the designated WWE corridor than the comparison section of the Proposed Route.

Approximately 21.0 miles (30 percent) of Segment 1W(c) is within the WWE corridor, 38.9 miles (55 percent) is within the projected WWE corridor, and 11.2 miles (16 percent) is adjacent to the projected WWE corridor.

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Medicine Bow Forest Plan

The Proposed Routes for Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) would both cross the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs (see Figure 3.17-4). The Project, as currently designed along the Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c), would not be consistent with a standard found in the Medicine Bow Forest Plan (see Table 2.2-1). Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) would each cross approximately 2.3 miles of land classified as MA 8.3, which allows development to dominate the foreground views; however, the development must be consistent with the SIOs of adjacent MAs. The adjacent land is MA 3.31 where the SIO is Moderate. A plan amendment would be needed to permit a one-time allowance for the Gateway West Project to cross land managed to be consistent with this adjacent MA SIO (see Appendix F-2).

Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) would also cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Casper and Rawlins RMPs (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table 2.2-1.

Casper RMP

Portions of each of the Proposed Routes for Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) would require that the Casper RMP be amended to allow the Project as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for about 0.1 mile in the Bates Creek area. The Proposed Route for Segment 1W(c) would also require that the Casper RMP be amended to allow the reclassification of 630 acres of VRM Class II to VRM Class III in the Deer Creek area.

No other plan amendments directly related to land use or recreation have been proposed for Segment 1W; however, as discussed in the Effects Common to All Action Alternatives section, all proposed plan amendments found in Appendix F could have indirect impacts to land use and recreation.

Plan Amendment Summary

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to ROS settings or VRM classes to more developed classifications have the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationists using the affected areas and would, in some cases, afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, the Proposed Route for Segment 1W(a) would primarily cross rangeland (94 percent), with the remainder of the route crossing forest (3 percent) and water and wetlands (2 percent). The Proposed Route for Segment 1W(c) would also primarily cross rangeland (97 percent), with forest and water and wetlands each accounting for about 1 percent of the routes total length. Much of the Proposed Route for Segment 1W(c) would be rebuilt within an existing

ROW that would need to be expanded by only 25 feet and, as a result, relatively small amounts of clearing would be required in forested areas (Table 3.17-9).

Alternative 1W-A runs parallel to the northern portion of Proposed Route 1W(c) and is approximately 4 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route for Segment 1W(a). This alternative would cross approximately 4 miles less rangeland than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-4).

The Proposed Route for Segment 1W(a) would pass within 1,000 feet of eight residences; one of these residences would be within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline. Alternative 1W-A would pass within 1,000 feet of fewer residences than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (two versus seven), and no residences are located within 300 feet of Alternative 1W-A compared to one within 300 feet of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Table 3.17-9. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 1W

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
1W(a) Proposed – Total Length	76.5	72.2	–	2.6	1.2	0.4	–	–
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 1W- A	20.3	19.7	–	0.1	0.2	0.2	–	–
Alternative 1W- A	16.2	15.5	–	–	0.6	0.2	–	–
1W(c) Proposed – Total Length	70.6	62.8	–	4.7	1.9	0.7	0.2	0.4

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

The Proposed Route for Segment 1W(c) would pass within 1,000 feet of 23 residences between MPs 1.3 and 2.3; five of these residences are within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline. Segment 1W(c) involves the reconstruction of an existing transmission line and would, therefore, result in minimal new long-term effects on existing residences. The Proponents have committed to developing a transportation plan (see Appendix C-1, Attachment A) that addresses issues such as maintaining emergency access during construction, dust suppression, and notification procedures. The implementation of this plan is expected to reduce impacts to nearby private residences during construction.

The Proposed Route for Segment 1W(a) would cross two active mining claims and pass within 1,000 feet of several industrial buildings and outbuildings, a mine, and the boundary for a proposed wind farm. Like the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, Alternative 1W-A would pass within 1,000 feet of several outbuildings or structures. Segment 1W(c) would cross two active mining claims and a wind energy project and pass within 1,000 feet of a radio tower, a barn, and an electric substation.

Special Management Areas

The Proposed Routes for Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) both cross about 10.5 miles of the Bates Hole MA, which was established by the BLM in 2007 to “protect highly erosive soils, fragile watersheds, and important and crucial wildlife habitat”. This area has a restriction against new utility corridors, unless there are no other feasible options.

Wilderness Characteristics

Inventory Unit WY-R-1C contains approximately 8,964 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. Proposed Route 1W(a) crosses the entire eastern side of the inventory unit, approximately 1,500 feet from the existing transmission line that forms the current boundary of the unit. If approved and constructed, this route would reduce the inventory unit by approximately 840 acres, shifting the boundary approximately 1,500 feet to the west. The remaining unit would still meet the size requirement. Construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude. In the long term, people seeking solitude or primitive recreation would find opportunities for both, but would have to travel an additional 1,500 feet to the west, away from the highway that lies just east of the current boundary.

Inventory Unit WY-R-1D contains approximately 56,265 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. Proposed Route 1W(a) crosses the entire eastern side of the inventory unit, approximately 1,500 feet from the existing transmission line that forms the current boundary of the unit. If approved and constructed, this route would reduce the inventory unit by approximately 1,308 acres, shifting the boundary approximately 1,500 feet to the west. The remaining unit would still meet the size requirement. Construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude. In the long term, people seeking solitude or primitive recreation would find opportunities for both, but would have to travel an additional 1,500 feet to the west, away from the highway which lies just east of the current boundary.

Inventory Unit WY-R-1E contains approximately 5,461 acres of BLM-managed land which lies between two transmission lines. This area has been identified as having wilderness characteristics. None of the proposed or alternative routes cross this inventory unit. However, it is within the 1-mile study area within which micro-siting may be implemented to reduce effects on resource. If the route remains to the west of the inventory unit, it would not affect the area’s wilderness characteristics. If Proposed Route 1W(a) were moved to the east of the existing transmission line and Highway 487 and into this inventory unit, the unit would no longer be large enough to qualify as an area with wilderness characteristics. Conversely, if both Proposed Route 1W(a) and Alternative 1E-C no longer cross through all or part of WY-R-1D, effects on that inventory unit would be reduced. If only 1W(a) were moved east of the highway and 1E-C remained as proposed, effects on WY-R-1D would remain as described above.

Historic Trails

Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) would cross a segment of the Oregon/California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer NHTs, where they all share the same alignment, and would also cross the Child’s Cutoff and the Bozeman Trail. Alternative 1W-A would cross the Oregon/California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer NHTs and Child’s

Cutoff, but would not cross the Bozeman Trail. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 2.8 miles of public land where OHV use is limited to existing roads and 4.2 miles with seasonal closure. The Proposed Route would cross one trail that is designated closed to OHV use and new road construction would result in one additional trail crossing. In open areas (the majority of the route), it would be difficult to physically close these access points to unauthorized OHV use. OHV use on nonmotorized trails could disrupt existing uses, such as hiking and horseback riding, and may result in adverse effects to trails not designed maintained for motorized use. The Proponents would post signs identifying the area as closed to OHV use and implement blocking measures where practical.

Alternative 1W-A would be 4.1 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and it would cross 0.3 mile less area with seasonal closure.

Alternative 1W-A would cross one trail designated as closed to OHV use, the same as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. There would be two trail crossings due to road construction under both Alternative 1W-A and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, there would be slightly less risk of unauthorized OHV access under Alternative 1W-A and a similar opportunity for unauthorized OHV access to trails.

Segment 2

Segment 2, as proposed, would link the Aeolus and Creston Substations in southeast Wyoming with two 500-kV circuits on one structure. One circuit would be operated at 230 kV during the initial phase of the Project. Its total proposed length is 96.7 miles. Fifty-two acres of the expansion of the Aeolus Substation and the construction of the Creston Substation and 0.5 acre for one regeneration site are attributed to Segment 2. There are three Route Alternatives, two of which are near the community of Fort Fred Steele. Alternative 2A at 28.4 miles long is being considered by the BLM because it remains in the WWE corridor nearer the town and the state historic site, and Alternative 2B, at 6.2 miles, is closer to the community than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and was the initially proposed route before the Proponents responded to local suggestions and relocated the Proposed Route farther to the south. Alternative 2C is a 24.4-mile alternative located north of Hanna, Wyoming. It is being evaluated at the recommendation of the Wyoming Governor's office to follow a utility corridor approved by that office for minimizing effects to sage-grouse (see Appendix A, Figure A-3).

Land Ownership

The Proposed Route for Segment 2 would cross approximately 36.9 miles of BLM-managed land, 6.2 miles of state land, and 53.5 miles of private land (Table 3.17-10). Alternatives 2A and 2B would be both less than 1 mile shorter than the Proposed Route and cross almost the same miles of land ownership. Alternative 2C would be approximately 4 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross almost 5 fewer miles of private land (Table 3.17-10).

Table 3.17-10. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 2

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	96.7	36.9	–	–	6.2	53.5
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 2A	28.8	10.1	–	–	2.4	16.2
Alternative 2A	28.4	10.2	–	–	1.7	16.5
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 2B	7.0	4.2	–	–	–	2.7
Alternative 2B	6.2	2.3	–	–	–	3.8
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 2C	28.4	9.6	–	–	1.0	17.8
Alternative 2C	24.4	11.4	–	–	–	13.0

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

There is an existing 230-kV transmission line corridor between the planned Aeolus and proposed Creston Substations. During siting studies, routing obstacles pushed the Proposed Route away from the existing and designated WWE corridor. These obstacles include oil and gas development, lek concentrations, and proximity to Fort Fred Steele. The Proposed Route would follow the existing transmission corridor for 53.9 miles (56 percent) of its length. This includes 16.5 miles (17 percent) within the WWE corridor, 24.2 miles (25 percent) within the projected WWE corridor, and 11.8 miles (12 percent) adjacent to the projected WWE corridor (Table 2.4-2).

Alternatives 2A and 2B would remain adjacent to the existing transmission lines as well as being substantially in or adjacent to the WWE corridor (Table 2.4-2). While these alternatives maximize use of existing and designated corridors, they are closer to Fort Fred Steele and residences. Alternative 2C would be mostly a Greenfield route proceeding northeast to southwest and north of the Proposed Route and Alternative 2A. Alternative 2C would be within or adjacent to an existing transmission corridor for just 3.5 miles (14 percent of its total length), but would follow an established corridor through core sage-grouse population areas (Table 2.4-2).

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Segment 2 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Rawlins RMP (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table 2.2-1.

Rawlins RMP

The Proposed Route for Segment 2, if approved, would require two amendments to the Rawlins RMP to allow surface-disturbing activities on public lands within 0.25 mile on either side of the North Platte River, and to allow the Project as a visually altering action without changing the affected VRM classifications (Table 2.2-1). The Proposed Route would also cross 0.24 mile of the North Platte SRMA on the east side of the river. Alternatives 2A and 2B would cross the North Platte River north of the Proposed Route's crossing and would not cross the North Platte SRMA.

Plan Amendment Summary

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to visual resources that have the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationists using the affected areas and would, in some cases, afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, the Proposed Route for Segment 2 would primarily cross rangeland (96 percent), with water and wetlands accounting for about 2 percent of the route’s total length. Alternatives 2A through 2C would range from less than 1 mile to about 4 miles shorter than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route, with generally commensurate reductions in the miles of rangeland crossed (Table 3.17-11).

Table 3.17-11. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 2

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Total Length	96.7	93.1	–	–	1.6	1.0	0.1	0.9
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 2A	28.8	27.8	–	–	0.7	0.3	–	–
Alternative 2A	28.4	27.5	–	–	0.6	0.2	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 2B	7.0	6.8	–	–	0.1	0.1	–	–
Alternative 2B	6.2	5.8	–	–	0.3	0.1	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 2C	28.4	27.5	–	–	0.3	0.2	–	0.4
Alternative 2C	24.4	23.8	–	–	0.2	0.1	–	0.3

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

Segment 2 generally would follow the existing SR 72 and U.S. Highway 30 corridors west from the Aeolus Substation. Land use within the Analysis Area for this segment is primarily rangeland (96 percent) (Table 3.17-4). This segment begins in the vicinity of an existing wind farm. Approximately 12.5 miles of the Aeolus Substation, it would cross about 2 miles of a former strip mine. Farther west, south of the city of Rawlins, the segment would pass within 1 mile of oil and gas development that continues for about 10 miles to the proposed Creston Substation site.

The Proposed Route for Segment 2 would pass within 1,000 feet of one residence; there are no residences located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline. Alternative 2B would pass within 1,000 feet of seven residences between MP 1.8 and 1.9; one of these residences is within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline.

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 15 miles of the planned Chokecherry-Sierra Madre Wind Farm Project and would pass within 1,000 feet of several industrial

buildings (at about MP 23), two mines, and an active mining claim. The 500-kV TransWest Express transmission line is proposed to traverse from east to west in the same general area. Alternative 2A would also cross potential wind energy sites and pass within 1,000 feet of a gravel pit. Alternative 2B would pass within 1,000 feet of a gravel pit and an active mine. Alternative 2C would pass within 1,000 feet of an active mine and cross areas identified as active coal leases and a coal mine.

The following mitigation measures are proposed to address potential conflicts between the project and wind energy facilities and industrial buildings:

- LU-4 Coordinate with the Chokecherry-Sierra Madre Wind Farm and TransWest Express Project developers and BLM along the Segment 2 Proposed Route to ensure mutually compatible siting of transmission lines and wind energy facilities.
- LU-5 Work with the owners of potentially affected industrial buildings and microsite the transmission line during final design to avoid impact to these structures.

During follow-on meetings sponsored by the Proponents, concerns were raised about visual impacts to the Fort Fred Steele Historic Site and proximity to nearby rural residences. In addition, the Wyoming Office of the Governor requested that an alternative crossing to the south of I-80 be considered for detailed analysis to avoid these resources (OGW 2009a). Based on these concerns, the Proposed Route was modified to avoid the Fort Fred Steele Historic Site and nearby residences. Figure 3.17-7 shows the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for this portion of Segment 2.

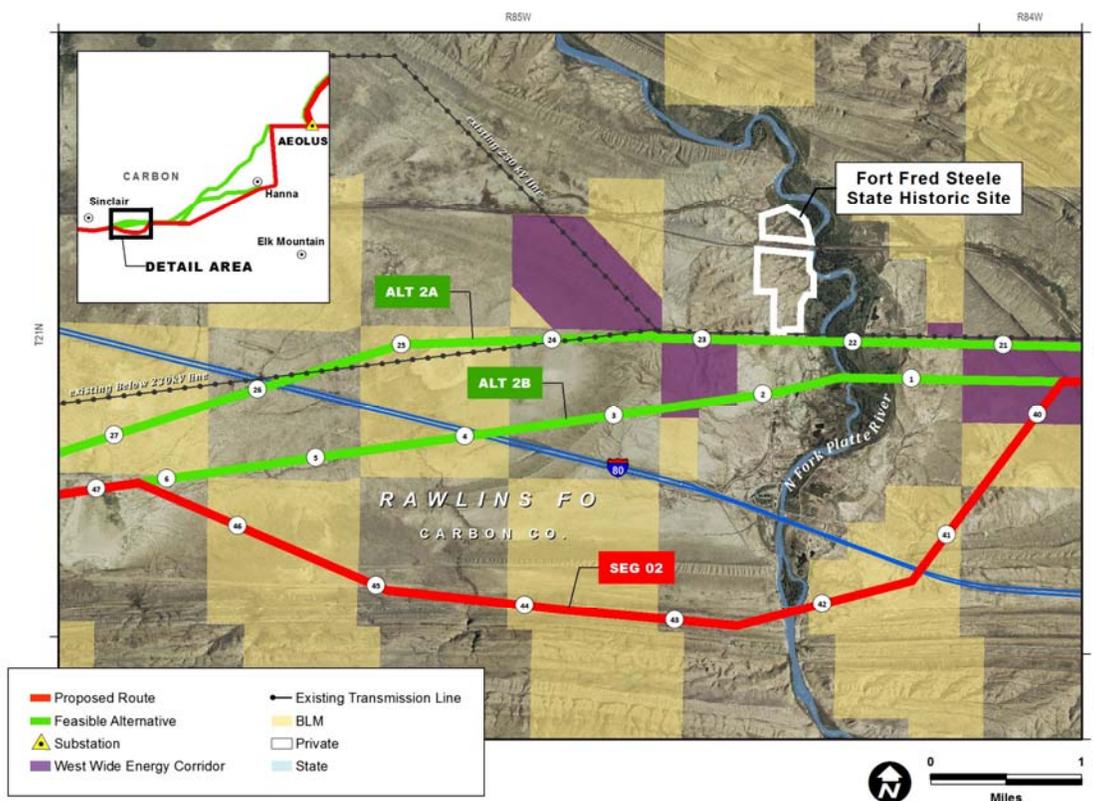


Figure 3.17-7. Fort Fred Steele Vicinity – Proposed Route and Route Alternatives

This portion of the Proposed Route is slightly longer than the corresponding parts of the Route Alternatives (see Table 3.17-6) but avoids potential impacts to the Fort Fred Steele Historic Site and the rural residences located near the Route Alternatives.

Special Management Areas

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 2 would cross three SRMAs and one Wildlife Habitat MA (Table 3.17-12).

Table 3.17-12. Special Management Areas Crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 2

Proposed Route/Alternative^{1/}	Segment Length (Miles)	Management Area	Miles Crossed
Proposed – Total Length	96.7	North Platte River SRMA	0.24
		Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (NST) SRMA	0.25
		OHV SRMA	1.0
		Red Rim-Daley Wildlife HMA	5.7
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alt 2A	28.8	North Platte River SRMA	0.24
		Continental Divide NST SRMA	0.25
Alternative 2A	28.4	Continental Divide NST SRMA	0.25
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alt 2B	7.0	North Platte River SRMA	0.24
		Continental Divide NST SRMA	0.25
Alternative 2B	6.2	Continental Divide NST SRMA	0.25
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 2C	28.4	None	NA
Alternative 2C	24.4	None	NA

1/ Route Alternative are only included in this table if the comparison portion of the Proposed Route or the Route Alternative would cross a species designated management area.

The Proposed Route would cross 0.24 mile of the North Platte River SRMA on the east side of the river. The North Platte River SRMA consists of 5,060 acres of lands located in discrete areas along the river. Surface-disturbing activities on public lands within 0.25 mile on either side of the river are intensively managed to maintain the quality of the visual resource. As a result, the proposed crossing would require an amendment to the Rawlins RMP (as discussed above).

The part of the SRMA that would be crossed by the Proposed Route is less than 1,000 feet from I-30 at its closest point, and the Proposed Route would cross this SRMA within 0.5 mile of I-80. This part of the SRMA is separated from the river by an access road. Construction of the proposed Project in this location could potentially affect the quality of the recreation experience in this area but the visual setting is only one aspect of the outdoor recreation experience and other types of infrastructure, including I-80, already exist in the immediate vicinity.

Alternatives 2A and 2B would cross the North Platte River, north of I-30, but would not cross the North Platte River SRMA. Alternative 2C would also not cross the North Platte River SRMA.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail SRMA consists of 600 acres based on a 0.25-mile corridor that follows the trail on lands managed under the Rawlins RMP. The Proposed Route would cross this SRMA south of I-80 in the vicinity of Rawlins. Alternatives 2A and 2B would also cross this SRMA (Table 3.17-12); however, Alternative 2C would not cross this SRMA.

The Proposed Route would cross 1 mile of the OHV SRMA. The management goal for this SRMA is to provide opportunities for safer OHV riding opportunities and OHV use for local residents and visitors to the area. There are no alternatives to this portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-11).

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 5.7 miles of the Red Rim-Daley Wildlife HMA. The Proposed Route would parallel (offset by 1,500 feet) an existing 230-kV transmission line across the affected sections. There are no alternatives to this portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-12).

Wilderness Characteristics

As noted earlier, no areas with wilderness characteristic are crossed in this segment.

Historic Trails

Segment 2 would not cross any NHTs but would cross the Rawlins to Baggs Stage Road and would also cross the Lincoln Highway several times (see Table 3.3-9 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 2.4 miles of public land closed to OHV use and 36.9 miles where OHV use is limited to existing routes. The Proposed Route would not cross any additional trails closed to OHV use and there would be no additional trail crossings due to new road construction. The Proposed Route would provide new access for OHVs to areas where OHV use is limited. In open areas (the majority of the route) it would be difficult to physically close the route to unauthorized OHV use. The Proponents would post signs identifying the area as closed to OHV use and implement blocking measures where practical.

Alternative 2A would be 0.4 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but it would cross a similar amount of area with seasonal closure. Neither Alternative 2A nor the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would result in additional trail crossings; however, all of Alternative 2A is co-located with existing transmission lines, compared to less than 25 percent of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Therefore, the Proposed Route would likely have a greater effect on unauthorized OHV use compared to Alternative 2A.

Alternative 2B would be 0.8 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and it would cross 1.9 miles less area where OHV use is limited to existing routes. Neither Alternative 2B nor the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would result in additional trail crossings. However, nearly 95 percent of Alternative 2B is co-located with existing transmission lines, compared to 11 percent of the comparison

portion of the Proposed Route. Therefore, the Proposed Route would likely have a greater effect on unauthorized OHV use compared to Alternative 2B.

Alternative 2C would be 4 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but it would cross 1.9 miles more area where OHV use is limited to existing routes. Neither Alternative 2C nor the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would result in additional trail crossings. The comparison portion of the Proposed Route is routed to better utilize existing transmission line ROWs. Therefore, the Proposed Route would likely have less of an effect on unauthorized OHV use compared to Alternative 2C.

