

Appendix C

Revised Proposed Plant and Wildlife Conservation Plan– Construction Activities

Gateway West Transmission Line Project

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January 2010

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document presents the plan proposed by Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power (the Companies) for avoidance and minimization of impacts to special status plant and wildlife species as related to construction activities for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (the Project). This plan summarizes the avoidance and minimization conducted during siting and routing of the Project components and outlines specific conservation measures to be implemented in the event that state or Federally listed species, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sensitive species, or Forest Service special status species or their habitats are identified within or adjacent to the Project right-of-way (ROW). The Companies will prepare and submit a separate plan that addresses avoidance and minimization measures related to operation and maintenance activities and emergency activities.

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

The objectives of this plan are to recognize the substantial effort already invested by the Companies in avoiding and minimizing impacts on special status plant and wildlife species, and in addition, to present a comprehensive, Project-specific plant and wildlife conservation plan that:

- Addresses avoidance and minimization of impacts to special status plant and wildlife species;
- Provide consistency across jurisdictions;
- Meet the intent of the current BLM and Forest Service management guidance for Federal lands; and
- Balance cost, practicality, and feasibility of Project implementation with avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts.

1.2 Contents of the Plan

The components of this plan include:

- Section 2: Brief background on the proposed transmission line and substation construction, operation and maintenance, and emergency response procedures (a complete description can be found in the August 2008 Gateway West Transmission Line Project Revised Plan of Development (POD), of which this plan is a part);
- Section 3: A list of the special status species that the Companies and the agencies (BLM, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD)) have identified as occurring or potentially occurring within the Project area, and explanations as to how the proposed measures are appropriate and will meet the intent of the BLM and Forest Service land management plan restrictions;
- Section 4: A summary of the avoidance and minimization measures used by the Companies, in conjunction with the Agencies, during corridor and ROW routing and substation siting, and the assumptions made during that process; and
- Section 5: This section is the heart of the plan that would be implemented after all reasonable avoidance and minimization measures were imposed during routing and siting. It includes the temporal and spatial restrictions the Companies propose to implement to avoid or minimize direct impacts to special status species, together with the conditions under which the Companies propose that restrictions could be limited or lifted, which includes the methods the Companies propose to use to determine where and when the measures will apply across the project.

2.0 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE

2.1 Project Components

The proposed Project, as described in the August 2008 Gateway West Transmission Line Project Revised POD and the September 2008 Gateway West Transmission Line Project Siting Study (Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power, 2008), includes the following major components:

- A total of 1,148 miles of transmission lines and associated support structures will be constructed, along with 71 miles to be re-conducted. Of this total:
 - Approximately 230 miles (1,265 support structures) will be single-circuit 230 kilovolt (kV) steel H-frame structures between 60 and 90 feet tall with a 700-foot average distance between structures; and
 - Approximately 918 miles (3,893 support structures) will be either single-circuit 500kV lattice steel structures between 145 and 180 feet tall with a 1,200 to 1,300-foot average distance between structures, or double-circuit 500kV lattice structures between 160 and 190 feet tall with a 1,200 to 1,300-foot average distance between structures.
- Nine substations, including three proposed new Project-specific substations, four substations that are planned for construction for other projects and that will be expanded for this Project, and two existing substations that will be expanded for this Project; and
- Ancillary facilities such as construction and permanent access roads, temporary construction staging areas, communications, power supply to new substations, and other similar facilities.
- The Companies propose to acquire a permanent ROW up to 300 feet wide for construction and operation of the double-circuit sections of the Project, a 250-foot-wide ROW for the 500kV single-circuit sections of the Project, and a 125-foot-wide ROW for the 230kV single-circuit sections of the Project.

The POD (Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power, 2008) details the construction, operation, maintenance, and emergency response procedures that will be implemented during the course of the Project. The following section details the major aspects of the aforementioned components of the Project where conservation measures may be required to assess and avoid or minimize potential impacts to special status plant and wildlife species.

2.1.1 Construction

Various construction activities will occur during the construction process, with multiple construction crews operating simultaneously at different locations. The following key sections are described in detail in the POD:

- Staging areas associated with development of the transmission line
- On and off ROW access roads
- Transmission line construction
 - Site access and preparation
 - Soil Boring
 - Structure foundation installation
 - Support structure erection

- Stringing of conductors, shield wire, and fiber optic ground wire
- Communications facilities (regeneration sites)
- Cleanup and site reclamation
- Substation construction
 - Access roads
 - Soil boring
 - Clearing and grading
 - Fencing
 - Foundation installation
 - Structure and equipment erection/installation
 - Landscaping and construction cleanup
 - Storage and staging yards
- Special construction techniques
 - Blasting
 - Helicopter construction
 - Temporary water use during construction
- Construction workforce
- Construction equipment and traffic
- Removal of facilities and waste disposal
- Construction schedule