Segment 3

Segment 3, as proposed, would link the Creston and Anticline Substations in southeast Wyoming with two 500-kV circuits on one structure. One circuit would be operated at 230 kV during the initial phase of the Project. Its total proposed length between those two substations is 46.7 miles. Sixty-nine acres of the construction of the Anticline and Creston Substations are attributed to Segment 3. Segment 3 would also link the Anticline and Jim Bridger Substations with a 4.3-mile 230-kV line and a 5.5-mile 345-kV line and includes the 10-acre expansion of the Jim Bridger 345-kV Substation. There are no alternatives proposed along this segment (see Appendix A, Figure A-4).

Land Ownership

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 29 miles of BLM-managed land, 1 mile of state land, and 26.5 miles of private land (Table 3.17-13).

Table 3.17-13. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 3

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	56.5	29.0	–	–	1.0	26.5

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

The proposed Creston Substation would be located on BLM-managed lands approximately 4 miles south of Wamsutter, as shown in Appendix A-Figure A-4. Approximately 13 acres would be developed within the fenced area. The substation would be on the east side of Wamsutter Crooks Gap Road, allowing easy access while avoiding impacts to wetlands, oil and gas wells, and pipelines. There appear to be no land use constraints that would prohibit construction of the proposed substation at this location.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

The 56.5-mile Proposed Route would follow a combination of existing transmission lines for 49.3 miles but very little would be within the WWE corridor. The WWE corridor does not follow existing transmission lines in this area and the WWE corridor location is constrained by existing development associated with roads, railroad, mining, and oil and gas operations.

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Segment 3 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Rawlins and Green River RMPs (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route are identified in Table 2.2-1. No plan amendments are proposed for

Segment 3 that are directly related to land use or recreation; however, as discussed in the “Effects Common to All Action Alternatives” section, all proposed plan amendments found in Appendix F could have indirect impacts to land use and recreation.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, the Proposed Route for Segment 3 would primarily cross rangeland (96 percent), with water and wetlands accounting for about 2 percent of the route’s total length.

Segment 3 generally would follow the existing U.S. Highway 30 corridor and existing ROWs account for about 2 percent of the total Analysis Area for this segment (Table 3.17-4). Oil and gas development occurs in the general vicinity of both the proposed Creston and Anticline Substation sites. Several areas of strip mining are also located in the vicinity of the Anticline Substation site. These land uses are not within 500 feet of Segment 3.

There are no residences or other structures located within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route. This segment would cross 0.3 mile of the Table Rock city limits and would pass within 1,000 feet of the Patrick Draw Oil Field, nine oil/gas wells, and the Point of Rocks city limits. The Agencies have identified the following mitigation measure to ensure that the final alignment maintains a 250-foot buffer from identified wells:

- LU-6 Review the final location of the Segment 3 Proposed Route with any affected oil/gas well operators to ensure measures are taken to protect against any impacts to wells. This measure also applies to any segment where the Proposed Route would be near oil/gas wells.

Special Management Areas

Federal lands along Segment 3 are regulated in part by the Rawlins and Green River RMPs. Segment 3 would not cross any SMAs identified in these plans.

Wilderness Characteristics

As noted earlier, no areas with wilderness characteristic are crossed in this segment.

Historic Trails

Segment 3 would not cross any NHTs but would cross the Overland Trail and the Point of Rocks to South Pass Stage Road, and would also cross the Lincoln Highway (see Table 3.3-10 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). The Overland Trail is not well-marked and mostly alternates between sections of private lands and BLM-managed public lands west of the Platte River. The part of the Point of Rocks to South Pass Stage Road that would be crossed by Segment 3 has been converted to a modern roadway. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 12.0 miles of public land where OHV use is limited to existing roads. The Proposed Route would not cross any trails closed to OHV use and

there would be no additional trail crossings due to new road construction. Approximately 98 percent of the Proposed Route is co-located with an existing transmission line; therefore, there would be no effect on OHV use.

Segment 4

Segment 4, as proposed, would link the Anticline Substation near the Jim Bridger Power Plant in southwestern Wyoming with the Populus Substation in Idaho with two 500-kV circuits on one structure. Its total proposed length is 203.0 miles. Eighty-nine acres of the construction of the Anticline Substation and the expansion of the Populus Substation, and 1.5 acres for three regeneration sites are attributed to Segment 4. It has six Route Alternatives in the middle portion of its route but the first 52 miles to the east and the last 61 miles to the west (in Idaho) do not have any Route Alternatives. The middle section of the Proposed Route is 90.2 miles long, and its Route Alternatives vary from 85.2 to 102.2 miles long. These alternatives were proposed by the Wyoming Governor’s office (4A, paralleling the existing 345-kV lines throughout); by the BLM Kemmerer FO (4B through 4E, including edits from various cooperating agencies), with the intent to avoid impacts to cultural resources to the extent practical; and by the Proponents (4F, attempting to avoid impacts to cultural resources while still remaining north of the existing lines) (see Appendix A, Figures A-5 and A-6).

Land Ownership

The Proposed Route for Segment 4 would cross approximately 82.2 miles of BLM-managed land, 3.1 miles of Bureau of Reclamation land, 9.2 miles of NFS land, 10.7 miles of state land, and 97.7 miles of private land (Table 3.17-14). The six proposed alternatives (Alternatives 4A through 4F) range from 5 miles shorter to 12 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross similar totals of miles by land ownership (Table 3.17-14). In addition, Alternatives 4C and 4E cross 0.7 mile of the USFWS-managed Cokeville Meadows NWR.

Table 3.17-14. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 4

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other ^{1/}	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	203.0	82.2	9.2	3.1	10.7	97.7
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 4A - 4F	90.2	53.0	–	3.1	2.7	31.4
Alternative 4A	85.2	43.0	–	3.1	4.5	34.4
Alternative 4B	100.2	50.6	–	0.6	8.1	41.0
Alternative 4C	101.6	46.9	–	1.2	8.6	44.9
Alternative 4D	100.8	52.1	–	0.6	6.7	41.4
Alternative 4E	102.2	48.4	–	1.2	7.2	45.3
Alternative 4F	87.5	45.2	–	3.1	3.6	35.7

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

1/ The Other category for the Proposed Route and Alternatives 4A, 4B, 4D, and 4F consists of Bureau of Reclamation lands; Other for Alternatives 4C and 4E consists of 0.6 mile Bureau of Reclamation and 0.7 mile USFWS-managed lands.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

The Proposed Route begins on the east end in the Rock Springs FO where it would follow the WWE corridor. It proceeds into the Kemmerer FO where there is no WWE corridor or designated corridor going in the same direction as the Gateway West route.

An existing 345-kV transmission line does, however, cross the Kemmerer FO diagonally, southeast to northwest, and would be paralleled by Alternative 4F.

From the Kemmerer FO, the route heads into the BLM Pocatello FO in an area where there are no designated corridors and across the Caribou-Targhee NF, where there is no WWE corridor. The Caribou-Targhee NF is, however, crossed by a 600-foot-wide designated utility corridor that is occupied by two existing 345-kV transmission lines. Initial siting studies for the Project attempted to locate this part of the segment within the existing corridor but, due to terrain, narrow corridor width, and reliability separation criteria, the route was not co-located. The current, nearby location has been developed in conjunction with the Forest Service to best meet the intent of consolidating utility lines.

Approximately 96.4 miles (48 percent) of the Proposed Route would be located within or adjacent to an existing transmission corridor, 11.9 miles (6 percent) is within the WWE corridor, 14.1 miles (7 percent) is within the projected WWE corridor, and 10.6 miles (5 percent) is adjacent to the WWE corridor (Table 2.4-2).

The lengths of the Route Alternatives that follow existing transmission lines range from 35.6 miles under Alternatives 4B through 4E, 54.1 miles under Alternative 4F, to 77.5 miles under Alternative 4A. The 77.5 miles of Alternative 4A that follow existing transmission lines comprise the majority (91 percent) of the total length of this alternative. Alternatives 4A through 4F all cross the Kemmerer FO where there is no WWE corridor or designated corridor. As a result, none of these alternatives would be located within a designated ROW corridor.

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Caribou Forest Plan

The Project, as currently designed along Segment 4, would not be consistent with a standard found in the Caribou Forest Plan, which requires that “existing and proposed rights-of-way... shall be designated as corridors” (see Table 2.2-1). This requirement includes “[e]lectric transmission lines of 66KV and greater, including fiberoptics.” Segment 4 would cross portions of the Caribou-Targhee NF currently designated as Prescription 5.2 (Forest Vegetation Management), Prescription 2.7.2 (Elk and Deer Winter Range), and Prescription 3.2 (Semi-Primitive Recreation). In addition, the Project would not be consistent with two guidelines within the Caribou Forest Plan that would directly affect recreation. The Scenic Resources Guideline 2 states that projects should be implemented to meet the VQOs displayed on the Forest VQO map and the Recreation Guideline 4 states that they should be implemented to meet the ROS depicted on the Forest ROS map. The portions of the NF that would be crossed by the Project have VQOs of Retention and Partial Retention and ROS classifications of RN and SPM. To be consistent with Forest Plan direction, an amendment is needed to designate the ROW for the proposed double circuit 500-kV line as Prescription 8.1 (Concentrated Development Areas; see Appendix F-2). The corridor would be 9.2 miles long by 300 feet wide and areas within 500 feet of the transmission line and new access roads would be amended to have an ROS of RN. VQOs are not specifically assigned to areas with MA 8.1; therefore, an amendment to the Scenery Guideline to allow the

Project would be needed. Approval of this plan amendment would result in impacts to the experiences of recreationalists that use these areas, in that these areas would afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. The associated changes in ROS are discussed below in the Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources subsection.

Segment 4 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Green River, Kemmerer, and Pocatello RMPs (Table 3.17-2). No amendments would be required for the portion of the Project located on lands managed under the Pocatello RMPs (no amendments directly related to land use or otherwise).

Green River RMP

The Proposed Route for Segment 4, if approved, would require that the Green River RMP be amended to allow the Project to cross the VRM Class II designated areas on the east side of the Green River (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources).

Kemmerer RMP

The Proposed Route and Alternatives 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, and 4F cross lands mapped as VRM Class II within the Kemmerer RMP (a corridor extending up to 1 mile on either side of the Sublette Cutoff and Slate Creek Cutoff). The Project would not be consistent with the VRM class in this area. Therefore, these routes could not be selected unless the Kemmerer RMP is amended to allow the Project as a visually altering action. In order for the Proposed Route or any of the Route Alternatives to be selected, an amendment to the Kemmerer RMP would be needed to allow the Project as a visually altering action without changing the VRM class. If any of the Alternatives 4B through 4E is selected, the plan would also be amended to change the VRM classification from VRM Class II to VRM Class III for areas crossed by portions of those routes (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources and Appendices F-1 and G-1).

The Proposed Route and Alternatives 4A, 4C, 4E, and 4F would not be consistent with the management objectives found in the Kemmerer RMP for the Tunp/Dempsey area, or areas near U.S. Highway 189 (see Table 2.2-1). Therefore, these routes could not be selected unless the Kemmerer RMP is amended to permit a one-time allowance for the Project where it would otherwise be in conflict. One amendment is proposed for the impacts to the viewshed of this area that would result from the Proposed Route and Alternatives 4A and 4F, while another amendment is proposed for impacts to habitats and the creation of a new ROW within this area as a result of Alternatives 4A, 4C, and 4E (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources and Appendices F-1 and G-1).

The Proposed Route would cross within 3 miles of eligible NRHP sites whose viewsheds are protected under the Kemmerer RMP; thus, the Proposed Route does not conform to the Kemmerer RMP. An amendment to the Kemmerer RMP has been proposed that would permit a one-time allowance for the Project within these sites' viewshed (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources and Appendix F).

Plan Amendment Summary

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to ROS settings, VQO, or VRM classes to more developed classifications have the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationalists using the affected areas and would, in some cases,

afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, the Proposed Route for Segment 4 would primarily cross rangeland (80 percent), with the remainder of the route crossing forest (10 percent), cropland (5 percent), and water and wetlands (2 percent).

Alternatives 4A through 4F range from approximately 5 miles shorter (Alternative 4A) than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route to 12 miles longer (Alternative 4E). All of the alternatives would cross fewer miles of forest than the Proposed Route—with the net reduction in miles of forest crossed ranging from 6.6 miles to 8.9 miles—and more miles of rangeland (Table 3.17-15).

Table 3.17-15. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 4

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Total Length	203.0	162.0	9.3	20.7	7.2	1.2	0.1	2.5
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 4A - 4F	90.2	77.9	0.4	8.9	2.5	0.5	0.1	–
Alternative 4A	85.2	79.4	0.7	1.2	3.3	0.2	0.3	–
Alternative 4B	100.2	94.4	2.6	–	2.1	0.5	0.2	0.4
Alternative 4C	101.6	98.6	0.2	–	1.5	0.6	0.4	0.4
Alternative 4D	100.8	95.0	2.6	0.1	2.1	0.4	0.2	0.4
Alternative 4E	102.2	99.2	0.2	0.1	1.5	0.5	0.4	0.4
Alternative 4F	87.5	80.6	1.4	2.3	2.9	0.2	0.2	–

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

The Proposed Route for Segment 4 would pass within 1,000 feet of 11 residences; four of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline. The number of residences within 1,000 feet of the Route Alternatives ranges from one (Alternative 4B and 4D) to 3 (Alternative 4F), versus 3 for the comparison section of the Proposed Route. There are no residences located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerlines for the Route Alternatives, versus 1 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-16).

The Proposed Route would cross 2.5 miles of the city impact area of the City of Downey (Bannock County) in the vicinity of the Populus Substation.

Table 3.17-16. Number of Residences within 1,000 feet and 300 feet – Segment 4

Proposed Route/ Alternative	Within 1,000 Feet			Within 300 Feet		
	Proposed Route/ Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference	Proposed Route/ Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference
Proposed Route	11	3	8	4	1	3
Alternative 4A	2	3	-1	–	1	-1
Alternative 4B	1	3	-2	–	1	-1
Alternative 4C	2	3	-1	–	1	-1
Alternative 4D	1	3	-2	–	1	-1
Alternative 4E	2	3	-1	–	1	-1
Alternative 4F	3	3	–	–	1	-1

The Proposed Route would pass within 1,000 feet of a wind energy facility, 10 non-residential buildings or structures, a substation, a gravel pit, and a mine. None of these land uses are located within 1,000 feet of the portion of the Proposed Route used for comparison with the proposed Route Alternatives. Commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses crossed or within 1,000 feet of the Route Alternatives are itemized by milepost in Table D.17-1 in Appendix D and summarized below.

Alternative 4A would cross approximately 7 miles of a proposed wind farm boundary and is within 1,000 feet of one other wind energy facility, an oil/gas well, three industrial buildings or other structures, the Kemmerer #1 dam and reservoir, a wastewater treatment facility, and Cook Canal.

Alternative 4B would pass within 1,000 feet of an oil/gas well, the Glencoe Mine and Elkol Strip Mine, the CH Smith dam and reservoir, two center-pivot agricultural facilities, and the B-Q Dam.

Alternative 4C would cross approximately 1 mile of a proposed wind farm boundary and an active mining claim. This alternative is within 1,000 feet of an oil/gas well, the Glencoe Mine and the Elkol Strip Mine, the CH Smith dam and reservoir, a substation, a gravel pit, two commercial buildings, and several barns and sheds.

Alternative 4D would cross approximately 4.5 miles of wind energy facilities and an active mining claim. This alternative is within 1,000 feet of an oil/gas well, the Glencoe Mine and the Elkol Strip Mine, the CH Smith dam and reservoir, a mine, two center-pivot agricultural facilities, and the B-Q Dam.

Alternative 4E would cross approximately 2 miles of a proposed wind farm boundary and an active mining claim. This alternative is within 1,000 feet of an oil/gas well, the Glencoe Mine, the Elkol Strip Mine, the CH Smith dam and reservoir, a mine, a substation, a gravel pit, two commercial buildings, and several barns and sheds.

Alternative 4F would cross approximately 8 miles of a proposed wind farm boundary. This alternative is within 1,000 feet of an oil/gas well, four center-pivot agricultural facilities, and the Cook Canal. Alternative 4F also would pass within 1,000 feet of the Pine Creek Ski Area, a ski resort located south of Cokeville, Wyoming, on BLM-

managed land. The Proposed Route and other Route Alternatives for Segment 4 do not cross or pass within 1,000 feet of this area.

Special Management Areas

Federal lands along Segment 4 are regulated in part by the Green River, Kemmerer, and Pocatello RMPs. The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 4 would cross the Oregon Trail, Pine Creek Canyon, and Dempsey Ridge SRMAs, as well as the Rock Creek/Tunp and Bear River Divide SMAs and the Cokeville Meadows NWR (Table 3.17-17).

Table 3.17-17. Special Management Areas Crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 4

Proposed or Alternative Name^{1/}	Segment Length (Miles)	Management Area	Miles Crossed
Proposed - Total Length	203.0	Oregon Trail SRMA	3.0
		Pine Creek Canyon SRMA	1.7
Proposed - Comparison portion for Alternatives 4A,B,C,D,E,F	90.2	Oregon Trail SRMA	3.0
		Pine Creek SRMA	1.7
Alternative 4A	85.2	Dempsey Ridge SRMA	6.0
		Rock Creek/Tunp SMA	3.6
Alternative 4B	100.2	Bear River Divide SMA	5.5
		Cokeville Meadows NWR	4.6
Alternative 4C	101.6	Bear River Divide SMA	4.3
		Cokeville Meadows NWR	2.3
		Rock Creek/Tunp SMA	4.1
Alternative 4D	100.8	Bear River Divide SMA	5.5
		Cokeville Meadows NWR	4.6
Alternative 4E	102.2	Bear River Divide SMA	4.3
		Cokeville Meadows NWR	2.3
		Rock Creek/Tunp SMA	4.1
Alternative 4F	87.5	Dempsey Ridge SRMA	9.4

1/ Alternative routes are only included in this table if the comparison portion of the Proposed Route or Route Alternative would cross a species designated management area.

The Proposed Route would cross 3 miles and 1.7 miles of the Oregon NHT and Pine Creek Canyon SRMAs, respectively. All of the Route Alternatives proposed for this segment—Alternatives 4A to 4F—would avoid crossing both of these SRMAs (Table 3.17-17).

Alternatives 4A and 4F would cross approximately 6 miles and 9.4 miles of the Dempsey Ridge SRMA, respectively. The Proposed Route would not cross the SRMA (Table 3.17-17).

Alternative 4A would cross approximately 3.6 miles of the Rock Creek/Tunp SMA and Alternatives 4C and 4E, sharing a common alignment, would cross approximately 4.1 miles. The Proposed Route would not cross this SMA (Table 3.17-17).

Alternatives 4B and 4D, sharing a common alignment, would cross approximately 5.5 miles of the Bear River Divide SMA, and Alternatives 4C and 4E, sharing a different

common alignment, cross approximately 4.3 miles. The Proposed Route would not cross this SMA (Table 3.17-17).

Alternatives 4B and 4D, sharing a common alignment, would cross approximately 4.6 miles of the Cokeville Meadows NWR, and Alternatives 4C and 4E, sharing a different common alignment, cross approximately 2.3 miles (Table 3.17-17). The Proposed Route would not cross this NWR (Table 3.17-17).

Wilderness Characteristics

Inventory Unit WY-K-6I-2 contains approximately 43,282 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. The inventory unit is crossed by approximately 9.1 miles of the Proposed Route. If this route were approved and constructed, the inventory unit would be divided into two units, both large enough to have wilderness characteristics. The northern subunit would be approximately 13,921 acres and the southern subunit would be approximately 29,361 acres. Construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude. In the long term, people would be able to find outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in both subunits. However, the naturalness of the area along the proposed transmission line would be degraded by the presence of towers up to 190 feet high and multiple cables crossing between the towers. People crossing between two subunits, including those following the Emigrant Trail (an NHT), would pass through an altered landscape.

Inventory Unit WY-K-6I-3 contains approximately 12,588 acres of BLM-managed land near Fontenelle Gap that has been identified as having wilderness characteristics. The inventory unit is crossed by approximately 2.5 miles of the Proposed Route. If this route were approved and constructed, the inventory unit would be divided into two subunits, both large enough to have wilderness characteristics. The northern subunit would be approximately 5,518 acres and the southern subunit would be approximately 7,070 acres. Construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude. In the long term, people would be able to find outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in both subunits. However, as with the adjacent unit (WY-K-6I-2), the naturalness of the area along the proposed transmission line would be degraded by the presence of towers up to 190 feet high and multiple cables crossing between the towers. As in WY-K-6I-2, people crossing between the two subunits would pass through an altered landscape. However, the portion of the inventory unit crossed by the Emigrant Trail in WY-K-6I-3 would not be affected.

Inventory Unit WY-K-6L-1 contains approximately 17,642 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. The inventory unit is crossed by the Proposed Route in the northern portion of the unit and by both Alternative 4A and 4E near the southern boundary. If the Proposed Route were approved and constructed, approximately 182 acres in the northeast corner would be dropped from the unit. The remainder of the unit would be split in two subunits. The northern subunit would be approximately 7,183 acres and the southern one approximately 10,307 acres; both subunits would retain naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, except for the area immediately under and adjacent to the transmission line. If Alternative 4A were built instead of the Proposed Route, approximately 1,383 acres along the southern boundary of the unit would be dropped.

Alternative 4A would be adjacent to existing transmission lines; therefore, the effect of the Project would be to move the southern boundary approximately 1,500 feet to the north. The remainder of the unit would retain naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, except for the area immediately under and adjacent to the transmission line. Alternative 4F follows the same route for approximately half its length within the inventory unit and then follows a more northwest path. If Alternative 4F were built, approximately 2,457 acres would drop from the unit, nearly 1,000 acres more than under Alternative 4A and more than approximately 2,204 acres more than under the Proposed Route. People using the Emigrant Trail (which crossed the unit) would not be affected by any of the three alternatives. If any of these routes is approved, construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude in the short term.

Inventory Unit WY-K-6L-2 contains approximately 17,709 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. The inventory unit is crossed by the Proposed Route in the northern portion of the unit. If built, this would divide the inventory unit into two units, both would be large enough to have wilderness characteristics. The northern subunit would be 7,150 acres and the southern subunit would be 10,559 acres. The northern subunit borders the NF. People would be able to find outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in both subunits. However, the naturalness of the area along the proposed transmission line would be degraded by the presence of towers up to 190 feet high and multiple cables crossing between the towers. People crossing between the two subunits would pass through an altered landscape. If this route is approved, construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude in the short term.

Inventory Unit WY-K-6S-1 contains approximately 37,617 acres of BLM-managed land assumed to have wilderness characteristics pending field inventory. Alternatives 4B/C and 4D/E cross the inventory unit. Alternative 4B/C crosses the northeast corner of the unit. If this route were constructed, approximately 3,592 acres northeast of the transmission line would drop from the unit. Alternative 4D/E follows 4B/C through the northeastern corner of the inventory unit but instead of exiting the unit at the north boundary, it continues west and then northwest for approximately 10 miles. If constructed, the area affected by Alternative 4B/C would also be affected by 4D/E. In addition, the area north of the 4D/E line (approximately 7,004 acres) would drop from the unit. In either case, the remaining portion of this large unit transmission would still have wilderness characteristics. People would be able to find outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. However, the naturalness of the area along the proposed transmission line would be degraded by the presence of towers up to 190 feet high and multiple cables crossing between the towers. If either of these routes is approved, construction activities would disrupt those seeking solitude in the short term.

Inventory Unit WY-K-8A contains approximately 33,293 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. It includes the Raymond Mountain WSA (Decision 7001 in the Kemmerer RMP). The Proposed Route crosses less than 0.25 mile south of the inventory unit. In addition, Alternative 4F joins the Proposed Route where it passes to the south of the inventory unit. A county road separates the route from the inventory unit/WSA. The Proponents have stipulated that they would not move the route north into the unit; therefore, the inventory unit/WSA would not be

directly affected by the Project. If either of these routes is approved, construction activities would disrupt users seeking solitude in the southern portion of the unit in the short term.

Historic Trails

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 4 would cross a number of NHTs and other trails, including stage and wagon roads, that have potential historic significance (see Table 3.3-11 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). These include the Oregon, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer NHTs, and the California NHT Sublette Cutoff, Slate Creek Cutoff, and Bartleton-Bidwell Route. Alternative 4F would also cross the Dempsey-Hockaday Cutoff. The Proposed Route along Segment 4 would also cross the Overland Trail and the 1849 Evans Cherokee Trail, as well as a number of historic stage and wagon roads. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 8.5 miles of public land where OHV use is limited and 15.6 miles with seasonal closure. The Proposed Route would cross six trails closed to OHV use (and three that are open to OHV use). There would be five additional trail crossings due to new road construction, three of which would be trails closed to OHV use. In open areas (the majority of the route) it would be difficult to physically close these access points to unauthorized OHV use. OHV use on nonmotorized trails could disrupt existing uses, such as hiking and horseback riding, and may result in adverse effects to trails not designed or maintained for motorized use. The Proponents would post signs identifying the area as closed to OHV use and implement blocking measures where practical.

Alternative 4A would be 5.0 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and it would cross 11.0 miles less area with seasonal closure and 1.0 mile less area where OHV use is limited. Alternative 4A would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to four for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New roads associated with Alternative 4A would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to two for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Nearly 90 percent of Alternative 4A would follow existing transmission lines, compared to less than 22 percent of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Over all, Alternative 4A would have less effect than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route in opportunity for unauthorized OHV use and disruption of existing uses.

Alternative 4B would be 10.0 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; it would cross 5.2 miles less area with seasonal closure and 0.1 mile where OHV access is limited. Alternative 4B would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to four for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New roads associated with Alternative 4B would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to two for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, Alternative 4B would have less effect than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route in terms of unauthorized OHV access to trails or areas closed to OHV use.

Alternative 4C would be 11.4 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would cross 2.0 miles less area with seasonal closure. Alternative 4C and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross a similar amount of area where OHV access is limited. Alternative 4C would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to four for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New roads associated with Alternative 4C would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to two for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, Alternative 4C would have less effect than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route in unauthorized OHV access to trails or areas closed to OHV use.

Alternative 4D would be 10.6 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would cross 8.7 miles less area with seasonal closure. Alternative 4D and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route both cross a similar amount of area where OHV access is limited. Alternative 4D would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to four for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New roads associated with Alternative 4D would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to two for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, Alternative 4D would have less effect than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route in unauthorized OHV access to trails or areas closed to OHV use.

Alternative 4E would be 12.0 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would cross 5.4 miles less area with seasonal closure. Alternative 4E and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route both cross a similar amount of area where OHV access is limited. Alternative 4E would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to four for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New roads associated with Alternative 4E would cross one trail closed to OHV use, compared to two for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, Alternative 4E would have less effect than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route in unauthorized OHV access to trails or areas closed to OHV use.

Alternative 4F would be 2.7 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, and it would cross 12.1 miles less area with seasonal closure and 1.0 mile less area where OHV access is limited. Alternative 4F would cross two trails closed to OHV use, the same as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New roads associated with Alternative 4F would not cross any trails closed to OHV use, compared to two for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Also, nearly 62 percent of Alternative 4F would be co-located with existing transmission lines, compared to less than 22 percent of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, Alternative 4F would have less effect than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Segment 5

Segment 5, as proposed, would link the Populus and Borah Substations with a 54.6-mile single-circuit 500-kV line. Forty-four acres of the expansion of the Populus and Borah Substations are attributed to Segment 5. There are five Route Alternatives including two proposed by the BLM to avoid the Deep Creek Mountains (5A and 5B; 8 miles and 19 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route), one preferred by Power County that would cross the Fort Hall Indian Reservation (5C; 6 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route), one originally

proposed by the Proponents (5D; 2 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but located within more agricultural lands), and one proposed by Power County as an alternative approach to the Borah Substation (5E) (see Appendix A, Figure A-7).

Land Ownership

Approximately 69 percent or 37.8 miles of the Proposed Route for Segment 5 would cross private land, with the remainder of the route crossing BLM (13.2 miles) and State (3.6 miles) land (Table 3.17-18). Alternatives 5A and 5B are approximately 8.4 miles and 19.1 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, respectively, with private lands accounting for the majority of the increase in miles by land ownership in both cases (Table 3.17-18).

Alternative 5C is approximately 7.1 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross fewer miles of BLM, state, and private lands. However, unlike the Proposed Route and other alternatives to Segment 5, Alternative 5C also would cross about 12.4 miles of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation (Table 3.17-18).

Table 3.17-18. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 5

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other^{1/}	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	54.6	13.2	–	–	3.6	37.8
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 5A and 5B	25.3	8.7	–	–	3.0	13.5
Alternative 5A	33.7	10.1	–	–	0.3	23.3
Alternative 5B	44.4	10.3	–	–	0.3	33.8
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 5C	33.2	8.8	–	–	3.5	20.9
Alternative 5C	26.1	–	–	12.4	0.7	13.0
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 5D	19.4	2.7	–	–	0.7	16.1
Alternative 5D	17.5	–	–	–	1.1	16.4
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 5E	5.8	1.2	–	–	0.1	4.5
Alternative 5E	5.3	0.1	–	–	0.2	5.0

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

1/ The 12.4 “Other” miles crossed by Alternative 5C are part of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.

Alternative 5C would parallel an existing transmission, offset 1,500 feet to the south and west, across the southern half of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, from the southeastern corner, angling diagonally to the northwest. Potential impacts to visual and cultural resources on the reservation are discussed in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources and Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources, respectively. Approximately 219 acres would be disturbed within the reservation boundary for construction if this route was selected.

A crossing of the Fort Hall Reservation would have to be negotiated between the Proponents and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The Tribes could refuse to allow the route to cross their Reservation if they decide they do not like the terms or effects of the ROW the Proponents would seek. The Tribes have the authority to negotiate the location, management, and compensation for the transmission line through the Reservation. The outcome of this negotiation is beyond the scope of this EIS.

Alternatives 5D and 5E are approximately 1.9 miles and 0.5 mile shorter than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route and cross similar totals of miles by land ownership (Table 3.17-18).

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

Between the Populus and the Borah Substations there is no WWE corridor or other designated corridors for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives to follow. However, existing 345-kV and other lines exist between these points as well as in the general vicinity. The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives make the following use of existing utility corridors:

- Proposed Route – 16.8 miles (31 percent) adjacent to an existing transmission corridor;
- Alternative 5A – 1.8 miles (5 percent) adjacent to an existing transmission corridor;
- Alternative 5B – 1.8 miles (4 percent) adjacent to an existing transmission corridor;
- Alternative 5C – 100 percent adjacent to an existing transmission corridor;
- Alternative 5D – 1.3 miles (7 percent) adjacent to an existing transmission corridor; and
- Alternative 5E – 100 percent adjacent to an existing transmission corridor (Note: this alternative would be located adjacent to an existing 345-kV line and would, therefore, not be consistent with the 1,500-foot separation criteria established for the Project [see Section 1.3.3.3]).

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Segment 5 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Pocatello, Monument, and Cassia RMPs and the Malad MFP (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table 2.2-1.

Malad RMP

The Proposed Route for Segment 5, as well as Alternative 5A, would require that the Malad MFP be amended to allow the Project as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for about 4.3 miles in the Deep Creek area.

The Proposed Route for Segment 5, as well as Alternatives 5A and 5B, as currently designed do not conform to a land use stipulation found in the Malad MFP. The Malad MFP states the following:

Future major utilities will be routed across public lands within the corridor systems as located.

However, the Proposed Route and Alternatives 5A and 5B would be constructed in areas outside of the corridor systems that are identified in the MFP; therefore, the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the Malad MFP, or the MFP would need to be amended. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to

be constructed outside of identified corridor system under the Proposed Route or Alternatives 5A and 5B (see Appendix F). Allowing this Project to be constructed outside of the “identified corridor system” on lands managed by the Malad MFP could potentially create a new “corridor system,” which may make it more likely that additional lines would be routed in this area.

No amendments related to Segment 5 have been identified for the Pocatello, Monument, or Cassia RMPs (those directly related to land use/recreation, or otherwise). Amendments have, however, been proposed for the Cassia RMP for Segment 7 (Table 2.2-1).

Plan Amendment Summary

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to VRM classes to more developed classifications has the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationalists using the affected areas and would, in some cases, afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in more detail within Section 3.2 – Visual Resources and Appendix G.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, more than half of the Proposed Route for Segment 5 would cross rangeland (62 percent), with the remainder of the route crossing cropland (21 percent), forest (14 percent), and water and wetlands (1 percent). Alternatives 5A through 5E range from approximately 7 miles shorter than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route to 19 miles longer (Table 3.17-19).

The two Route Alternatives that are longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Alternatives 5A and 5B) are located south of the Proposed Route to avoid crossing the Deep Creek Mountains. Both Alternatives 5A and 5B would cross more miles of rangeland and dryland farming than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 5C extends to the north and east of the Proposed Route and would cross approximately 12.4 miles of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation (as discussed above). This alternative is approximately 7 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross approximately 1.7 fewer miles of rangeland and about 6 miles less forestland.

Alternatives 5D and 5E are shorter than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route and primarily would cross fewer miles of rangeland. Alternative 5D would also cross approximately 1.3 miles of cropland.

Dryland farming occurs mostly west of the Deep Creek Mountains. Irrigated cropland is scattered along the Analysis Area. Forestland within the Analysis Area is mainly concentrated in the Deep Creek Mountains. Residential development within the Analysis Area is limited to scattered rural residences.

Table 3.17-19. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 5

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Total Length	54.6	34.0	11.5	7.9	0.5	0.5	0.1	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternatives 5A and 5B	25.3	14.5	4.5	6.1	0.1	–	–	–
Alternative 5A	33.7	21.5	7.1	5.0	0.1	0.1	–	–
Alternative 5B	44.4	27.7	13.5	2.9	0.1	0.2	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 5C	33.2	20.5	4.5	7.8	0.2	0.1	–	–
Alternative 5C	26.1	18.7	5.2	1.9	0.2	0.1	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 5D	19.4	13.2	3.6	1.8	0.4	0.3	0.1	–
Alternative 5D	17.5	7.9	5.0	3.7	0.6	0.1	0.2	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 5E	5.8	2.3	3.0	–	0.3	0.1	0.1	–
Alternative 5E	5.3	1.3	2.3	–	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.2

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

The Proposed Route for Segment 5 would pass within 1,000 feet of 22 residences; 2 of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline. Eight of the houses within 1,000 feet are part of a subdivision located on the west side of I-86, near the existing Borah Substation (Table 3.17-20).

Table 3.17-20. Number of Residences within 1,000 feet and 300 feet – Segment 5

Proposed Route/ Alternative	Within 1,000 Feet			Within 300 Feet		
	Proposed Route/ Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference	Proposed Route/ Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference
Proposed Route	22	NA	NA	2	NA	NA
5A	3	4	-1	4	3	1
5B	4	4	–	4	3	1
5C	–	–	–	–	–	–
5D	24	10	14	2	–	2
5E	2	10	-8	–	–	–

NA – not applicable

Alternatives 5A and 5B would pass within 1,000 feet of 3 and 4 residences, respectively, versus 4 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. However, unlike the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, one residence would be located within 300 feet of the ROW centerline for Alternative 5A, and two are within 300 feet of the ROW centerline for Alternative 5B. There are no residences within 1,000 feet of Alternative

5C. Alternative 5D would pass within 1,000 feet of 24 residences, 14 more residences than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; 2 of these residences are within 300 feet of the proposed centerline for Alternative 5D. Alternative 5E would pass within 1,000 feet of 2 residences versus 10 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; none of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed centerline for Alternative 5E (Table 3.17-20).

Commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses crossed or within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are itemized by milepost in Table D.17-1 in Appendix D and summarized below. The Proposed Route would pass within 1,000 feet of the Arbon Elementary School, a commercial building, three barns, a pipeline, Marys Mine Access Area, and a substation.

Alternatives 5A and 5B would both pass within 1,000 feet of the Hawkins Dam and Reservoir, and the Hawkins Dam Recreation Site. Alternative 5A would also pass within 1,000 feet of the Arbon Cemetery. There are no commercial, industrial, or institutional land uses within 1,000 feet of Alternative 5C.

Alternative 5D would pass within 1,000 feet of a borrow pit and a substation. The alternative is also near but would not affect a recreational access site on the East Fork of Rock Creek. Alternative 5E would be located within 1,000 feet of a barn and a commercial building.

Power County requested that a combination of Alternatives 5C and 5E be considered as the preferred route to the Borah Substation. Alternative 5E would proceed due west parallel and adjacent to existing transmission lines for approximately 4.2 miles, crossing irrigated cropland and the Snake River in this interval. As noted above, this Route Alternative would be adjacent to existing 230- and 345-kV transmission lines (Figure 3.17-8).

Alternative 5E would pass within 1,000 feet of fewer residences than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (3 versus 11) and would cross 0.6 mile less of irrigated cropland. There are no residences within 300 feet of the proposed centerline for Alternative 5E or the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-20).

As noted above, the ROW for this alternative, as proposed by Power County, would be located immediately adjacent to an existing 345-kV line (with a tower-to-tower distance of less than 200 feet) and would, therefore, not be consistent with the 1,500-foot separation criteria established for the Project (see Section 1.3.3.3). An exception does exist in the WECC criterion that allows the last five spans approaching a substation to be closer to existing lines. For Gateway West this would be up to 1.5 miles; however, the length of Alternative 5E would be approximately 4.2 miles and would, therefore, not be consistent with this exception.

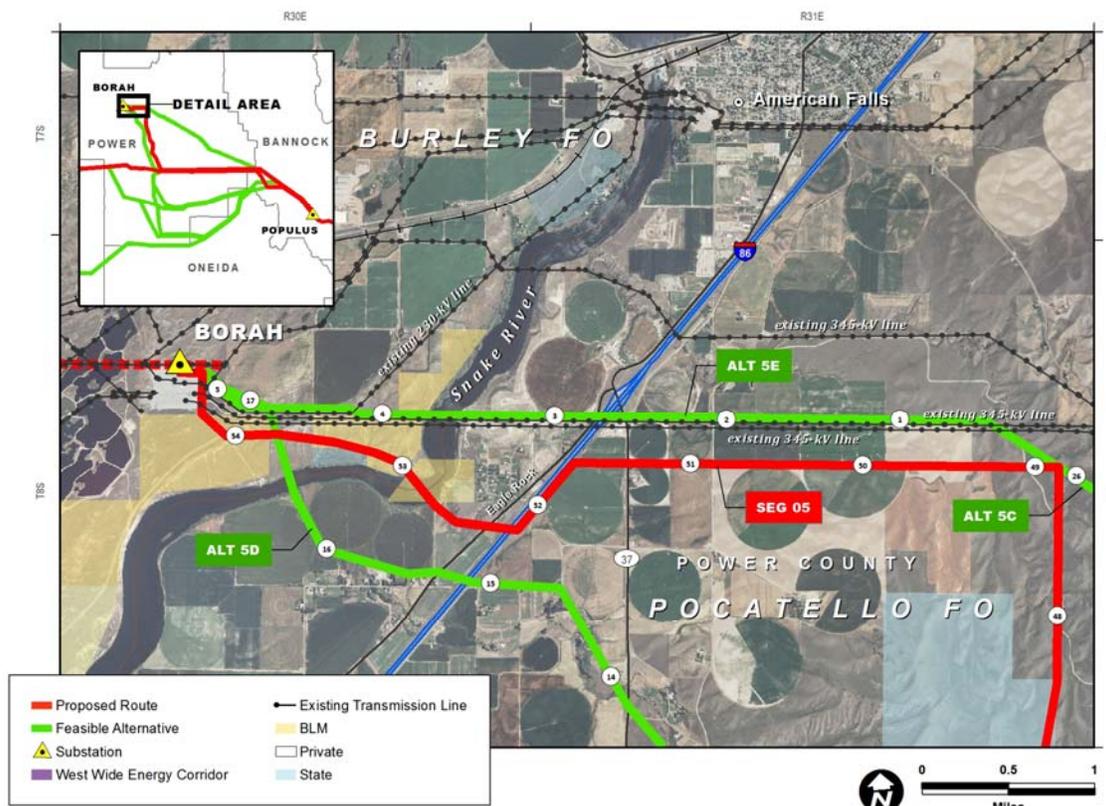


Figure 3.17-8. Power County – Alternative 5E

Special Management Areas

Federal lands along Segment 5 are regulated in part by the Pocatello and Cassia RMPs, and the Malad MFP. The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 5 would not cross any SMAs identified in these plans.

Wilderness Characteristics

As noted earlier, no areas with wilderness characteristic are affected in this segment.

Historic Trails

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 5 would cross the Oregon NHT and the North Alternate Oregon NHT (see Table 3.3-13 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 2.2 miles of public land closed to OHV use and 2.3 miles where OHV use is limited. The Proposed Route would cross one trail closed to OHV use and there would be one additional trail crossing due to new road construction. In open areas (the majority of the route) it would be difficult to physically close these access points to unauthorized OHV use. OHV use on nonmotorized trails would disrupt existing uses, such as hiking and horseback, and may result in adverse effects to trails not designed maintained for motorized use. The Proponents would post signs

identifying the area as closed to OHV use and implement blocking measures where practical.

Alternative 5A would be 8.4 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but it would not cross any areas closed to OHV use or where OHV use is limited (compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, which would cross 2.4 miles closed to OHV use). Alternative 5A and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would both cross one trail closed to OHV use. New roads associated with both routes would cross one additional trail closed to OHV use. Over all, there would be less opportunity for unauthorized OHV use, and less potential disruption of existing uses under Alternative 5A.

Alternative 5B would be 19.1 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would not cross any areas closed to OHV use or where OHV use is limited (compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, which would cross 2.4 miles closed to OHV use). Alternative 5B and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would both cross one trail closed to OHV use. Alternative 5B would cross one additional trail due to new road construction, compared to two trails for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. There would be less opportunity for unauthorized OHV use in areas closed to OHVs under Alternative 5B but a greater risk for unauthorized use of trails closed to OHV use.

Alternative 5C would be 7.1 miles shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 5C would follow an existing transmission line; therefore, there would be no additional effects on areas closed to OHV use. The comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross 2.2 miles of land closed to OHV use. Therefore, Alternative 5C would have a lower potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas closed to OHVs. There would be no additional trail crossings under Alternative 5C or the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, Alternative 5C would have less effect on OHV use.

Alternative 5D would be 1.9 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 1.2 miles less area where OHV use is limited while the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would not cross any areas where OHV use is limited. Alternative 5D would not cross any areas closed to OHV access while the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross 2.2 miles closed to OHV use. This would result in a lower potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited or not allowed. There would be no additional trail crossings for Alternative 5D or for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, Alternative 5D would have less effect on OHV use.

Alternative 5E would be 0.5 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and it would cross 1.0 mile less area where OHV access is limited. This would result in a lower potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited. There would be no additional trail crossings for Alternative 5D or for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. All of Alternative 5E would follow existing transmission lines, as does over 91 percent of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Therefore, there would be little difference in terms of OHV use between these two alternatives.