2.1.2 Operation and Maintenance

The Companies have prepared internal operation and maintenance policies and procedures designed to meet the requirements of the North American Electrical Reliability Corporation (NERC), Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), and the state public utility/service commissions (PUCs), while remaining in compliance with the applicable codes and standards with respect to maintaining the reliability of the electrical system

Operation and maintenance activities will include transmission line patrols, climbing inspections, tower and wire maintenance, insulator washing in selected areas as needed, and access and service road repairs. Periodic inspection and maintenance is also a key part of operating and maintaining the electrical system. The following key sections are described in detail in the POD:

- Routine system inspection, maintenance, and repair
 - Transmission line maintenance
 - Hardware maintenance and repairs
 - Right-of-way repair
 - Vegetation management
- Substation and regeneration site maintenance

In order to meet requirements by NERC and WECC regarding reliability, rigorous operation and maintenance activities need to be conducted. A plan to address wildlife conservation measures during operation and maintenance as well as during emergency response has been prepared under separate cover (Gateway West Transmission Line Project - Proposed Plant and Wildlife Conservation Plan – Operations and Maintenance and Emergency Response).

3.0 SPECIES CONSIDERED FOR THE PLAN

The following steps were taken to determine which species and habitats needed to be considered for avoidance, minimization, and conservation measures. The Companies:

- Identified potential habitats and special status species that may occur along the proposed corridor using available data from Federal and state wildlife agencies and from the BLM and Forest Service;
- Discussed habitat types and special status species at kickoff meetings with agency resource specialists to identify which species are of greatest concern in the Project area; and
- Refined the list of species and habitats to be addressed in Project plans through several subsequent meetings with state and Federal agency resource specialists.

Table 1 presents the special status species that were discussed during the screening process described above. This list of species identifies those to be addressed in the Biological Assessment (BA) or Biological Evaluation (BE) and those that are to be emphasized in other Project documents. Note that some species appear on this table because a local field office or ranger district or concurrence at the Level 1 meetings requested their inclusion in the BA for completeness, but they are not addressed further in this conservation plan because they are not expected to be adversely affected by the Project due to lack of occurrence in the Project area, lack of direct impact to the species or its habitats from the Project, or a low level of anticipated impact at the population level. Also note that other species that are not listed in this table will be analyzed in other Project documents but are not addressed further in this conservation plan because they were not identified as primary concerns for the Project.

Table 1 Species Protected in the Gateway West Species Conservation Plan			
Species	Regulatory Status within Project Area	Analysis	Included in Conservation Plan?
Big Game			
Antelope (<i>Antilocapra americana</i>)	None	EIS	Yes
Bighorn sheep (<i>Ovis canadensis</i>)	None	EIS	Yes
Elk (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	None	EIS	Yes
Moose (<i>Alces alces</i>)	None	EIS	Yes
Mule deer (<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>)	None	EIS	Yes
Other Mammals			
Black-footed ferret (<i>Mustela nigripes</i>)	USFWS WY Endangered; USFWS Shirley Basin experimental population WY	BA and EIS	Yes

Table 1 Species Protected in the Gateway West Species Conservation Plan			
Species	Regulatory Status within Project Area	Analysis	Included in Conservation Plan?
Black-tailed prairie dog (<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i>)	USFWS removed as Candidate	BA and EIS	No
Canada lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>)	USFWS WY and ID Threatened	BA and EIS	No
Gray wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	USFWS WY and ID De-listed and Petitioned	BA and EIS	No
Northern Idaho ground squirrel (<i>Spermophilus brunneus</i>)	USFWS ID Threatened	BA and EIS	No
Preble's meadow jumping mouse (<i>Zapus hudsonius preblei</i>)	USFWS WY De-listed 2008	BA and EIS	No
Pygmy rabbit (<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>)	USFWS WY and ID Petitioned; WY BLM Sensitive; ID BLM Sensitive; ID USFS Sensitive	BA and EIS	Yes
Southern Idaho ground squirrel (<i>Spermophilus brunneus</i>)	USFWS ID Candidate	BA and EIS	No
White-tailed prairie dog (<i>Cynomys leucurus</i>)	USFWS WY Petitioned; WY BLM Sensitive	BA and EIS	Yes
Wolverine (<i>Gulo gulo</i>)	WY USFS Sensitive; ID USFS Sensitive	BE and EIS	No
Wyoming pocket gopher (<i>Thomomys clusius</i>)	USFWS WY Petitioned; WY BLM Sensitive	BA and EIS	No
Raptors			
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	USFWS De-listed WY and ID 2007; MBTA; BGEPA	EIS	Yes
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	WY BLM Sensitive; MBTA	BE and EIS	Yes
Ferruginous hawk (<i>Buteo regalis</i>)	WY BLM Sensitive; WY USFS Sensitive; ID BLM Sensitive; MBTA	BE and EIS	Yes
Flammulated owl (<i>Otus flammeolus</i>)	WY USFS Sensitive; ID BLM Sensitive; ID USFS Sensitive; MBTA	BE and EIS	Yes
Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	MBTA; BGEPA	EIS	Yes
Northern goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)	WY BLM Sensitive; WY USFS Sensitive; WY USFS MIS; ID BLM Sensitive; ID USFS Sensitive; MBTA	BE and EIS	Yes
All other raptors	MBTA	EIS	Yes
Other Avian			
Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus</i>)	WY BLM Sensitive; WY USFS Sensitive; ID BLM Sensitive; ID USFS Sensitive	BA and EIS	No