Segment 7

Segment 7, as proposed, would link the Populus and Cedar Hill Substations with a 118.1-mile single-circuit 500-kV line. Forty-two acres of the expansion of the Populus and the construction of the Cedar Hill Substations and 1 acre for two regeneration sites are attributed to Segment 7. In addition to the Proposed Route, which is principally on private lands, Route Alternatives have been proposed by the BLM to avoid the Deep Creek Mountains (7A and 7B; which are 3 miles and 11 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route), by local landowners (7C, 7D, 7E, 7F, and 7G, which all represent minor adjustments proposed to address local issues), by local landowners to avoid private agricultural lands and create a corridor for multiple proposed transmission lines (7I or the State Line Route, which is 55 miles longer than the Proposed Route and would require 0.5 acre for an additional regeneration site), and by the Proponents to avoid the State Line Route (7H, which is 10 miles longer than the Proposed Route). Alternative 7J, which is a variant of the State Line Route also proposed by local landowners, would not terminate at the Cedar Hill Substation. This alternative, referred to as the Rogerson Alternative, would require a different substation be constructed near a 345-kV existing transmission line (approximately 24 miles southwest of the Cedar Hill Substation; see Appendix A, Figure A-9). The tables and discussion in this document compare 7J (202 miles) with the corresponding portion of Segment 7/9 (118.1 miles of Segment 7 and 25.8 miles of Segment 9, for a total of 143.9 miles). All other Segment 7 alternatives are compared to Segment 7 of the Proposed Route (118.1 miles) only.

Land Ownership

Almost three quarters (73 percent) or 85.7 miles of the Proposed Route for Segment 7 would cross private lands, with the remainder of the route crossing BLM-managed (28.1 miles) and state (4.3 miles) land (Table 3.17-21). Alternatives 7A and 7B would be 2.8 miles and 11.3 miles longer, respectively, than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Both routes would cross 3.8 miles less of state land than the Proposed Route and more miles of private land (Table 3.17-21). Alternatives 7C through 7G range from 0.1 mile to 0.7 mile longer than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route and cross similar totals of miles by land ownership.

Alternative 7H is approximately 9.4 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross approximately 21.2 fewer miles of private lands, and 18.5 miles more BLM-managed land, as well as 11.4 miles of the Sawtooth NF (Table 3.17-21).

Alternative 7I is approximately 55.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, almost half (47 percent) as long again. This alternative would cross approximately 20.4 fewer miles of private lands than the Proposed Route, but substantially more miles (44.3 miles) of BLM-managed land. Alternative 7I would also cross 27.7 miles of the Sawtooth NF that would not be crossed by the Proposed Alternative, as well as 3.6 more miles of state land (Table 3.17-21).

Although Alternative 7I has been routed to avoid private agricultural lands, despite being 55 miles longer than the Proposed Route and crossing almost four times as much Federal land (100.1 miles versus 28.1 miles, respectively), it still would cross 65.3 miles of private land, just 20.4 miles less than the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-21). Alternative 7H would cross slightly fewer miles of private land than Alternative 7I (64.5

miles versus 65.3 miles), and substantially fewer miles of public lands, 63 miles versus 108 miles, a difference of 45 miles (Table 3.17-21).

Table 3.17-21. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 7

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	118.1	28.1	–	–	4.3	85.7
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternatives 7A,B	35.2	7.0	–	–	3.8	24.4
Alternative 7A	38.0	7.2	–	–	–	30.7
Alternative 7B	46.4	7.7	–	–	–	38.7
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7C	20.1	9.1	–	–	–	11.0
Alternative 7C	20.3	7.2	–	–	1.0	12.0
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7D	6.2	1.7	–	–	0.5	4.0
Alternative 7D	6.8	0.1	–	–	1.0	5.7
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7E	3.8	0.3	–	–	–	3.5
Alternative 7E	4.5	1.9	–	–	–	2.6
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7F	10.5	1.3	–	–	–	9.2
Alternative 7F	10.8	4.4	–	–	–	6.4
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7G	3.1	2.4	–	–	–	0.8
Alternative 7G	3.2	1.8	–	–	–	1.4
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternatives 7H and 7I	118.1	28.1	–	–	4.3	85.7
Alternative 7H	127.5	46.6	11.4	–	5.0	64.5
Alternative 7I	173.4	72.5	27.7	–	7.9	65.3
Proposed – Comparison Portion 7/9 for Alternative 7J ^{1/}	143.9	48.1	–	–	4.3	91.6
Alternative 7J	202.1	87.9	13.0	–	8.9	92.4

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

^{1/} Alternative 7J connects with Segment 9 approximately 25.8 miles west of the proposed Cedar Hill Substation, which is the western terminus of Segment 7 and the beginning point for Segment 9. The table above compares 7J (202 miles) with the corresponding portion of Segment 7/9 (118.1 miles of Segment 7 and 25.8 miles of Segment 9, for a total of 143.9 miles). All other Segment 7 alternatives are compared to Segment 7 of the Proposed Route (118.1 miles) only.

Note that Alternative 7I has also been routed to avoid mapped roadless areas on the Sawtooth NF. This alternative would cross into Nevada just east of the eastern Sawtooth NF boundary, follow just south of the state line, and then cross back into Idaho just west of the western boundary of the Sawtooth NF.

Alternative 7J is approximately 58.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. It would cross substantial lengths of BLM and NFS-managed lands, while the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would avoid much of the BLM-managed lands and all of the NFS lands.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

Most of the Proposed Route along Segment 7 between Populus and Cedar Hill Substations does not follow existing corridors and construction of a transmission line would, therefore, result in the development of a new utility corridor. The Proposed Route would be co-located with existing transmission lines for about 16.5 miles (14 percent of its length). The Proposed Route would be within the WWE corridor for 0.5 mile, within the projected WWE corridor for 0.9 mile, and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 0.9 mile.

In addition, the Proposed Route would cross through an MA 11 area, as designated by the Cassia RMP. The Cassia RMP limits new ROWs in MA 11 to areas adjacent to existing facilities. This limitation in the plan requires a plan amendment for Gateway West in order for Segment 7 to be consistent with it; therefore, a plan amendment has been proposed (as discussed below in the Federal Land Use Plans section).

Alternatives 7A through 7F do not follow existing transmission lines, nor do they occur within or near the WWE corridor. Alternatives 7G and 7H would follow existing transmission lines and the WWE corridor for a combined total of 17 and 12 percent of their respective routes. Alternative 7I would be co-located with existing transmission lines for about 30 miles (17 percent), within the WWE corridor for 8.3 miles, within the projected WWE corridor for 3.3 miles, and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 9.1 miles. Alternative 7J would be co-located with existing transmission lines for about 41.6 miles (21 percent), within the WWE corridor for 19.7 miles, within the projected WWE corridor for 13.1 miles, and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 11.4 miles (see Table 2.4-2).

Alternatives 7I and 7J are Cassia County's proposal to provide for a corridor for Gateway West and other transmission lines that might be proposed in the future. Assessment of alternatives has determined that there would be serious environmental impacts for just one transmission line such as the Gateway West Project. Additional transmission lines in this corridor would have a substantial adverse effect on the same resources. Finally, of the transmission lines currently identified, none have apparent plans to extend in the direction set by Alternative 7I.

Accommodating one or more extra high-voltage transmission line along the same path as Gateway West may not be reasonable. The establishment of the alignment is a very site-specific exercise to avoid areas where impacts might occur. In doing so, the alignment attempts to make the best use of topography and to go around features such as sage-grouse leks and uses such as irrigated fields. A second future transmission line would presumably go through the same siting process but would unlikely be able to take advantage of the locations occupied by the first line. Important resources avoided in establishing the alignment for Alternatives 7I and 7J that may not be able to be avoided by a future line include roadless areas, sage-grouse leks, rugged terrain, and irrigated cropland.

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Segment 7 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Pocatello, Cassia, and Wells RMPs, and the Malad and Twin Falls MFPs (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table 2.2-1. Some portions of the Project located along Segment 7 would not conform to land use stipulations found in the Cassia and Wells RMPs and the Malad and Twin Falls MFPs, as discussed below.

Cassia RMP

The Project, as currently designed along Segment 7, would not conform to two land use stipulations found in the Cassia RMP. The Cassia RMP management direction for MA 11 is as follows:

Limit rights-of-way (ROWs) to existing facilities/localities.

The Proposed Route along Segment 7 would cross through MA 11. As currently designed, this route would not conform to the Cassia RMP stipulations, because the Project would not be constructed within “existing facilities/localities.” Therefore, the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the Cassia RMP or the RMP would need to be amended. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed outside of “existing facilities/localities” (see Appendix F-1). Allowing this Project to be constructed outside of “existing facilities/localities” on lands managed by the Cassia RMP could potentially create new areas where additional lines could be routed in the future, because the Project would become an “existing facility” following construction.

Alternatives 7E, 7H, 7I, and 7J would all require that the Cassia RMP be amended to allow the reclassification of certain VRM Class II areas to VRM Class III. Alternative 7E would require the reclassification of approximately 39 acres in the Spring Canyon area. Alternative 7H would require the reclassification of approximately 122 acres and 806 acres in the Jim Sage and Cottonwood Creek areas, respectively. Alternatives 7I and 7J would require the reclassification of the area in the vicinity of 0.1 mile of the proposed Project crossing the Goose Creek Travel Zone, and would also require that the plan be amended to allow the Project as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for about 0.2 mile, also in the Goose Creek Travel Zone area.

Wells RMP

The Project as currently designed along Alternatives 7I and 7J would not conform to a land use stipulation found in the Wells RMP. The Wells RMP states the following:

Locate new facilities in identified planning corridors.

Alternatives 7I and 7J would cross through lands managed by the Wells RMP, but would not be constructed within areas identified in the RMP as “planning corridors.” Therefore, Alternatives 7I and 7J do not conform to the Wells RMP and the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the Wells RMP or the RMP would need to be amended. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed outside of the Wells RMP “planning corridors” along Alternatives 7I and 7J, if either of these alternatives is selected (see Appendix F). The land crossed by Alternatives 7I and 7J that is managed by the Wells RMP is also classified as VRM Class II. A high-voltage transmission line would not conform to the management goals for VRM Class II, and thus an amendment would be needed. The proposed amendment would permit the Project as a one-time visually altering action without changing the VRM classification. Allowing this Project to be constructed outside of the “identified planning corridors” is not likely to create new areas where additional lines could be routed in the future, unless the final amendment is worded such that it designates the Project’s ROW as part of the planning corridor. Permitting the Project without changing the VRM classification would retain the more restrictive management guidelines; however, the presence of the Project could affect future visual inventories classification determinations for the area.

Twin Falls RMP

The Project as currently designed along Alternatives 7I and 7J would not conform to a land use stipulation found in the Twin Falls MFP. The Twin Falls MFP states the following:

L-4.1 Allow future major power transmission lines (line of at least 46-138RV which originate and terminate outside of the MFP area) to be constructed within the recommended corridors. Also allow construction of transmission lines between the corridors. Do not permit power lines to the west or the east of the two corridors. Exempt service lines from restriction.

Alternatives 7I and 7J, as well as the Proposed Route along Segment 9 and Alternative 9A, would cross through lands managed by the Twin Falls MFP, but would not be constructed in areas identified by the RMP as “recommended corridors.” Therefore, these routes are not conform to the Twin Falls MFP, and the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the Twin Falls MFP or the MFP would need to be amended. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed outside of the Twin Falls MFP’s “recommended corridors” along Alternatives 7I and 7J, as well as the Proposed Route for Segment 9 and Alternative 9A, if one or more of these routes are selected (see Appendix F). As discussed above, allowing this Project to be constructed outside of the “recommended corridors” is not likely to create new areas where additional lines could be routed in the future, unless the final amendment is worded such that it designates the Project’s ROW as part of the recommended corridors.

Alternatives 7I and 7J would also require that the Twin Falls MFP be amended to allow the reclassification of 70 acres of VRM Class II to VRM Class III in the Rock Creek area.

Malad MFP

The Proposed Route for Segment 7 would require that the Malad MFP be amended to allow the Project as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM class for about 4.3 miles in the Deep Creek area.

The Proposed Route for Segment 7 and Alternatives 7A and 7B would also be inconsistent with the following stipulation in the Malad MFP:

Future major utilities will be routed across public lands within the corridor systems as located.

The Proposed Route and Alternatives 7A and 7B would be constructed in areas outside of the corridor systems that are identified in the MFP. Therefore, the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the Malad MFP, or the MFP would need to be amended. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed outside of identified corridor system under the Proposed Route or Alternatives 7A and 7B (see Appendix F). Allowing this Project to be constructed outside of “identified corridor system” on lands managed by the Malad MFP could potentially create a new “corridor system,” which could allow additional lines to be routed in this area.

Sawtooth NF Revised Forest Plan

The Project would also be inconsistent with a Forest Service Forest Plan along portions of Segment 7. Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J, as currently designed, are not consistent with a land use stipulation found in the Sawtooth Forest Plan, which states:

All projects and activities should maintain or enhance the adopted ROS classes as displayed on the Forest ROS strategy maps. New road construction should not occur within the summer Primitive and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized areas. Facilities identified as being necessary should blend with the surrounding landscape character and the ROS setting.

Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J would cross Modification and Partial Retention VQOs within the Sawtooth NF. This would not be consistent with the management direction for scenic environment found in the Sawtooth Forest Plan, which states:

All projects shall be designed to meet the adopted VQOs as displayed on the Forest VQO map. Portions of Alternative Segments are currently designated as Partial Retention. There should be minimal distraction from scenic quality in the foreground from road construction, reconstruction, and other excavation management. Roads and other excavation may be visible in the middleground and background landscapes, but should blend into the characteristic landscape of the surroundings. Portions of Alternative Segments are also currently designated as Modification. Management activities may dominate the characteristic landscape but must use naturally established form, line, color, and texture. They should appear as a natural occurrence when viewed as middleground.

Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J are coincident for the first 57 miles of their alignment. At MP 37.9, the routes enter the Sublett portion of the Sawtooth NF, turning to the southwest. This results in the alternatives crossing approximately 4.0 miles of NFS land managed as VQO Modification. The presence of the proposed transmission line in these landscapes would not meet the designated VQOs. As a result, Forest Service action would be necessary to modify the visual classification or approve a one-time allowance to be consistent with the Forest Plan.

Alternative 7H enters the narrowest portion of the Albion Division of the Sawtooth NF. At this point, the route is within Cold Spring Creek Valley between Cache Peak to the south and Mt. Harrison to the north, the two highest peaks within the Albion Mountain Range. As a result, the alternative crosses 2.9 miles of land managed as VQO Partial Retention and 1.5 miles in land with a VQO of Modification. The presence of the transmission line in these landscapes would not meet the designated VQOs. As a result, Forest Service action would be necessary to modify the visual classification or approve a one-time allowance to be consistent with the Forest Plan.

Alternatives 7I and 7J share the same alignment until MP 137.3, at which point 7J continues in a northwest direction, while 7I proceeds north, through the Sawtooth NF. The joint route is partially located in Elko County, Nevada, staying just south of the Cassia Division of the Sawtooth NF. It then turns north-northwest at MP 129.5, passing in and out of the western edge of the NF for a total distance of approximately 18 miles.

As a result, Alternative 7I crosses 0.8 mile of land managed as VQO Partial Retention and 5.2 miles in VQO Modification. Alternative 7J crosses 0.1 mile of land managed as VQO Partial Retention and 2.2 miles of land managed as VQO Modification. The presence of the transmission line in these landscapes would not meet the designated visual resource management objectives. As a result, Forest Service action would be necessary to modify the visual classification or approve a one-time exemption to be consistent with the Forest Plan.

Alternative 7H would cross about 7 miles of NFS lands allocated to the RN ROS class, 4.1 miles allocated to Roaded Modified, and 0.2 mile allocated to SPM (note that these are summer allocations). In the winter, the areas crossed by Alternative 7H are entirely allocated to SPM use, because existing roads are closed. An estimated 11.5 miles of new access road would be required along the portion of Alternative 7H that would cross the Sawtooth NF. Because this is not consistent with the Sawtooth Forest Plan, a plan amendment would be required (if this route is selected and approved) that would convert current ROS classification to a type that can accommodate the Project's development. Land that is currently allocated to SPM and within 0.5 mile of a new road or the proposed Project's ROW would be converted to RN if the proposed plan amendment is adopted (see Appendix F). This would result in 1,234 acres on the Sawtooth NF changing from SPM to RN during the summer. Alternatives 7I and 7J would also require a plan amendment (if one of these alternatives is selected), which would result in 8,465 acres and 2,613 acres, respectively, on the Sawtooth NF changing from SPM to RN during the summer.

Alternative 7I crosses two divisions of the Sawtooth NF—the Sublett and Cassia Divisions—for a total distance of 27.7 miles and passes within 0.5 mile of the northern boundary of the Black Pine Division. Alternatives 7H and 7I share the same alignment where they cross the Sublett Division and pass within 0.5 mile of the Black Pine Division. An estimated 30.5 miles of new road would be required along the majority of the portion of Alternative 7I that crosses the Sawtooth NF, with an estimated 53.2 miles of existing road on the Sawtooth NF requiring improvement. The transmission line and associated new roads construction for Alternative 7I would result in 8,465 acres on the Sawtooth NF changing from SPM to RN during the summer.

Alternative 7J crosses the Sublett and Cassia Divisions of the Sawtooth NF for a total distance of 14.9 miles, and shares the same route as Alternative 7I in these areas (with Alternative 7I crossing an additional 12.8 miles). An estimated 17.5 miles of new road would be required on the Sawtooth NF to build Alternative 7J, with an additional 20.8 miles of existing road on the Sawtooth NF requiring improvement. The transmission line and associated new road construction for Alternative 7J would result in 2,613 acres on the Sawtooth NF changing from SPM to RN during the summer.

Plan Amendment Summary

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to ROS settings, VQOs, or VRM classes to more developed classifications have the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationists using the affected areas and would, in some cases, afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially

affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in more detail within Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, more than half of the Proposed Route for Segment 7 would cross rangeland (58 percent), with the remainder of the route crossing cropland (37 percent), and forest (4 percent). The irrigated cropland crossed by the Proposed Route (approximately 15.7 miles) occurs predominantly south of Burley and at scattered locations east and west of the Deep Creek Mountains.

Alternatives 7A through 7J range from less than 1 mile longer to approximately 58 miles longer than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-22).

Table 3.17-22. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 7

Segment/Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Total Length	117.4	68.0	43.6	4.6	0.3	0.5	0.4	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7A,B	35.1	19.9	10.4	4.6	0.1	–	–	–
Alternative 7A	36.0	22.5	7.5	5.1	0.6	0.2	–	–
Alternative 7B	46.4	30.1	13.5	2.6	–	0.3	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7C	20.1	11.9	8.1	–	–	–	–	–
Alternative 7C	20.3	15.2	4.8	–	–	–	0.2	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7D	6.2	5.3	0.8	–	0.1	0.1	–	–
Alternative 7D	6.8	5.6	1.0	–	0.1	0.1	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7E	3.8	3.6	0.2	–	–	–	–	–
Alternative 7E	4.5	4.5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7F	10.5	8.3	2.1	–	–	–	0.1	–
Alternative 7F	10.8	8.8	2.0	–	–	–	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7G	3.1	2.7	0.4	–	–	–	–	–
Alternative 7G	3.2	2.5	0.7	–	–	–	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 7H and 7I	117.4	68.0	43.6	4.6	0.3	0.5	0.4	–
Alternative 7H	126.8	98.4	14.2	8.0	4.8	1.3	–	0.1
Alternative 7I	172.7	142.9	13.3	9.9	5.8	0.6	–	0.2
Proposed – Comparison Portion 7/9 for Alternative 7J1/	143.9	91.0	46.4	4.6	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.2
Alternative 7J	202.1	177.1	13.6	9.3	1.4	0.7	–	<0.1

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

1/ Alternative 7J connects with Segment 9 approximately 25.8 miles west of the proposed Cedar Hill Substation, which is the western terminus of Segment 7 and the beginning point for Segment 9. The table above compares 7J (202 miles) with the corresponding portion of Segment 7/9 (118.1 miles of Segment 7 and 25.8 miles of Segment 9, for a total of 143.9 miles). All other Segment 7 alternatives are compared to Segment 7 of the Proposed Route (118.1 miles) only.

Alternatives 7A and 7B would extend to the south of the Proposed Route to avoid the Deep Creek Mountains. Both alternatives are longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and cross more miles of rangeland. Alternative 7A would also cross about 1 mile more of irrigated cropland and 4 miles less of dryland farming. Alternative 7B would cross approximately 3 miles more of dryland farming than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and about 2 miles less forest. Alternative 7C is almost the same length as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but would cross about 3 miles more rangeland and about 2 miles and 1.5 miles less, respectively, of dryland farming and irrigated cropland.

Alternatives 7D through 7G are each almost the same length as their respective comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross roughly the same miles of different land uses.

Alternative 7H is approximately 126.8 miles long, about 9.5 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. As noted above, this alternative was proposed by the Proponents in response to the State Line Route (Alternative 7I, see below) proposed by local landowners. Alternative 7H would cross approximately 29 fewer miles of agricultural land (18.6 miles of dryland farming; 10.8 miles of irrigated cropland) than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This alternative would cross about 30 more miles of rangeland and 3.4 more miles of forest than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 7I is approximately 172.7 miles long, about 55 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. As noted above, this alternative was proposed by local landowners to avoid private agricultural lands and would cross approximately 30 fewer miles of cropland (18.6 miles of dryland farming; 11.8 miles of irrigated cropland) than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This alternative would, however, cross about 75 more miles of rangeland and 5 more miles of forest than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 7J is approximately 202.1 miles long, about 58 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. It would cross about 87.1 miles more rangeland than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but 32.8 fewer miles of agricultural lands.

The Proposed Route for Segment 7 would pass within 1,000 feet of 21 residences; 6 of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline (Table 3.17-23). Seven of the houses within 1,000 feet are clustered on the east side of State Route 77, north of Albion, Idaho.

Alternatives 7A and 7B would each pass within 1,000 feet of three residences versus two for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; the proposed ROW centerlines for Alternative 7B and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route both pass within 300 feet of one residence.

Table 3.17-23. Number of Residences within 1,000 feet and 300 feet – Segment 7

Proposed Route / Alternative	Within 1,000 Feet			Within 300 Feet		
	Proposed Route / Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference	Proposed Route / Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference
Proposed Route	21	NA	NA	6	NA	NA
7A	3	2	1	–	1	-1
7B	3	2	1	1	1	–
7C	2	–	2	–	–	–
7D	–	–	–	–	–	–
7E	4	7	-3	1	1	–
7F	–	7	-7	–	1	-1
7G	1	1	–	–	1	-1
7H	6	21	-15	1	6	-5
7I	5	21	-16	2	6	-4
7J	5	23	-18	2	7	-5

NA – not applicable

Alternative 7C would pass within 1,000 feet of two residences versus none for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; neither of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline for Alternative 7C. There are no residences within 1,000 feet of Alternative 7D or the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 7E would pass within 1,000 feet of four residences versus seven for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; the proposed ROW centerlines for Alternative 7E and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route both pass within 300 feet of one residence. There are no residences within 1,000 feet of Alternative 7F versus seven for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, one of which would be located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline. Alternative 7G and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would each pass within 1,000 feet of one residence; the residence for Alternative 7G would be within 300 feet of proposed ROW centerline (Table 3.17-23).

Alternatives 7H and 7I would pass within 1,000 feet of 6 and 5 residences, respectively, versus 21 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; 1 and 2 of the residences for Alternatives 7H and 7I, respectively, would be within 300 feet, versus 6 residences within 300 feet of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-23).

Alternative 7J would pass within 1,000 feet of 5 residences versus 23 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; 2 of these residences would be within 300 feet, versus 7 residences within 300 feet of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-23).

Commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses crossed or within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are itemized by milepost in Table D.17-1 in Appendix D and summarized below. The Proposed Route would cross a CAFO (see

Section 3.18 – Agriculture) and an MTR (see below) and would pass within 1,000 feet of many center pivots and the Bower Cemetery. Alternatives 7G and 7H would also pass within 1,000 feet of the Bower Cemetery.

Alternatives 7A and 7B would each pass within 1,000 feet of one farm. Alternative 7C would pass within 1,000 feet of a center-pivot and a CAFO. Alternative 7D would cross 0.3 mile of a wind energy facility and pass within 1,000 feet of a center pivot.

Alternative 7H, would pass within 1,000 feet of a silo, a warehouse, a gravel pit, an active mining claim, and the Bower Cemetery. Alternative 7I would pass within 1,000 feet of a silo, a warehouse, a water tank, a gravel pit, an unidentified structure, and a center-pivot. Alternative 7J would pass within 1,000 feet of a silo, warehouse, and a center-pivot.

The Proposed Route and Alternative 7H would both cross MTR 302, at MPs 58 and 66, respectively, and Alternatives 7I and 7J would parallel MTR 302 between MPs 65 and 98. Consultation with the IDANG (Postema 2010) indicates that, in general, there is an approximate height restriction of 100 feet AGL. However, higher structures can be accommodated along these routes, if marked on charts so that pilots are alerted to their presence. There should be no impact on the MTRs from the transmission line. The Proponents have not reported any plans to coordinate with the IDANG; therefore, the Agencies recommend that once the final location of towers is known, the Proponents should consult with the IDANG to ensure that the proper information is made available for warnings.

- LU-7 Once the final locations of towers where crossings of the MTR would occur are known, IDANG should be consulted to ensure that the proper information is made available for proper warnings.

The Proposed Route would cross the planned Dry Creek Sky Ranches airstrip (Figure 3.17-9). According to the owner, the location of the runway is approved by the FAA and will be marked on the FAA Sectional as an unrestricted public use facility. A helipad is also planned, which would be located approximately 2,000 feet south of the Proposed Route. The Agencies recommend that the Proponents coordinate with the owner to realign the transmission line or airstrip or in some way compensate for loss of use if the airstrip receives local approvals for construction.

- LU-8 Coordinate with the owner of the planned Dry Creek Sky Ranches airstrip to realign the Segment 7 Proposed Route or airstrip or in some way compensate for loss of use.

Special Management Areas

Federal lands along Segment 7 are regulated in part by the Caribou Forest Plan; the Pocatello, Malad, Cassia, and Wells RMPs; and the Twin Falls MFP. The Proposed Route for Segment 7 would not cross any SMAs identified in these plans. Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J would, however, cross 12.1 miles, 25.5 miles, and 25.5 miles respectively, of the Raft River-Curlew Valley IBA. The Proposed Route and other alternatives for Segment 7 would not cross this IBA.

Wilderness Characteristics

Inventory Unit ID-B-18A contains approximately 31,062 acres of BLM-managed land identified as having wilderness characteristics. The northern edge of the area would be crossed by Alternative 7H. Based on indicative engineering, the transmission line would closely follow the northern boundary of the inventory unit. If this route is approved and constructed, it would have little effect on the size of the unit or on the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Construction activities would disrupt users seeking solitude in the northern portion of the unit in the short term.

Inventory Unit ID-B-22A contains approximately 5,442 acres of BLM-managed land assumed to have wilderness characteristics pending field inventory. Alternative 7H crosses through the northeastern quarter of the inventory unit. If this route is approved and constructed as planned, the area northeast of the new transmission line and access roads would be dropped. Although opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation may still be present in the western portion of the unit due to the rugged topography, the unit would no longer be large enough to qualify as an area with wilderness characteristics. Construction activities would disrupt users seeking solitude in the northern portion of the unit in the short term.

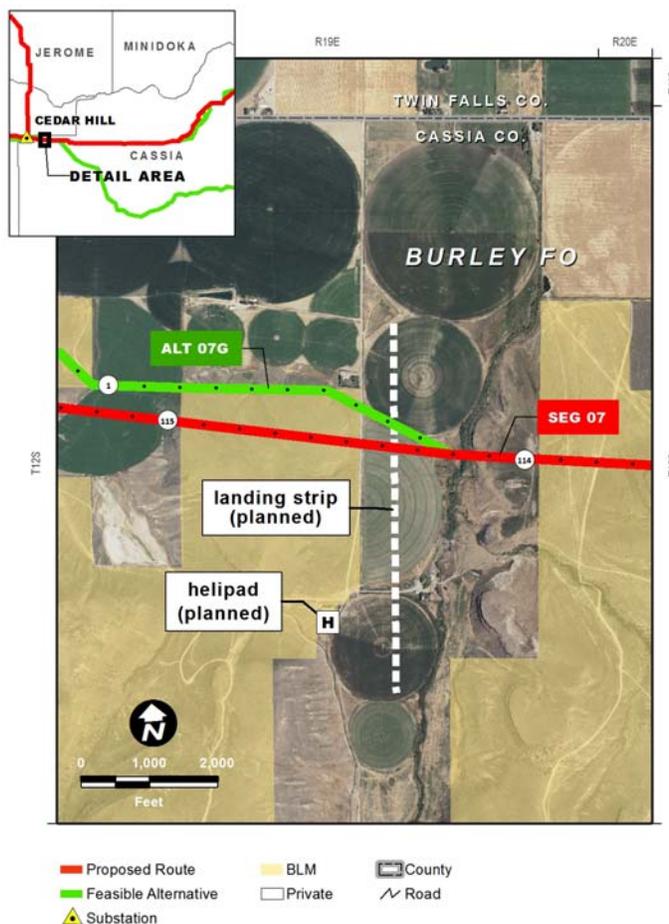


Figure 3.17-9. Dry Creek Sky Ranches Planned Airstrip

Historic Trails

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 7 would cross a number of NHTs and other trails that have potential historic significance (see Table 3.3-14 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). These include the Oregon NHT, California NHT–Hudspeth Cutoff, and Kelton Road. Alternative 7I and 7J would also cross the California NHT – Salt Lake Alternate. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 3.1 miles of public land closed to OHV use and 3.9 miles where OHV use is limited. The Proposed Route would cross three trails closed to OHV use and there would be two additional trail crossings due to new road

construction. In open areas (the majority of the route), it would be difficult to physically close these access points to unauthorized OHV use. OHV use on nonmotorized trails would disrupt existing uses, such as hiking and horseback riding, and may result in adverse effects to trails not designed or maintained for motorized use. The Proponents would post signs identifying the area as closed to OHV use and implement blocking measures where practical.

Alternative 7A would be 2.8 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but it would not cross any areas closed to OHV use or where OHV use is limited (compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, which would cross 2.3 miles closed to OHV use). Alternative 7A would cross one trail closed to OHV use, and new road construction associated with Alternative 7A would cross one additional trail. The comparison portion of the Proposed Route would not cross any trails closed to OHV use. Overall, there would be less opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs but more opportunity for unauthorized access to trails closed to OHV use.

Alternative 7B would be 11.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but would not cross any areas closed to OHV use or where OHV use is limited (compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, which would cross 2.3 miles closed to OHV use). Alternative 7B would cross one trail closed to OHV use, the same as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New road construction associated with Alternative 7B would cross two additional trails, one more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, there would be the less opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs, but more opportunity for unauthorized access to trails closed to OHV use and a greater potential disruption of existing uses on these trails.

Alternative 7C would be 0.2 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would cross 0.7 miles closed to OHV use more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 7B would cross one trail closed to OHV use, the same as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. New road construction associated with Alternative 7C would cross one additional trail, one more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, there would be a greater opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs and for unauthorized access to trails closed to OHV use and potential disruption of existing uses on these trails under Alternative 7C,

Alternative 7D would be 0.6 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but would cross 1.6 miles less area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 7D would cross one trail closed to OHV use and there would be one additional trail crossing due to new road construction. This would be the same as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; therefore, there would be no difference in the risk of unauthorized use on trails closed to OHVs and less potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited under Alternative 7D.

Alternative 7E would be 0.7 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would cross 1.6 miles where OHV use is limited more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This would result in a greater potential for unauthorized

OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited. There would be no additional trail crossings for Alternative 7E or for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; therefore, there would be no additional opportunity for unauthorized use on trails closed to OHVs or potential disruption of existing uses on these trails.

Alternative 7F would be 0.3 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but would cross 3.1 miles more where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This would result in a greater potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited. There would be no additional trail crossings for Alternative 7F or for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; therefore, there would be no additional opportunity for unauthorized use on trails closed to OHVs or potential disruption of existing uses on these trails.

Alternative 7G would be approximately the same length as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, and neither route would cross areas closed to OHVs or where OHV use is limited. There would be no additional trail crossings for Alternative 7G or for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route; therefore, there would be no additional opportunity for unauthorized use on trails closed to OHVs or potential disruption of existing uses on these trails under either alternative.

Alternative 7H would be 9.4 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, and would cross 8.4 miles more area closed to OHV use and 16.4 miles more area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This would result in a much greater potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited or not allowed.

Alternative 7I would be 55.3 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, and would cross 26.7 miles more area closed to OHV use and 24.3 miles more area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This would result in a much greater potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited or not allowed.

Alternative 7J would be about 58.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, and would cross 11.8 miles more area closed to OHV use and 19.3 miles more area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This would result in a much greater potential for unauthorized OHV use in areas where OHV access is limited or not allowed.

Segment 8

Segment 8, as proposed, would link the Midpoint and Hemingway Substations. This 131-mile single-circuit 500-kV transmission line would stay north of the Snake River until crossing through the SRBOP parallel to an existing 500-kV transmission line before ending at the Hemingway Substation. Thirteen acres of the expansion of the Midpoint Substation and 0.5 acre for a regeneration site are attributed to Segment 8. There are five Route Alternatives: 8A, which follows the WWE corridor but crosses the Snake River and I-84 twice (while the Proposed Route would stay north of this area); 8B and 8C, which represent the old routes originally proposed by the Proponents but that have now been changed to avoid the cities of Kuna and Mayfield, respectively; 8D, which represents a small revision involving a rebuild of the existing transmission line to move

both away from the National Guard Maneuver Area; and 8E, which was proposed by the BLM in order to avoid crossing the Halverson Bar nonmotorized portion of the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Historical Area (see Appendix A, Figure A-10).

Land Ownership

Almost two-thirds (65 percent) or 84.5 miles of the Proposed Route for Segment 8 would cross BLM-managed land, with the remainder crossing private (33.5 miles), state (9.3 miles), and Bureau of Reclamation (3.7 miles) land (Table 3.17-24). Alternatives 8A, 8C, and 8D range from 0.1 mile shorter to 2.2 miles longer than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route and would cross similar totals of miles by land ownership. Alternative 8B is 0.5 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 24.5 more miles of private land and 25.7 fewer miles of BLM-managed land (Table 3.17-24). Alternative 8E would be about 11.5 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross more BLM-managed lands and slightly less private land.

Table 3.17-24. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 8

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other^{1/}	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	131.0	84.5	–	3.7	9.3	33.5
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8A	51.4	29.1	–	–	2.3	20.0
Alternative 8A	53.6	25.1	–	–	6.3	22.1
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8B	45.3	39.9	–	2.7	–	2.7
Alternative 8B	45.8	14.2	–	1.5	2.8	27.2
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8C	6.5	5.5	–	–	–	0.8
Alternative 8C	6.4	2.3	–	–	0.3	3.9
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8D	6.9	6.9	–	–	–	–
Alternative 8D	8.1	2.9	–	–	1.0	4.2
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8E	7.0	6.4	–	0.1	–	0.4
Alternative 8E	18.5	18.0	–	0.1	–	0.3

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

1/ The “Other” miles crossed by the Proposed Route and some of the Route Alternatives are Bureau of Reclamation lands.

Approximately 6 miles of Alternative 8B would cross land that is part of the city of Kuna, and zoned and identified in the City’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan for future residential and commercial development (City of Kuna 2009b). The comparison portion of the Proposed Route would avoid this and other current and planned development that would be affected by Alternative 8B by crossing the SRBOP.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

The Proposed Route is adjacent to existing transmission corridors for 114.5 miles (87 percent of its length). For most of its length, this route would follow the WWE corridor except at the north end where there are no existing designated corridors across

the SRBOP. Over 18 miles of the 131-mile-long Segment 8 Proposed Route (14.4 percent of its total length) is within the WWE corridor, 19.3 miles (15 percent) is within the projected WWE corridor, and 4.7 miles (4 percent) is adjacent to the WWE corridor (Table 2.4-2).

Alternative 8A is adjacent to existing transmission corridors for 38.3 miles (72 percent) of its total 53.6 miles. The alternative is within the WWE corridor for 18.9 miles (35 percent of its total length), within the projected WWE corridor for 10.7 miles (20 percent), and is adjacent to the WWE corridor for 9.3 miles (17 percent). The Jarbidge RMP restricts the location of new utilities in MUA 7. The alternative would cross a part of an existing wind farm that the Proponents would avoid during final design.

Alternative 8B is adjacent to existing transmission corridor for 17.1 miles (38 percent) of its total 45.8 miles. The alternative is within or adjacent to the WWE corridor for less than 3 miles.

Alternative 8C is adjacent to existing transmission corridors for 5.5 miles (86 percent) of its total length of 6.4 miles. For this alternative 1.9 miles (29 percent of its total length) is within the WWE corridor, 2.5 miles (39 percent) is within the projected WWE corridor, and 0.5 mile (8 percent) is adjacent to the projected WWE corridor.

Approximately 86 percent of Alternative 8D is adjacent to existing transmission corridors. There is no WWE corridor in this area.

About 11.3 miles of Alternative 8E (61.1 percent of its total length) would be located adjacent to existing transmission line corridors. There is no WWE corridor in this area.

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Segment 8 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Monument, Jarbidge, SRBOP, and Owyhee RMPs and the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills, and Kuna MFPs (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table 2.2-1. No plan amendments to the Monument or Owyhee RMPs have been proposed.

Jarbidge RMP

The Proposed Route for Segment 8 would require that the Jarbidge RMP be amended to allow the reclassification of approximately 5,200 acres of VRM I to VRM III in the vicinity of the Oregon Trail. Alternative 8A would require a similar amendment to the Jarbidge RMP to allow the reclassification of approximately 2,800 acres of VRM Class I to VRM Class III in the vicinity of the Oregon NHT.

SRBOP RMP

The Project as currently designed along Segments 8 and 9 would not conform to a land use stipulation and a recreation stipulation found in the SRBOP RMP. These stipulations are as follows:

Restrict major utility developments to the two utility corridors identified. (see Lands Map 3 in the SRBOP RMP)

This SRMA (Snake River SRMA) consists of 22,300 acres in the Snake River Canyon downstream from Grandview, Idaho that is managed for the protection of cultural and scenic values. (2.14 Recreation 2-20).

Close the following areas to motorized vehicles:

- *Halverson Bar – 1,150 acres*

The Proposed Route along Segment 8, as well as Alternatives 8D and 8E, would cross through areas managed under the SRBOP RMP and would be constructed in areas outside of the two utility corridors identified within this RMP. Therefore, these alternatives would not conform to the SRBOP RMP stipulation regarding utility corridors and the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the SRBOP RMP, or the RMP would need to be amended. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed outside of the two utility corridors defined in the SRBOP RMP along Segments 8 and 9, as well as Alternatives 8D, 9D, and 9E, if these alternatives are selected (see Appendices F and G). Allowing this Project to be constructed outside of the utility corridors identified within the RMP is not likely to create new areas where additional lines could be routed in the future, unless the final amendment is worded such that it identifies the Project's ROW as a viable utility corridor for future lines.

The Proposed Route along Segment 8 would cross through the Halverson Bar area, which is designated as a non-motorized area. Therefore, this route would not conform to the SRBOP RMP stipulation regarding the Halverson Bar area, and the Project would either need to be altered so that conforms to the SRBOP RMP, or the RMP would need to be amended for this route to be approved. An amendment would be needed to allow the Project to be constructed within this non-motorized area; however, the Boise District BLM Office has stated that the RMP could not be amended in this way to meet objectives. Alternative 8E would avoid this area.

The Proposed Route along Segment 8 would cross the Snake River SRMA managed under the SRBOP RMP. Because a transmission line does not conform to the SRMA designation, an amendment would be required to allow the Project to cross and would result in a reduction of the total acreage by removing the area crossed by the Project from the SRMA designation. The proposed amendment would reduce the size of the Snake River SRMA by 6,400 acres. This could impact the purpose and goals of the SRMA due to the visual disturbance of a utility line, as well as reducing the overall size of the SRMA.

The Proposed Route along Segment 8 as well as Alternative 8E would cross through a ROW avoidance area designated by the SRBOP RMP to protect the visual corridor along the Oregon NHT and the resources along the Snake River canyon. Therefore, these routes would not conform to the SRBOP RMP regarding this ROW avoidance area, and the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the SRBOP, or the RMP would need to be amended for this route to be approved. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed within this ROW avoidance area.

Approval of the proposed amendments to the SRBOP RMP would result in approximately 653 acres changing from an ROS of SPM to RN as a result of the

transmission line and new road construction under Alternatives 8B and 8E. The majority of the SRBOB is currently allocated to the RN ROS class.

Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP

The Proposed Route for Segment 8 would require that the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP be amended to allow the reclassification of approximately 3,000 acres of VRM Class II to VRM Class III in the Burnt Ridge area to the north of the Proposed Route.

Kuna MFP

The Project, as currently designed along Segment 8, would not conform to a land use stipulation found in the Kuna MFP. The Kuna MFP states the following:

Confine major new utility R/Ws (i.e., 500KV or larger or 24-inch pipeline) to existing corridors. The R/Ws will subject to reasonable stipulations to protect other resource uses.

The Proposed Route along Segment 8, as well as Alternatives 8B, 8C, and 8D, would cross through areas managed under Kuna MFP and would be constructed in areas outside of existing corridors. Therefore, these routes would not conform to the Kuna MFP. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed outside of “existing corridors” along Segment 8, as well as Alternatives 8B, 8C, and 8D if these alternatives are selected (see Appendix F). Allowing this Project to be constructed outside of “existing corridors” on lands managed by the Cassia RMP could potentially create new areas where additional lines could be routed in the future, as the Project would become an “existing corridor” following construction.

Plan Amendment Summary

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to VRM classes to more developed classifications have the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationists using the affected areas and would, in some cases, afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in more detail within Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, the majority of Proposed Route for Segment 8 would cross rangeland (89 percent), with the remainder of the route crossing cropland (9 percent), and water and wetlands (1 percent). Alternatives 8A through 8E range from less than 1 mile shorter to approximately 11.5 miles longer than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-25).

Table 3.17-25. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 8

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Total Length	131.0	116.9	12.0	–	1.0	0.8	–	0.3
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8A	51.4	39.5	11.2	–	0.3	0.4	–	–
Alternative 8A	53.6	40.2	11.7	–	0.6	0.3	0.7	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8B	45.3	44.1	0.4	–	0.2	0.3	–	0.2
Alternative 8B	45.8	29.9	11.7	–	0.4	2.6	0.4	0.8
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8C	6.5	6.4	–	–	–	0.1	–	–
Alternative 8C	6.4	6.3	–	–	–	0.1	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8D	6.9	6.9	–	–	–	–	–	–
Alternative 8D	8.1	6.6	1.4	–	–	–	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 8E	7.0	6.3	0.4	–	0.1	0.04	–	–
Alternative 8E	18.5	18.2	–	–	0.1	0.1	–	–

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

Alternative 8A is approximately 53.6 miles long and extends to the south of the eastern portion of the Proposed Route. This alternative generally would follow the WWE corridor but would cross the Snake River and I-84 twice. Alternative 8A is about 2.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross very similar miles of different land uses.

Alternative 8B is approximately 45.8 miles, about 0.5 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This route, originally identified by the Proponents as the Proposed Route, would cross approximately 14 fewer miles of rangeland and about 11 miles more of cropland, mostly irrigated.

Alternatives 8C and 8D, 6.4 miles and 8.1 miles long, respectively, are very similar in total length to their respective comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross roughly the same miles of different land uses.

Alternative 8E would be approximately 18.5 miles long, about 11.5 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 8E and the comparison portion

of the Proposed Route both primarily cross rangeland; approximately 18.2 miles or 98 percent of Alternative 8E crosses rangeland.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 8 pass within 1,000 feet of more residences than the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for any of the other segments. The Proposed Route would pass within 1,000 feet of 27 residences; 6 of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline (Table 3.17-26). Eight of the residences within 1,000 feet are between MPs 130.4 and 130.7 where the Proposed Route approaches the Hemingway Substation.

Table 3.17-26. Number of Residences within 1,000 feet and 300 feet – Segment 8

Proposed Route / Alternative	Within 1,000 Feet			Within 300 Feet		
	Proposed Route / Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference	Proposed Route / Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference
Proposed Route	27	NA	NA	6	NA	NA
8A	46	14	32	7	3	4
8B	55	12	43	24	2	22
8C	1	–	1	–	–	–
8D	1	–	1	1	–	1
8E	–	–	–	–	–	–

NA – not applicable

The two longer Route Alternatives, Alternatives 8A and 8B, would both pass within 1,000 feet of substantially more residences than the Proposed Route. Alternative 8A would pass within 1,000 feet of 46 residences versus 14 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. The majority of these residences, approximately 30, are located north of the city of Hagerman near where Alternative 8A would cross U.S. Highway 30. Seven of the residences within 1,000 feet of Alternative 8A are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline versus 3 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. No residences are located near Alternative 8E or the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-26).

Alternative 8B would pass within 1,000 feet of 56 residences versus 12 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. These residences are clustered in the vicinities of Mora, Kuna, and Melba, and at the approach to the Hemingway Substation. Twenty-four of the residences within 1,000 feet of Alternative 8B are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline versus 2 for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-26).

Alternatives 8C and 8D each pass within 1,000 feet of one residence versus none for the respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-26).

Commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses crossed or within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are itemized by milepost in Table D.17-1 in Appendix D and summarized below.

The Proposed Route for Segment 8 would cross approximately 0.5 mile of a wind energy facility and the Wilson Creek Sanitary Landfill, and pass within 1,000 feet of five

center-pivots, two CAFOs, a gravel pit, and four other structures. Potential impacts to agricultural operations are addressed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture.

The Proposed Route would also cross approximately 9.2 miles of the IDANG Orchard Training Area. Consultation with the IDANG indicates their preference for the line to avoid a portion of the “Alpha” Maneuver Sector, Orchard Training Area (see Alternative 8D below). The IDANG has indicated that the presence of additional power lines would adversely affect existing ground maneuver and aerial combat training operations within the Orchard Training Area (Kelly 2011). The IDANG has also indicated that the Proposed Route would adversely affect approximately 3,500 acres of lands in the northern portion of the Orchard Training Area by limiting or restricting training near the proposed transmission line. This would adversely affect their ability to train personnel. In addition, this impact would constitute a permanent loss of lands within the Orchard Training Area, due to the Major Land Acquisition Moratorium established in 1990 by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, which constrains the DoD Agencies from acquiring new land.

Alternative 8A would cross approximately 0.3 mile of the Glenns Ferry Landfill and pass within 1,000 feet of two center-pivot agricultural fields, a CAFO, an animal pen, the Billingsley Creek Wildlife Management Area, a fish farm, and a wind farm.

Alternative 8B would pass close to a planned development near Mayfield in Elmore County, Idaho. Alternative 8B also would cross approximately 6 miles of the city of Kuna in Ada County, as well as 3 miles of its city impact area. Part of the area within the Kuna city limits that would be crossed was recently annexed to include the proposed Osprey Ridge development and other smaller proposed developments (City of Kuna 2009b). The area that would be crossed by Alternative 8B is currently largely agricultural land use, with existing commercial and residential development mainly limited to farms and rural residences (Figure 3.17-10). The City has, however, installed sewer lines in this area and modified its treatment plan to accommodate future development (Hasson 2010). The City of Kuna approved a Comprehensive Plan update in September 2009 that identified the proposed Osprey Ridge development area as Mixed Use General, which is defined as a zoning classification that “pertains to a land parcel or combination of parcels that are planned and developed together” (City of Kuna 2009b).

The City of Kuna has indicated that if Alternative 8B were part of the selected route the City would require the following items as part of its land use permitting process: an amendment of the City’s recently approved comprehensive plan; “special use permit; design review, possible rezone; special studies; variance procedure; amendment to sewer, water, pressure irrigation and transportation plans; and road permits” (Hasson 2010).

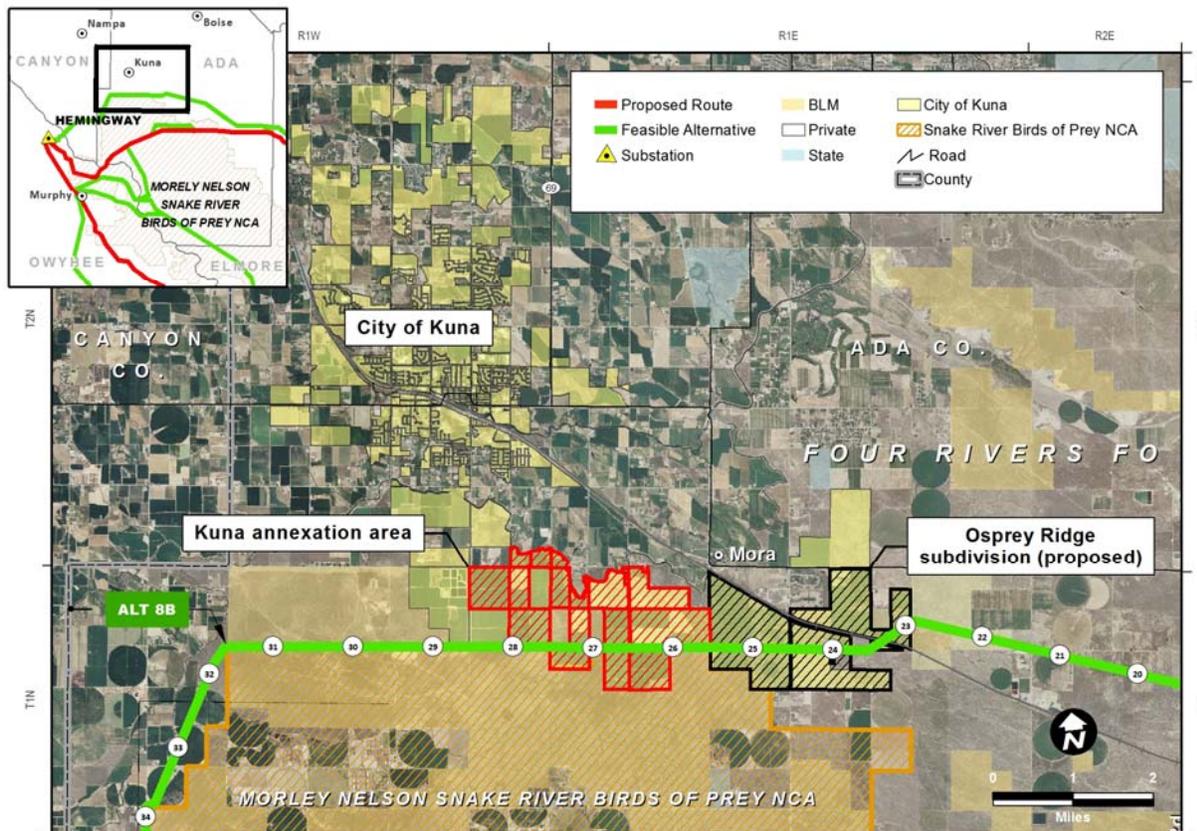


Figure 3.17-10. Alternative 8B – Vicinity of Kuna

Alternative 8B also runs along 2 miles of the northern edge of the city impact area for the city of Melba in Canyon County. This alternative would also cross approximately 0.1 mile and 0.3 mile of two residential subdivisions (Colombani Estates and Sagebrush Ridge Estates), respectively, within Ada County, Idaho (Table D.17-1). These two subdivisions are not located within an incorporated town or city; the closest city to these subdivisions is Melba, located in Canyon County. This alternative also would cross a short section of the SRBOP that is in the process of being acquired by BLM and pass within 1,000 feet of two animal pens, two CAFOs, a commercial building, two gravel pits, a silo, a warehouse, and six outbuildings.

Alternative 8B (45.8 miles) was originally identified by the Proponents as their proposed route. However, the communities of Kuna and Melba expressed strong opposition to this route when it was proposed. The City of Kuna and a number of private landowners in Kuna and Melba commissioned a study of the effects of the then-proposed route on these communities (ECS 2009). This study contends that this route (now Alternative 8B) would adversely affect the planned Osprey Ridge development and would also impact an adjacent 600-acre tract of land owned by the City of Kuna. The referenced City of Kuna land is identified in the 2009 City Future Land Use Map as agricultural with a “City Interest” overlay, which the ECS study identifies as sewer and waste water treatment, with future park and recreational development also envisioned (ECS 2009).

Much of the 6 miles of proposed transmission line that would cross the City of Kuna parallels an existing road, Barker Road.

The ECS study contends that this route (now Alternative 8B) would affect long-term growth potential in Kuna and Melba by altering the comprehensive planning process for Kuna that was ongoing when ECS prepared its study, “resulting in:

- Requiring the possible relocation of essential public services such as fire and police stations;
- Altering infrastructure such as roads and their placement;
- Rerouting the City’s traffic circulation;
- Impairing utility services such as sewer and water by requiring the City’s wastewater, water and stormwater management plans to be modified;
- Affecting the desirability and therefore the value of residential property; and
- Degrading view-sheds in Kuna and Melba including but not limited to the Kuna Butte and the McElroy Butte, Powers Butte and Hat Butte near Melba as well as the views in the Snake River canyon” (ECS 2009: 4).

Although not stated, it appears that the first four points pertain specifically to development in the recently annexed part of Kuna, while the last two points are more general and meant to apply to both Kuna and Melba. It is important to note that the impacts identified in the first four bullets apply to public services, infrastructure, and utility services that, for the most part, do not yet exist. Construction of the proposed transmission line through the planned Osprey Ridge development, and along the south boundary of the 600-acre parcel owned by the City of Kuna, could have implications for the location of future infrastructure and public utilities, but would not require that existing facilities be relocated.

Construction of the proposed transmission line along Alternative 8B could affect future development plans in the planned Osprey Ridge development and other areas identified as part of the city impact areas for Kuna and Melba, as could many other factors, including housing market trends and the availability of development capital. The presence of a transmission line corridor could discourage some development in the immediate vicinity, but high-voltage transmission lines coexist with residential and other types of development in cities, suburbs, and rural subdivisions, throughout the United States, with many examples of commercial and residential development abutting the transmission line ROW. Potential impacts to property values and visual impacts are addressed in Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics and Section 3.2 – Visual Resources, respectively.

The ECS study also contends that Alternative 8B would “considerably impair Kuna’s and Melba’s economic development opportunities by diminishing potential revenue from property taxes, building permits, and utility fees” from future planned developments like Osprey Ridge. These concerns are addressed in Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics.

In a separate comment, the City of Kuna expressed concern that construction of the proposed transmission line along Alternative 8B could negatively affect the ability of the Osprey Ridge development to provide the public amenities required by the applicable

City of Kuna zoning classification (Planned Unit Development). Kuna believes this could occur if a portion of Osprey Ridge property was “severed” by the proposed transmission line corridor in a way that affected the developers’ ability to benefit from potential economies of scale that would facilitate the provision of public amenities. While this could potentially occur, the concept of “severance damage”, whereby the presence of a transmission line potentially diminishes the utility of a portion of property by severing this area from the remaining property, is more generally applicable to properties smaller than large scale planned developments like Osprey Ridge (see Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics).

Alternative 8C would cross the Mayfield Springs planned community and Regina Heights. BLM has identified the need for the transmission line to be realigned in the vicinity of the planned Mayfield Springs community to substantially reduce impact to the planned development if Alternative 8C is selected.

- LU-9 Alternative 8C along Segment 8 should be realigned in the vicinity of the Mayfield Springs subdivision during final design to reduce impact on the planned Mayfield Springs community.

Alternative 8D would accommodate the IDANG concerns that the “Alpha” Maneuver Sector, Orchard Training Area be avoided. This 8.1-mile alternative begins at the east boundary of the Alpha Maneuver Sector. At this point, the transmission line would be located in the existing Summer Lake to Midpoint 500-kV ROW or on new structures if the existing ones are not adequate to support the proposed conductor. The existing circuits would be relocated to a parallel 4.7-mile-long segment offset 1,500 feet to the north to maintain the reliability separation distance. This alternative would avoid the Alpha Maneuver Sector but would still be within the SRBOP. Figure 3.17-11 shows the location of Alternative 8D, the Proposed Route, and the training area. While the realignment proposed as Alternative 8D appears feasible, it would cause more construction disturbance than the Proposed Route. A detailed study would be required in conjunction with the IDANG to ensure selection of the least impacting alternative and one that does not compromise the training area’s mission.

- LU-10 Consult with the IDANG to determine if the Segment 8 Proposed Route can be sited in such a way as to not compromise the training mission in the Alpha Maneuver Sector of the Orchard Training Area, thereby avoiding relocation of the existing transmission line if possible.

Alternative 8E would not pass within 1,000 feet of any identified structures; however, see the discussion in the “Special Management Areas” section below regarding special designated areas crossed by Alternative 8E.

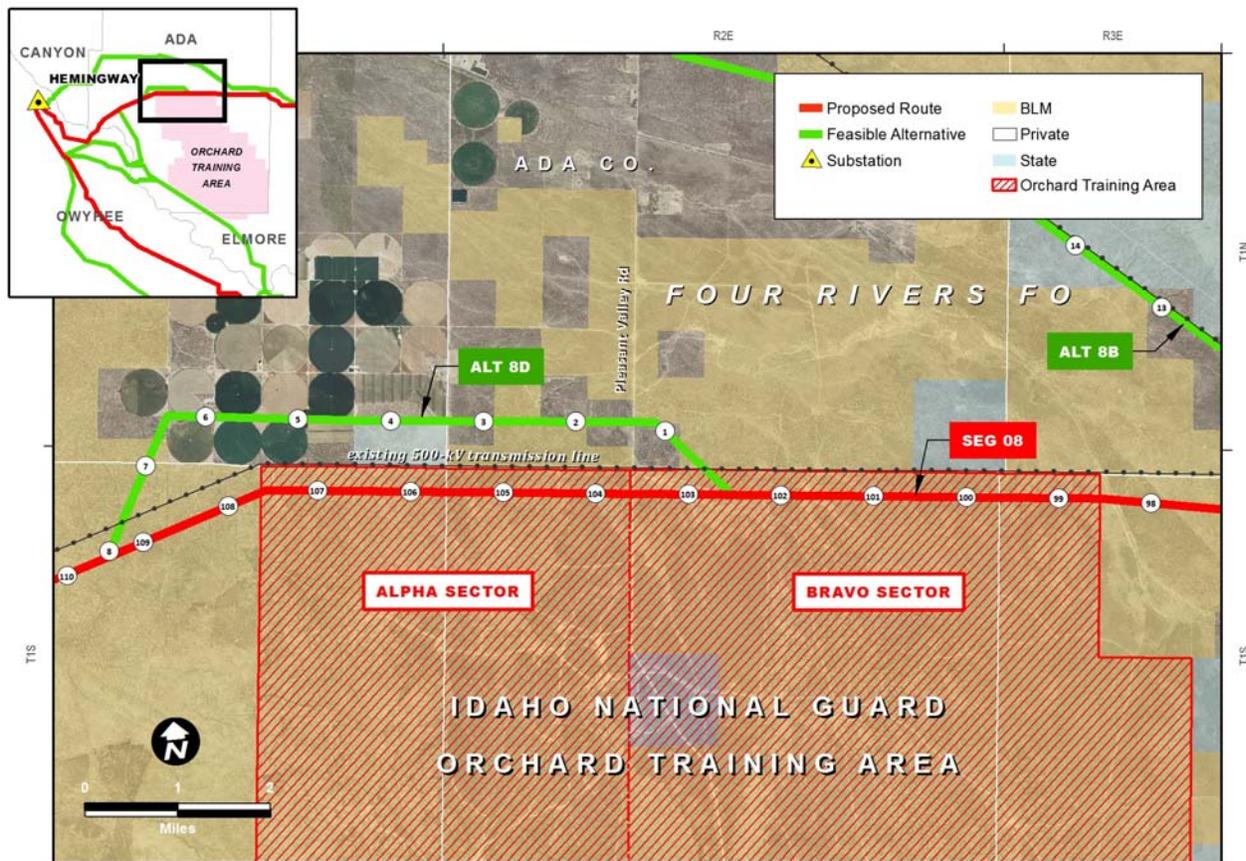


Figure 3.17-11. Orchard Training Area – Proposed Route and Route Alternatives

Special Management Areas

Federal lands along Segment 8 are regulated in part by the Monument, Jarbidge, SRBOP, and Owyhee RMPs, as well as the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills and Kuna MFPs.

The Proposed Route for Segment 8 would cross approximately 29.8 miles of the SRBOP and three SRMAs managed under the SRBOP RMP: the Oregon NHT, Owyhee Front, and Snake River Canyon SRMAs (Table 3.17-27). Alternative 8B does

Table 3.17-27. Special Management Areas Crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 8

Proposed or Alternative Name ^{1/}	Segment Length (Miles)	Management Area	Miles Crossed
Proposed – Total Length	131.0	SRBOP	29.8
		Oregon NHT SRMA	0.2
		Owyhee Front SRMA	2.8
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	2.1
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	5.3
		Guffey Butte/Black Butte Archaeological District	3.2
		Black Mountain HMA	7.0
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 8A	51.4	none	NA
Alternative 8A	53.6	Oregon NHT SRMA	1.5

Table 3.17-27. Special Management Areas Crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 8 (continued)

Proposed or Alternative Name ^{1/}	Segment Length (Miles)	Management Area	Miles Crossed
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 8B	45.3	SRBOP	29.8
		Oregon NHT SRMA	0.2
		Owyhee Front SRMA	2.8
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	2.1
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	5.3
		Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District	3.2
		Black Mountain HMA	7.0
Alternative 8B	45.8	none	NA
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 8C	6.5	none	NA
Alternative 8C	6.4	none	NA
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 8D	6.9	SRBOP	6.9
Alternative 8D	8.1	SRBOP	7.9
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 8E	7.0	SRBOP	7.0
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	2.6
		Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District	3.2
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	2.1
Alternative 8E	18.5	SRBOP	18.5
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	8.3
		Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District	3.5
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	1.4

1/ Alternative routes are only included in this table if the comparison portion of the Proposed Route or the Route Alternative would cross a species designated management area.

NA – not applicable; HMA – Herd Management Area

not cross the SRBOP. Alternative 8D would cross approximately 1 mile more of the SRBOP than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, while Alternative 8E would cross about 11.5 miles more (Table 3.17-27).

The Proposed Route for Segment 8 would cross approximately 0.2 mile of the Oregon NHT SRMA, 2.1 miles of the Owyhee Front SRMA, and 2.1 miles of the Snake River Canyon SRMA, as well as 5.3 miles of the SRBOP ROW avoidance area (Table 3.17-27). Alternative 8A would cross an additional 1.5 miles of the Oregon NHT SRMA. Alternative 8B would not cross the SRBOP and would, therefore, avoid crossing all three SRMAs and the ROW avoidance area. Alternative 8E would cross an additional 5.7 miles of the SRBOP ROW avoidance area but 0.7 mile less of the River Canyon SRMA (Table 3.17-27).

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 3.2 miles of the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District and 7 miles of the Black Mountain HMA. Alternative 8B would avoid crossing this district and HMA, while Alternative 8E would cross about 0.3 mile more of this area than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-27).

Wilderness Characteristics

As noted earlier, no areas with wilderness characteristic are affected in this segment.

Historic Trails

The Proposed Route along Segment 8 and route alternatives to this segment would cross a number of NHTs and other trails such as stage and wagon roads that have potential historic significance. These include the Oregon NHT, the Oregon NHT South Alternate, the Northside Alternate Oregon NHT, the North Alternate Oregon NHT, Kelton Road, Dorsey's Road, and the Boise City-Silver City Road. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 34.6 miles of public land where OHV use is limited. Segment 8 of the Proposed Route would cross approximately 0.8 mile of Halverson Bora (public land) immediately north of the Snake River that is closed to all motorized vehicles. The Proposed Route would result in five trail crossings and there would be five additional trail crossings due to new road construction. Over 90 percent of the Proposed Route would follow existing transmission lines; therefore, there would be little effect on OHV access.

- LU-11 Consult with the BLM to determine how best to construct and maintain the Proposed Route transmission line through the area closed to motorized vehicles along the Snake River to ensure no impacts to existing natural, cultural, and historic resources.

Alternative 8A would be 2.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 1.1 miles of land closed to OHV use and 3.3 miles where OHV use is limited. The comparison portion of the Proposed Route would not cross any areas closed to OHV use or where use is limited. Alternative 8A would cross three trails closed to OHV use, one more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. There would be two additional trail crossings due to new road construction, the same as for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Approximately 76 percent of Alternative 8A and 95 percent of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would follow existing transmission lines. Overall, there would be a somewhat greater risk of unauthorized OHV under Alternative 8A.

Alternative 8B would be 0.5 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but would cross 24.9 miles more land where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 8B would cross one trail closed to OHV use, the same as the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. There would be one additional trail crossing due to new road construction, compared to no trail crossings for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. In addition, 81 percent of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would follow existing transmission lines, compared to about 31 percent under Alternative 8B; therefore, Alternative 8B would have a greater risk for adverse effects due to increased OHV access.

Alternative 8C would be 0.1 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Neither Alternative 8C nor the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross areas closed to OHV use or where OHV use is limited. Alternative 8C would not result in any additional trail crossing, nor would the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. All of Alternative 8C would follow existing transmission lines, compared to 46

percent of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, there would be little effect on unauthorized OHV use under either alternative.

Alternative 8D would be 1.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route but would cross 3.5 miles less area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 8D would not result in any additional trail crossings due to new road construction, nor would the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Nearly 86 percent of Alternative 8D would follow existing transmission lines, as would all of the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, there would be little difference in the risk of unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs or the potential for disruption of existing uses on trails closed to OHV use.

Alternative 8E would be 11.5 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 11.7 miles more area where OHV use is limited. Alternative 8E would not result in any additional trail crossings due to new road construction, nor would the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. About 61 percent of Alternative 8E would follow existing transmission lines. Because of the longer length and the additional crossing of areas where OHV use is limited, Alternative 8E would generally have a greater risk for adverse effects due to increased OHV access than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Segment 9

Segment 9, as proposed, would link the Cedar Hill and Hemingway Substations with a 161.7 mile single-circuit 500-kV transmission line which skirts the Jarbidge and Owyhee Military Operating Areas to the north, then follows the WWE corridor just north of the Saylor Creek Air Force Range, passing through Owyhee County before entering into the Hemingway Substation. Fifteen acres of the construction of the Cedar Hill Substation and 1 acre for two regeneration sites are attributed to Segment 9. There are eight Route Alternatives proposed, including 9A, which was the Proponents' Proposed Route until moving to avoid the Hollister area; 9B, which is being considered by the BLM because it follows the WWE corridor and parallels existing utility corridors; 9C, which was the Proponents' Proposed Route until moving to avoid the Castleford area; and 9D and 9E, proposed by the Owyhee County Task Force, that cross more public lands north and south of the Proposed Route, respectively, than the Proposed Route. Most of Alternative 9D would be within the SRBOP. Alternatives 9F, 9G, and 9H were proposed to avoid crossing the nonmotorized area south of C.J. Strike Reservoir. Alternatives 9G and 9H provide an alternate route location south of Alternative 8E (see Appendix A, Figure A-11).

Land Ownership

The majority (80 percent) of the Proposed Route for Segment 9, approximately 128.7 miles, would cross BLM-managed lands, with the remainder crossing private (28.4 miles) and state (4.6 miles) lands (Table 3.17-28). Alternative 9A is 0.1 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross similar totals of miles by land ownership. Alternatives 9B and 9C would be approximately 3.8 miles and 0.6 mile longer than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route and

Table 3.17-28. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 9

Segment/Alternative	Total	BLM	NFS	Other	State	Private
Proposed – Total Length	161.7	128.7	–	–	4.6	28.4
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 9A	7.8	6.0	–	–	–	1.8
Alternative 9A	7.7	5.6	–	–	–	2.1
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 9B	49.5	46.0	–	–	1.1	2.4
Alternative 9B	53.2	33.1	–	–	1.0	19.1
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 9C	14.7	13.6	–	–	1.1	–
Alternative 9C	15.3	8.3	–	–	–	7.0
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternatives 9D, 9E, 9F, 9G, 9H	57.2	37.6	–	–	1.1	18.4
Alternative 9D	58.4	51.1	–	–	4.0	3.3
Alternative 9E	68.7	65.1	–	–	2.3	1.3
Alternative 9F	62.9	46.5	–	0.2	3.9	12.3
Alternative 9G	56.4	49.4	–	0.2	3.9	3.0
Alternative 9H	61.0	44.8	–	0.2	3.9	12.0

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

would cross 16.7 miles and 7 miles more private land, respectively, with a generally commensurate reduction in the acres of BLM-managed lands that would be crossed (Table 3.17-28).

Alternatives 9D and 9E would be approximately 1.2 miles and 11.5 miles longer than the comparison portions of the Proposed Route and would cross 15.1 and 17.1 fewer miles of private land, respectively. Both alternatives are located almost entirely on BLM-managed lands, and Alternative 9D would cross 54.3 miles of the SRBOP.

Alternatives 9F and 9H would be approximately 5.7 miles and 3.8 miles longer, respectively, than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Both alternatives would cross more miles of BLM-managed land and fewer miles of private land than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 9G would be approximately 0.8 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Like Alternatives 9F and 9H, Alternative 9G would cross more miles of BLM-managed land and fewer miles of private land than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

The 161.7-mile Proposed Route would follow existing transmission line corridors for 16.9 miles (11 percent) of its length. The route would be within the WWE corridor for 53.9 miles (33 percent of its total length), within the projected WWE corridor for 13.9 miles (9 percent), and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 10.6 miles (7 percent; Table 2.4-2).

Approximately 2.2 miles (28 percent) of Alternative 9A would be adjacent to an existing transmission corridor and about 2.2 miles (29 percent) would be adjacent to the WWE corridor.

Alternative 9B would follow an existing 138-kV transmission line for 23.3 miles (44 percent of its total length). The route would be within the WWE corridor for 28.2 miles (53 percent of its total length), within the projected WWE corridor for 15.7 miles (30 percent), and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 2.8 miles (5 percent).

Alternative 9C would follow an existing 138-kV transmission line for 10.4 miles. Approximately 3 miles of the route (21 percent) would be adjacent to the projected WWE corridor.

Alternatives 9D would follow an existing 138-kV transmission line for 31.3 miles (54 percent). The route would be within the WWE corridor for 0.4 mile and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 1.1 miles.

Alternative 9E would not follow an existing transmission; however, it would be within the WWE corridor for 0.4 mile and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 1.8 miles.

Alternative 9F would follow an existing transmission line for 28.6 miles (46 percent of its total length). The route would be within the WWE corridor for 8.4 miles, within the projected WWE corridor for 3.0 miles, and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 3.6 miles.

Alternative 9G would follow an existing transmission line for 26.3 miles (47 percent of its total length). The route would be within the WWE corridor for 0.4 mile, and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 1.0 mile.

Alternative 9H would follow an existing transmission line for 23.6 miles (39 percent). The route would be within the WWE corridor for 8.4 miles, within the projected WWE corridor for 3.0 miles, and adjacent to the WWE corridor for 3.5 miles.

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Segment 9 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Cassia, Jarbidge, SRBOP, and Owyhee RMPs, and the Twin Falls and Bruneau MFPs (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are identified in Table 2.2-1.

No plan amendments to the Cassia and Owyhee MFPs that are directly related to land use or recreation are proposed for Segment 9; however, as discussed in the Effects Common to All Action Alternatives section, all proposed plan amendments found in Appendix F could have indirect impacts to land use and recreation.

Bruneau MFP

The Project as currently designed is not in conformance with the Bruneau MFP in regards to VRM. The MFP designates areas that are proposed for crossing by the Project as VRM Class II. Two proposed plan amendments would convert the entire VRM Class II parcel crossed by the Project (located near Castle Creek) to a VRM Class III classification (see Appendix F).

Twin Falls MFP

The Project as currently designed does not conform to the Twin Falls MFP. The details regarding the Project's inconsistency with the Twin Falls MFP land use stipulation L-4.1 are discussed above in the Segment 7 section.

The Proposed Route along Segment 9 would require an amendment to the Twin Falls VRM classification for the Rock Creek area before this route could be approved. Seventy acres of VRM Class II (the Rock Creek area, north of the section line) would be changed to VRM Class III (see Appendix F).

Segment 9 of the Proposed Route, as currently designed, would cross the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC along a WSR-eligible portion of Salmon Falls Creek. WSR eligibility requires management that prevents activities that could result in the river being declared WSR-unsuitable. A powerline crossing would not conform to WSR management and therefore no amendment can be proposed unless the river is determined to be unsuitable (see Appendix F-1). WSR eligibility is discussed at the end of the Segment 9 amendment discussion.

SRBOP RMP

The Project as currently designed along Segment 9 would not conform to a land use stipulation and two recreational stipulations found in the SRBOP RMP. These stipulations are as follows:

Restrict major utility developments to the two utility corridors identified. (see Lands Map 3 in the SRBOP RMP)

The Snake River SRMA consists of 22,300 acres in the Snake River Canyon downstream from Grandview, Idaho that is managed for the protection of cultural and scenic values. (2.14 Recreation 2-20).

The C.J. Strike SRMA consists of 20,000 acres surrounding C.J. Strike Reservoir along the Snake River. The purpose of the SRMA is to provide enhanced recreation management associated with the reservoir, and protection of the Oregon Trail adjacent to the reservoir (2.14 Recreation 2-20).

Close the following areas to motorized vehicles:

- Cove – 1,600 acres

The Proposed Route, as well as Alternatives 9D, 9E, 9F, 9G, and 9H, would cross through areas managed under the SRBOP RMP and would be constructed in areas outside of the two utility corridors identified within this RMP. Therefore, these alternatives would not conform to the SRBOP RMP stipulation regarding utility corridors, and the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the SRBOP RMP or the RMP would need to be amended. The proposed amendment would allow the Project to be constructed outside of the two utility corridors defined in the SRBOP RMP along Segment 9, as well as the Route Alternatives, if these routes are selected (see Appendices F and G). Allowing this Project to be constructed outside of the utility corridors identified within the RMP is not likely to create new areas where additional

lines could be routed in the future, unless the final amendment is worded such that it identifies the Project's ROW as a viable utility corridor for future lines.

Alternatives 9D and 9G would cross through the Snake River and the C.J. Strike SRMAs managed under the SRBOP RMP. A transmission line does not conform to the SRMA designation for these areas; therefore, an amendment that would reduce the acreage of the designated areas (i.e., remove the area crossed by the Project from the SRMA designation) would be required to construct the line along Alternatives 9D and 9G (see Appendices F and G). The amendment would remove about 6,400 acres from the Snake River SRMA and about 3,100 acres from the C.J. Strike SRMA. This would impact the utility of these SRMAs due to the visual disturbance of a transmission line near these areas, as well as reducing their overall size.

Alternatives 9D, 9F, 9G, and 9H would also require that the SRBOP RMP be amended to allow the reclassification of approximately 3,100 acres of VRM Class II to VRM Class III in the vicinity of the Oregon NHT and the Snake River Canyon.

In addition, Alternatives 9D and 9G would cross through the Cove Non-motorized Area. Roads would be constructed as part of these alternatives, which means they would not conform to the SRBOP RMP stipulation for this area, and the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the SRBOP RMP or the RMP would need to be amended for this route to be approved. An amendment would be needed to allow the Project to be constructed within this non-motorized area; however, the Boise District BLM Office has stated that the RMP could not be amended in this way to meet objectives. The Proposed Route and Alternatives 9F and 9H would avoid this area.

Alternatives 9D, 9F, 9G, and 9H would cross through a ROW avoidance area designated by the SRBOP RMP to protect the visual corridor along the Oregon NHT and the resources along the Snake River canyon. Therefore, these routes would not conform to the SRBOP RMP regarding this ROW avoidance area, and the Project would either need to be altered so that it conforms to the SRBOP, or the RMP would need to be amended for this route to be approved. The proposed amendment would allow these alternatives to be constructed within this ROW avoidance area.

Approval of the proposed amendments to the SRBOP RMP would result in approximately 653 acres changing from an ROS of SPM to RN as a result of the transmission line and new road construction along the Proposed Route through the SRBOP. Alternatives 9D and 9G would result in approximately 955 acres changing from an ROS of SPM to RN. The majority of the SRBOP is currently allocated to the RN ROS class.

Jarbridge RMP

The Proposed Route along Segment 9 would pass through the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC. As a result, it does not conform to the Jarbridge RMP, due to the restriction of "No developments in the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC," the establishment of the ACEC as a utility avoidance/restriction area, and the current VRM Class I designation. Therefore, for the Proposed Route along Segment 9 to be approved, the Jarbridge RMP would either need to be amended to allow construction of the Project in the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC or the Project would need to be modified to avoid this area. The crossing

of Salmon Falls Creek occurs within a WSR-eligible portion of the river. WSR eligibility requires management that prevents activities that could result in the river being declared WSR-unsuitable. A powerline crossing would not conform to WSR management and therefore no amendment can be proposed unless the river is determined to be unsuitable (see Appendix F-1). No other plan amendments are proposed for Segment 9 that are directly related to land use or recreation; however, as discussed in the Effects Common to All Action Alternatives section, all proposed plan amendments found in Appendix F could have indirect impacts to land use and recreation.

The Proposed Route along Segment 9 would also cross VRM Class II area in the Saylor Creek area. An amendment would be needed to reclassify the area within the WWE corridor to VRM Class II, in order to conform to the Jarbidge RMP.

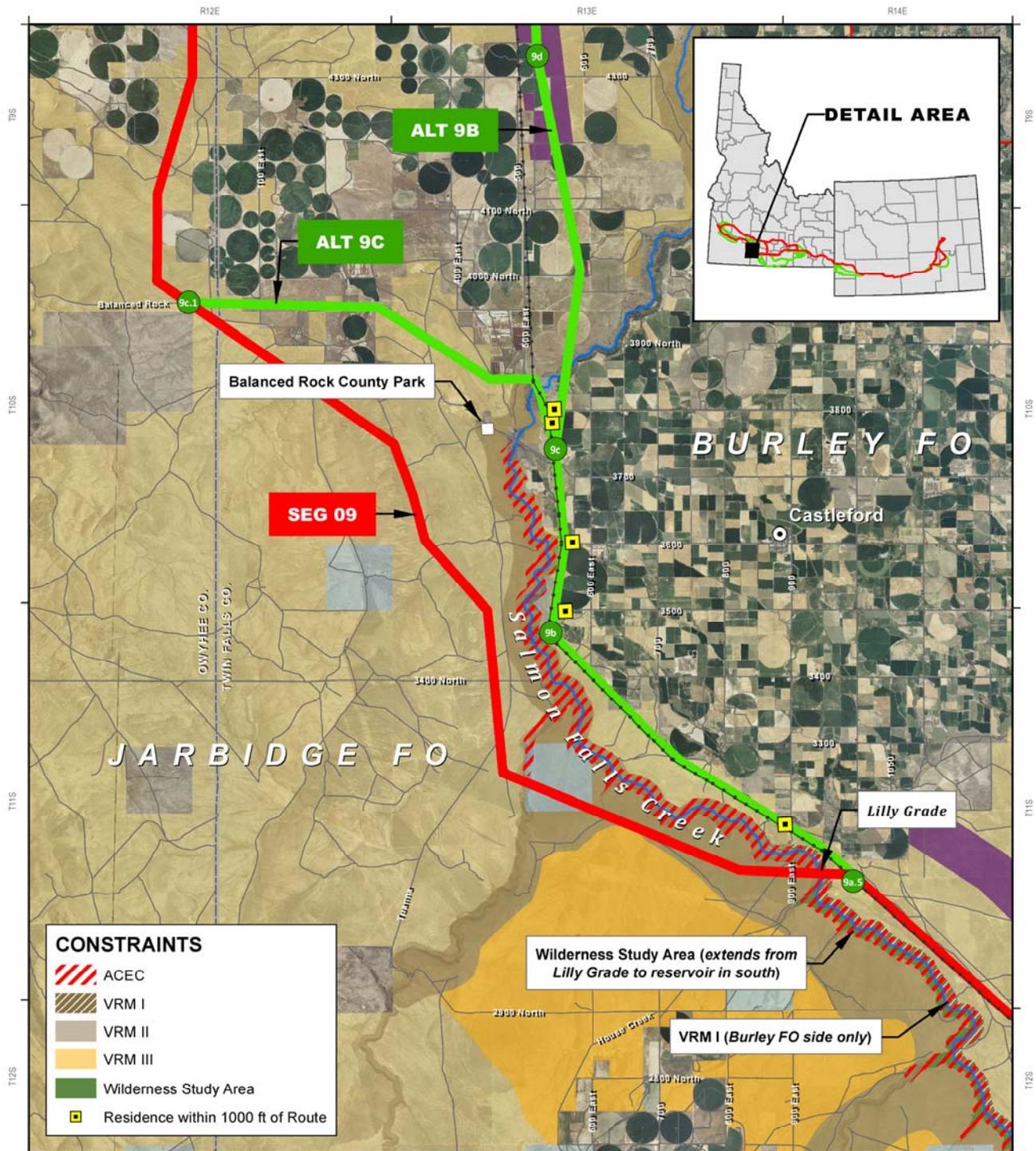
No other plan amendments are proposed for Segment 9 that are directly related to land use or recreation; however, as discussed in the Effects Common to All Action Alternatives section, all proposed plan amendments found in Appendix F could have indirect impacts to land use and recreation.

Approval of plan amendments that would result in changes to VRM classes to more developed classifications have the potential to affect the quality of the experience for recreationalists using the affected areas and would, in some cases, afford a less “semi-primitive” experience to users. Visual impacts to the potentially affected areas as well as the visual amendments, as discussed above, are evaluated in more detail within Section 3.2 – Visual Resources and Appendix G.

Salmon Falls Creek Wild and Scenic River Eligibility

The Proponents’ Proposed Route (points 9a.4, 9a.5, 9c.1) was developed in cooperation with Twin Falls County to cross Salmon Falls Creek at Lily Grade (see Figure 3.17-12). The reason for the crossing is to keep the Project on public lands and off of private agriculture lands (points 9a.4, 9b, 9c, 9c.1). The alternative route crossing at Lilly Grade is north of the Salmon Falls Creek WSA and would not affect the use. However, the route would. The Lilly Grade would cross the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC and an eligible WSR segment (as shown in Figure 3.17-12).

An RMP amendment could address issues with the proposed crossing as they relate to Salmon Falls Creek ACEC by either: 1) removing the ACEC designation, or 2) changing the management for ROW avoidance. However, a plan amendment cannot be used in a similar way to address the issues associated with crossing the eligible WSR segment because an amendment cannot 1) remove the eligibility determination without doing a full suitability study or 2) remove scenery as one of the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) of the segment. Therefore, a plan amendment has not been proposed for this crossing.



NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Route Features	Ownership/Other Feature
Proposed Route	Bureau of Land Management
Feasible Alternative	Private
West Wide Energy Corridor	State
Route Reference Node	City/Town
	Road

Gateway West Transmission Line Project
 Idaho, Wyoming
Salmon Falls Creek ACEC Proposed & Alternative Routes
 FIGURE 3.17-12

The segment of Salmon Falls Creek from Salmon Falls Dam to Balanced Rock is eligible as a WSR because it is free-flowing and possesses scenic, recreational, and geological ORVs; this segment's tentative classification is Scenic. BLM Manual 8351, *Wild and Scenic Rivers*, states at .32 C:

When a river segment is determined eligible and given a tentative classification (wild, scenic, and/or recreational), its identified ORVs must be afforded adequate protection, subject to valid existing rights, and until the eligibility determination is superseded, management activities and uses shall not be allowed to adversely affect either eligibility or the tentative classification....Each segment shall be managed to protect identified ORVs (subject to valid existing rights) and, to the extent practicable such values shall be enhanced.

This policy is reiterated in Section 0.52 C. of the same manual. An eligibility determination is superseded when the BLM completes a suitability study; if the segment is determined to not be suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the segment ceases to be eligible and no longer receives protective management. If the segment is determined to be suitable, the suitability recommendation is forwarded to Congress for further action. Therefore, the BLM concludes that the Proposed Route along Segment 9 could not be approved unless the river is found to be not suitable.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, the majority of the Proposed Route for Segment 9 would cross rangeland (90 percent), with much of the remainder of the route crossing cropland (8 percent). Alternatives 9A through 9E would range from less than 1 mile shorter to approximately 11.5 miles longer than their respective comparison portions of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-29). Alternatives 9A and 9C are very similar in total length to their respective comparison portion of the Proposed Route and cross very similar miles of different land uses.

Table 3.17-29. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 9

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Total Length	161.7	145.2	13.5	–	0.6	1.3	0.2	0.8
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 9A	7.8	7.6	–	–	0.1	0.1	–	–
Alternative 9A	7.7	7.1	0.1	–	–	0.3	0.1	0.1
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 9B	49.5	48.7	–	–	–	0.6	–	0.1
Alternative 9B	53.3	43.6	9.3	–	0.1	0.1	0.2	–

Table 3.17-29. Miles Crossed by Land Use – Segment 9 (continued)

Segment/ Alternative	Total	Rangeland	Agriculture	Forest	Water and Wetlands	ROW	Developed	Other
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternative 9C	14.7	14.3	–	–	–	0.3	–	0.1
Alternative 9C	15.3	14.8	0.4	–	–	–	–	–
Proposed – Comparison Portion for Alternatives 9D, 9E, 9F, 9G, 9H	57.2	45.7	10.0	–	0.6	0.4	–	0.5
Alternative 9D	58.4	55.6	1.5	–	0.5	0.8	–	–
Alternative 9E	68.7	67.6	0.1	–	0.2	0.3	–	0.4
Alternative 9F	62.9	54.9	6.4	–	0.7	0.8	–	0.2
Alternative 9G	56.4	53.6	1.5	–	0.5	0.9	–	0.0
Alternative 9H	61.0	52.9	6.4	–	0.7	0.8	–	0.2

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

Alternative 9B, which would follow the WWE corridor and parallel existing utility corridors, would be approximately 53 miles long, about 3.8 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. This alternative would cross 9.3 more miles of irrigated cropland and 5 miles less of rangeland.

Alternatives 9D and 9E, both proposed by the Owyhee County Task Force, are approximately 58.4 miles and 68.7 miles long, respectively, about 1.2 miles and 11.5 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. The majority of Alternative 9D (93 percent; 54.3 miles) would cross the SRBOP. Viewed in terms of land use cover, this alternative would cross 8.5 miles less of irrigated cropland and 9.9 more miles of rangeland. Alternative 9E, which would cross 2.7 miles of the SRBOP, would cross 8.5 miles less of irrigated cropland and 21.9 more miles of rangeland.

Alternatives 9F and 9H are both longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (about 5.7 miles and 3.8 miles longer, respectively). Alternative 9G is 0.8 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. All three of these alternatives predominantly cross rangelands, with a small component of agricultural lands, wetlands, and other.

The Proposed Route for Segment 9 would pass within 1,000 feet of 20 residences; 8 of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline (Table 3.17-30). Nine of the houses within 1,000 feet are clustered near where the Proposed Route approaches the proposed Hemingway Substation.

Table 3.17-30. Number of Residences within 1,000 feet and 300 feet – Segment 9

Proposed Route / Alternative	Within 1,000 Feet			Within 300 Feet		
	Proposed Route / Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference	Proposed Route / Alternative	Comparison Portion of the Proposed Route	Net Difference
Proposed Route	20	NA	NA	8	NA	NA
9A	1	1	–	–	–	–
9B	7	–	7	1	–	1
9C	5	–	5	1	–	1
9D	–	9	-9	–	6	-6
9E	–	9	-9	–	6	-6
9F	8	9	-1	2	6	-4
9G	–	9	-9	–	6	-6
9H	8	9	-1	2	6	-4

NA – not applicable

Alternative 9A and the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would each pass within 300 feet and 1,000 feet of 1 residence.

Alternatives 9B and 9C would pass within 1,000 feet of 7 and 5 more residences than the Proposed Route, respectively; in both cases 1 of these residences would be located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline.

Alternatives 9D, 9E, and 9G would all pass within 1,000 feet of 9 fewer residences than the Proposed Route; six of the residences they avoid are within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline for the Proposed Route.

Alternatives 9F and 9H would both pass within 1,000 feet of 1 less residence than the Proposed Route, and 4 fewer residences within 300 feet.

Commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses crossed or within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives are itemized by milepost in Table D.17-1 in Appendix D and summarized below.

The Proposed Route for Segment 9 would cross 1 mile of a proposed wind farm and 0.5 mile of an active mining claim. The Proposed Route would also pass within 1,000 feet of two gravel pits, a clay pit, the Indian Springs Estate, two animal pens, a water tank, a cemetery, and a center-pivot.

From MPs 48 to 54, the Proposed Route would be just inside the east boundary of the general Jarbidge Military Operating Area. Within the general Military Operating Area, the height of transmission structures normally cannot extend more than 100 feet above ground level. Consultation between Twin Falls County and the U.S. Air Force has determined that this height restriction would not apply and this minor encroachment would be acceptable (Kramer 2009).

The Proposed Route would also pass through the Saylor Creek Air Force Range restricted area and to the south of Bruneau Dunes State Park in the vicinity of MPs 90 to 95. Consultation between representatives of the BLM, U.S. Air Force, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Proponents has determined that the

location of the Proposed Route within the restricted military operations area and just to the south of Bruneau Dunes State Park is acceptable.

Alternative 9A would pass within 1,000 feet of a gravel pit. Alternative 9B would cross approximately 0.1 mile of an active mining claim and about 0.7 mile of a wind energy facility, and pass within 1,000 feet of a CAFO, six center-pivots, a proposed wind farm boundary, miscellaneous outbuildings (e.g., warehouses and animal pens), and the Grindstone Agricultural Airport (the airport would be located about 398 feet southwest of this alternative). Alternative 9C would cross 0.1 mile of the same active mining claim as Alternative 9B and pass within 1,000 feet of a CAFO.

Alternative 9D would follow the southwest boundary of the IDANG Orchard Training Area and pass within 1,000 feet of two structures and Locust Park, which is owned and maintained by Idaho Power.

Alternative 9E would cross approximately 10 miles of active mining claims, as well as 0.1 mile of the Murphy Landfill and the Idaho Launch Complex (U.S. Department of Defense). This alternative would also pass within 1,000 feet of the Buckaroo and Harris Dams. Alternative 9E would also cross a motorcycle raceway area between the Grandview area (around Shoofly Creek) and Castle Creek. The area was historically a missile base and has been disturbed in the past.

Alternatives 9F and 9H would cross about 4.6 miles of the IDANG Orchard Training Area and would pass within 1,000 feet of three structures, one center-pivot, a cemetery, Beeroth Canal, and Bieroth Canal.

Alternative 9G would cross about 4.6 miles of the IDANG Orchard Training Area and would pass within 1,000 feet of Locust Park and one structure.

Special Management Areas

Federal lands along Segment 9 are regulated in part by the Cassia, Jarbidge, SRBOP, and Owyhee RMPs, as well as the Twin Falls and Bruneau MFPs.

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 2.9 miles of the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC. This is discussed in more detail above in the Federal Land Use Amendments section. The Route Alternatives would not cross this area (Table 3.17-31).

Table 3.17-31. Special Management Areas Crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 9

Proposed or Alternative Name ^{1/}	Segment Length (Miles)	Management Area	Miles Crossed
Proposed – Total Length	161.7	Salmon Falls Creek ACEC	2.9
		SRBOP	13.6
		Owyhee Front SRMA	4.7
		Black Mountain HMA	9.5
		Saylor Creek HMA	12.9
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 9A	7.8	none	NA
Alternative 9A	7.7	none	NA
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 9B	49.5	Salmon Falls Creek ACEC	2.9
		Saylor Creek HMA	12.9

Table 3.17-31. Special Management Areas Crossed by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives for Segment 9 (continued)

Proposed or Alternative Name^{1/}	Segment Length (Miles)	Management Area	Miles Crossed
Alternative 9B	53.2	Saylor Creek HMA	6.1
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternative 9C	14.7	Salmon Falls Creek ACEC	2.9
Alternative 9C	15.3	None	NA
Proposed – Comparison portion for Alternatives 9D–9H	57.2	SRBOP	6.1
		Owyhee Front SRMA	4.7
		Black Mountain HMA	1.1
Alternative 9D	58.4	SRBOP	54.3
		Oregon NHT SRMA	0.6
		Owyhee Front SRMA	1.2
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	1.5
		C.J. Strike Reservoir SRMA	6.0
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	10.8
		Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District	3.0
		Black Mountain HMA	1.3
Alternative 9E	68.7	SRBOP	2.7
		Owyhee Front SRMA	0.2
		Black Mountain HMA	1.2
Alternative 9F	62.9	SRBOP	42.6
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	10.8
		Black Mountain HMA	1.3
		Guffey Butte/Black Butte Archaeological District	3.0
		Oregon Trail SRMA	0.2
		Owyhee Front SRMA	1.2
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	1.5
Alternative 9G	56.4	SRBOP	52.0
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	10.5
		Black Mountain HMA	1.2
		Guffey Butte/Black Butte Archaeological District	3.3
		Oregon Trail SRMA	0.3
		Owyhee Front SRMA	1.1
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	2.6
		C.J. Strike SRMA	9.4
Alternative 9H	61.0	SRBOP	40.3
		SRBOP ROW Avoidance Area	10.5
		Black Mountain HMA	1.2
		Guffey Butte/Black Butte Archaeological District	3.3
		Oregon Trail SRMA	0.2
		Owyhee Front SRMA	1.1
		Snake River Canyon SRMA	2.6

1/ Route Alternatives are only included in this table if the comparison portion of the Proposed Route or the Route Alternative would cross a species designated management area.

HMA – Herd Management Area; NA – not applicable; SRMA –Special Recreation Management Area

The Proposed Route would cross approximately 13.6 miles of the SRBOP and would also cross the Owyhee Front SRMA (4.7 miles), the Black Mountain HMA (9.5 miles), and the Saylor Creek HMA (12.9 miles) (Table 3.17-31). Alternative 9B would cross approximately 6.8 fewer miles of the Saylor Creek HMA than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternatives 9A and 9C would not cross any SMAs.

Alternative 9D would cross approximately 54.3 miles of the SRBOP, about 48.2 miles more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Table 3.17-31). This alternative would cross approximately 3.5 fewer miles of the Owyhee Front SRMA and 0.2 more mile of the Black Mountain HMA than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. It would also cross a number of other SMAs that would not be crossed by the Proposed Route or the other alternatives (Table 3.17-31). These areas include the C.J. Strike Reservoir SRMA, the Snake River Canyon SRMA, the Oregon NHT SRMA, the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District, and the SRBOP ROW avoidance area. Construction of a transmission line through some these areas (through selection of this alternative or any other alternative that would cross these areas) would require amendments to the SRBOP RMP as discussed above in the Federal Land Use Plan Amendments section.

Alternative 9E would cross approximately 3.4 fewer miles of the SRBOP than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, 4.5 fewer miles of the Owyhee Front SRMA, and approximately 0.1 mile of the Black Mountain HMA (Table 3.17-31).

Alternative 9F would cross approximately 42.6 miles of the SRBOP, about 29.0 miles more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 9G would cross approximately 52.0 miles of the SRBOP, about 38.4 miles more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 9H would cross approximately 40.3 miles of the SRBOP, about 26.7 miles more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternatives 9F, 9G, and 9H would cross similar amounts of the Owyhee Front SRMA, Black Mountain HMA, Snake River Canyon SRMA, the Oregon NHT SRMA, the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District, and the SRBOP ROW avoidance area (Table 3.17-31). Alternative 9G would also cross the C.J. Strike SRMA, which would not be crossed by Alternatives 9F and 9H. With the exception of the SRBOP, these alternatives would cross fewer miles of the SMAs that are also crossed by the comparison portion of the Proposed Route (Owyhee Front SRMA and Black Mountain HMA) and unlike the Proposed Route would not cross the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC (Table 3.17-31).

Wilderness Characteristics

As noted earlier, no areas with wilderness characteristic are affected in this segment.

Historic Trails

The Proposed Route along Segment 9 and route alternatives to this segment would cross several NHTs and other trails such as stage and wagon roads that have potential historic significance (see Table 3.3-16 in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources). These include the Oregon NHT, California NHT, Toana Freight Wagon Road, and Boise City-

Silver City Road. Alternative 9D would also cross the Oregon NHT South Alternate several times. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would cross 3.3 miles of public land closed to OHV use and 37.2 miles where OHV use is limited, resulting in increased opportunities for unauthorized OHV access, and potential for disruption of existing uses. The Proposed Route would not cross any trails closed to OHV use. The Proponents would post signs identifying the area as closed to OHV use and implement blocking measures where practical.

Alternative 9A would be 0.1 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would cross 1.2 miles of land where OHV use is limited. In comparison, the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would cross 0.6 mile of land where use is limited. Neither Alternative 9A nor the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would result in any additional trail crossings. Overall, there would be more opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs under Alternative 9A.

Alternative 9B would be 3.7 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 0.3 mile more land closed to OHV use and 1.7 miles more land where OHV use is limited compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. However, because all of Alternative 9B would follow existing transmission lines, there would be little difference between the two alternatives in this regard. Alternative 9B would cross one more trail compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and two additional trails due to new road construction; therefore, Alternative 9B would have a greater risk of unauthorized use on trails closed to OHVs than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 9C would be 0.6 mile longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 0.3 mile more land closed to OHV use than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Neither Alternative 9C nor the comparison portion of the Proposed Route would result in any additional trail crossing. More than 88 percent of Alternative 9C would follow existing transmission lines; therefore, there would be little potential for increased unauthorized OHV use over that in the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 9D would be 1.2 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 25.7 miles more area where OHV use is limited compared to comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 9D would cross two trails closed to OHV use and new road construction associated with this alternative would result in an additional two crossings. This would be a total of four crossings more than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Approximately 54 percent of Alternative 9D would follow existing transmission lines, compared to 85 percent for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, there would be a greater potential for increased unauthorized OHV use compared to the comparison portion of the Proposed Route.

Alternative 9E would be 11.5 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 7.3 miles more area where OHV use is limited than the

comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Approximately 3 percent of Alternative 9E would follow existing transmission lines, compared to 85 percent for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Overall, there would be a greater opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs under Alternative 9E than under the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, as well as a greater potential disruption of existing uses.

Alternative 9F would be 5.7 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 18.0 miles more area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Approximately 46 percent of Alternative 9F would follow existing transmission lines, compared to 85 percent for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 9F would cross two more trails than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and two additional trails due to new road construction. Overall, there would be a greater opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs under Alternative 9F than under the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, as well as a greater potential disruption of existing uses.

Alternative 9G would be about 0.8 mile shorter than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, but it would cross 23.6 miles more area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Approximately 47 percent of Alternative 9G would follow existing transmission lines, compared to 85 percent for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 9G would cross two more trails than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and five additional trails due to new road construction. Overall, there would be a greater opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs under Alternative 9G than under the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, as well as a greater potential disruption of existing uses.

Alternative 9H would be 3.8 miles longer than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and would cross 15.7 miles more area where OHV use is limited than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Approximately 39 percent of Alternative 9H would follow existing transmission lines, compared to 85 percent for the comparison portion of the Proposed Route. Alternative 9H would cross two more trails than the comparison portion of the Proposed Route and four additional trails due to new road construction. Overall, there would be a greater opportunity for unauthorized use in areas closed to OHVs under Alternative 9H than under the comparison portion of the Proposed Route, as well as a greater potential disruption of existing uses.

Segment 10

Segment 10, as proposed, would link the Cedar Hill and Midpoint Substations with a 33.6-mile single-circuit 500-kV line, following a WWE corridor for most of its distance. Twenty-eight acres of the expansion of the Midpoint Substation and of the construction of the Cedar Hill Substation are attributed to Segment 10. There are no Route Alternatives proposed along this segment (see Appendix A, Figure A-12).

The Proposed Route would comprise 49.2 percent rangeland, 46.1 percent agriculture, and 2.1 percent commercial and residential development. In the vicinity of Jerome and from Eden south to the Cedar Hill Substation, the entire route would be irrigated agricultural lands with scattered farms and residences. From Jerome north, this area is mostly rangeland with some agriculture. Both the Midpoint Substation and the

proposed Cedar Hill Substation would be located on rangeland. Also, there is an existing 345-kV line that follows the Proposed Route from north to south for its entire length.

Land Ownership

The 33.6-mile-long Proposed Route would cross 13.2 miles of BLM-managed land and 20.4 miles of private land (Table 3.17-32).

Table 3.17-32. Miles Crossed by Land Ownership – Segment 10

Segment/Alternative	Total	Federal	Indian Reservation	State (including water)	Private
Proposed – Total Length	33.6	13.2	–	–	20.4

Miles are rounded to tenths of a mile; columns/rows may therefore not sum exactly.

Designated Corridors and Existing ROW

The Proposed Route would follow an existing transmission line for its entire length, except to deviate from the existing line in the vicinity of the Minidoka National Historic Site. The Proposed Route would be within the WWE corridor for 11.6 miles (35 percent of its total length), within the projected WWE corridor for 19.7 miles (59 percent), and adjacent to the projected WWE corridor for 0.4 mile (1 percent).

Federal Land Use Plan Amendments

Segment 10 would cross BLM-managed lands that fall within the jurisdiction of the Monument and Cassia RMPs, and the Twin Falls MFP (Table 3.17-2). Proposed amendments for the Proposed Route are identified in Table 2.2-1. No plan amendments (related to land use or otherwise) are currently proposed for Segment 10.

Specific Land Uses and Recreational Resources

Land Use

Land use within the Analysis Area for the Proposed Route is summarized by segment in Table 3.17-4. Viewed in terms of miles crossed, half of the Proposed Route for Segment 10 would cross rangeland (approximately 50 percent), with the remainder crossing irrigated cropland (46 percent), and water and wetlands (1 percent). In the vicinity of Jerome and from Eden south to the Cedar Hill Substation, the entire Analysis Area would be irrigated agricultural lands with scattered farms and residences. From Jerome north, the area is mostly rangeland with some crop production.

The Proposed Route for Segment 10 would pass within 1,000 feet of 20 residences; 6 of these residences are located within 300 feet of the proposed ROW centerline.

Segment 10 would pass within 1,000 feet of two CAFOs and a center-pivot agricultural field. Between MPs 11 and 20, the Proposed Route would deviate from the existing 345-kV transmission line and follow the WWE corridor, thereby increasing the distance between the proposed transmission line and the NPS-managed Minidoka National Historic Site, which would be located approximately 1 mile east of the Proposed Route.

Special Management Areas

Federal lands along Segment 10 are regulated in part by the Monument and Cassia RMPs, as well as the Twin Falls MFP. The Proposed Route for Segment 10 would not cross any SMAs identified in these plans.

Wilderness Characteristics

As noted earlier, no areas with wilderness characteristic are affected in this segment.

Historic Trails

Segment 10 would cross the Oregon NHT, Northside Alternate Oregon NHT, and Kelton Road. Potential impacts to historic trails are assessed in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources.

OHV Use

The Proposed Route would not cross any public land closed to OHV use or where OHV use is limited, nor would it result in any trail crossings. In addition, all of the Proposed Route would follow existing transmission lines; therefore, there would be no effect on OHV access.

3.17.2.4 Design Variation

A Design Variation is being considered that would consist of constructing two single-circuit lines in Segments 2 through 4 instead of a single double-circuit line (which is the design assessed above). The disturbance footprint of the two single-circuit towers is greater than that of the double-circuit tower, in part because the requested ROW would be wider, but also because helicopter-assisted construction could be implemented in these areas due to the lighter weight of the towers, which would require additional fly yards. The additional ROW space and the fly yards would cause additional temporary disturbance during construction. Across Segments 2, 3, and 4, the additional disturbance of the single-circuit tower alternative ranges from 25 to 30 percent greater than the comparable portions of the double-circuit tower disturbance under the proposed design. The two single circuits require more ground disturbance, but would be designed and constructed to the same standards as the Proposed Action. Table 3.17-33 shows the difference in acres for each of the segments or alternatives of increasing the ROW from 300 feet to 350 feet.

Table 3.17-33. Difference in ROW Acres for Design Variation

Segment/Route Name	Segment Length (Miles)^{1/}	Difference (Acres)^{2/}
Segment 2 – Proposed	96.7	587
Segment 2 – Alternative 2A	28.4	173
Segment 2 – Alternative 2B	6.2	38
Segment 2 – Alternative 2C	24.4	148
Segment 3	56.5	344
Segment 4 – Proposed	203.0	1,231
Segment 4 – Alternative 4A	85.2	517
Segment 4 – Alternative 4B	100.2	608
Segment 4 – Alternative 4C	101.6	616
Segment 4 – Alternative 4D	100.8	611
Segment 4 – Alternative 4E	102.2	620
Segment 4 – Alternative 4F	87.5	531

1/ Miles rounded to tenths of a mile.

2/ Acres rounded to nearest acre.

3.17.2.5 Structure Variation

The proposed guyed Structure Variation would add four guy wires about 140 feet long from a point about 100 feet up in each tower to four guy anchors spaced in a square around the tower (Appendix B, Figure B-6). This would not change the amount of disturbance during construction or operation appreciably. These structures would not be used adjacent to public roads or in rural development areas; therefore, there is no appreciable difference in impact on land use from the use of this Structure Variation when compared to the use of self-supporting lattice towers.

3.17.2.6 Schedule Variation

The Schedule Variation uses the two single-circuit design variation described above but extends construction over a longer time frame. Initially, only one of the eventual two single-circuit lines would be constructed, with the second to be constructed at a later date. The Schedule Variation proposes that the first single-circuit transmission line in Segments 2, 3, and 4 would be built as soon as a ROW grant is issued, but that the second line would not begin construction until late 2018. This would mean nearly 2 years between the end of construction for the first line and beginning of construction for the second line. Any staging areas and fly yards that had been used for the first stage would have been revegetated after construction was complete and would have to be cleared again. There would be two sets of construction disturbances, adding movement, noise, and dust to the area of construction in two instances in any given area. Varying the schedule as proposed in this variation would have no effect on most land uses, but it would affect adjacent landowners as construction occurring in two cycles would require use of access roads twice, possibly cause a delay in some reclamation, and may cause some acres to be non-productive for a longer period.

3.17.3 Mitigation Measures

To minimize or avoid impacts on land use and recreation, the Proponents have committed to EPMs that would be implemented Project-wide as outlined in this section and in Appendix C.

The following mitigation measures identified by the Agencies are required on federally managed lands. The Agencies recommend that the Proponents incorporate the measures into their EPMs and apply them Project-wide.

- LU-1 To assist agency and county law enforcement in minimizing unauthorized OHV use on public and private lands, monitor OHV use and post signs along access roads where OHV activity has increased in areas on public lands where OHVs are regulated by a land use plan, and on private, state, and tribal lands at the request of the landowner, agency, or tribal government. Signs shall indicate the restriction or regulation, location, penalty for violation, and appropriate contact information for reporting violations. Signage shall be maintained and replaced as part of the routine maintenance. Consult with appropriate Agencies on additional measures to block unauthorized OHV use.

- LU-2 Coordinate with the Foxley Airstrip owner to realign the location of Alternative 1E-C to eliminate the impact to the airstrip or in some manner compensate for any loss of use.
- LU-3 Work with the private landowner of the ice cave along Alternative 1E-C and microsite the facilities during final design to reduce effects.
- LU-4 Coordinate with the Chokecherry-Sierra Madre Wind Farm and TransWest Express Project developers and BLM along the Segment 2 Proposed Route to ensure mutually compatible siting of transmission lines and wind energy facilities.
- LU-5 Work with the owners of potentially affected industrial buildings and microsite the transmission line during final design to avoid impact to these structures.
- LU-6 Review the final location of the Segment 3 Proposed Route with any affected oil/gas well operators to ensure measures are taken to protect against any impacts to wells. This measure also applies to any segment where the Proposed Route would be near oil/gas wells.
- LU-7 Once the final location of towers where crossings of the MTR would occur is known, IDANG should be consulted to ensure that the proper information is made available for proper warnings.
- LU-8 Coordinate with the owner of the planned Dry Creek Sky Ranches airstrip to realign the Segment 7 Proposed Route or airstrip or in some way compensate for loss of use.
- LU-9 Alternative 8C along Segment 8 should be realigned in the vicinity of the Mayfield Springs subdivision during final design to reduce impact on the planned Mayfield Springs community.
- LU-10 Consult with the IDANG to determine if the Segment 8 Proposed Route can be sited in such a way as to not compromise the training mission in the Alpha Maneuver Sector of the Orchard Training Area, thereby avoiding relocation of the existing transmission line if possible.
- LU-11 Consult with the BLM to determine how best to construct and maintain the Proposed Route transmission line through the area closed to motorized vehicles along the Snake River to ensure no impacts to existing natural, cultural, and historic resources.