Table 1 Species Protected in the Gateway West Species Conservation Plan			
Species	Regulatory Status within Project Area	Analysis	Included in Conservation Plan?
Greater sage grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>)	USFWS WY and ID Petitioned; WY BLM Sensitive; WY USFS Sensitive; ID BLM Sensitive; ID USFS Sensitive	BA and EIS	Yes
Greater sandhill crane (<i>Grus canadensis</i>)	MBTA	EIS	Yes
Long-billed curlew (<i>Numenius americanus</i>)	MBTA	EIS	Yes
Mountain plover (<i>Charadrius montanus</i>)	WY BLM Sensitive; MBTA	BE and EIS	Yes
Mountain quail (<i>Oreortyx pictus</i>)	ID BLM Sensitive	BE and EIS	No
Three-toed woodpecker (<i>Picoides dorsalis</i>)	ID USFS Sensitive; MBTA	BE and EIS	Yes
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>)	USFWS Candidate WY and ID; WY BLM Sensitive; MBTA	BA and EIS	No
Amphibians			
Boreal toad (<i>Bufo boreas boreas</i>)	WY BLM Sensitive; ID BLM Sensitive	BE and EIS	No
Columbia spotted frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>)	USFWS WY and ID Candidate	BA and EIS	No
Great Basin spadefoot toad (<i>Spea intermontana</i>)	WY BLM Sensitive	BE and EIS	No
Northern leopard frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	USFWS WY Petitioned; WY BLM Sensitive; WY USFS Sensitive; ID BLM Sensitive; ID USFS Sensitive	BA and EIS	No
Wyoming toad (<i>Bufo hemiophrys baxteri</i>)	USFWS WY Endangered	BA and EIS	No
Fish			
Bonneville cutthroat trout (<i>Oncorhynchus clarki utah</i>)	USFWS WY and ID Petitioned	BA and EIS	No
Bonytail (<i>Gila elegans</i>)	USFWS Endangered	BA and EIS	No
Bull trout (<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>)	USFWS ID Threatened	BA and EIS	No
Colorado pikeminnow (<i>Ptychocheilus lucius</i>)	USFWS Endangered	BA and EIS	No
Humpback chub (<i>Gila cypha</i>)	USFWS Endangered	BA and EIS	No
Pallid sturgeon (<i>Scaphirhynchus albus</i>)	USFWS Endangered	BA and EIS	No
Razorback sucker (<i>Xyrauchen texanus</i>)	USFWS Endangered	BA and EIS	No
Invertebrates			
Bruneau Hot springsnail (<i>Pyrgulopsis bruneauensis</i>)	USFWS Endangered; ID BLM Sensitive	BA and EIS	No
Idaho springsnail (<i>Pyrgulopsis idahoensis</i>)	USFWS ID De-listed; ID BLM Sensitive	BA and EIS	No
Plants			
Blowout penstemon (<i>Penstemon haydenii</i>)	USFWS WY Endangered	BA and EIS	Yes

Table 1 Species Protected in the Gateway West Species Conservation Plan			
Species	Regulatory Status within Project Area	Analysis	Included in Conservation Plan?
Colorado butterfly plant (<i>Gaura neomexicana coloradensis</i>)	USFWS WY Threatened	BA and EIS	Yes
Desert yellowhead (<i>Yermo xanthocephalus</i>)	USFWS WY Threatened	BA and EIS	No
Goose Creek milkvetch (<i>Astragalus anserinus</i>)	USFWS ID Petitioned	EIS	No
Slickspot peppergrass (<i>Lepidium pappileferum</i>)	USFWS ID Threatened	BA and EIS	Yes
Ute ladies'-tresses orchid (<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>)	USFWS Threatened WY	BA and EIS	Yes

Notes:

BA = Biological Assessment

BE = Biological Evaluation

BGEPA = Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

EIS = Environmental Impact Statement

ID = Idaho

MBTA = Migratory Bird Treaty Act

WY = Wyoming

USFS = U. S. Forest Service

MIS = Management Indicator Species

4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATION PLAN

This section explains how the Companies approached avoidance and minimization of impacts through data collection and careful routing and siting of the proposed facilities.

4.1 Avoidance and Minimization Development and Implementation

This section presents the data collection and analysis that have been and will be employed for the various stages of Project development. The stages of Project development addressed include the proposed corridor routing process, the proposed ROW routing process, the construction scheduling, operation and maintenance, and emergency response.

4.1.1 Proposed Corridor Routing and Substation Siting

Corridor evaluation was conducted in two phases. In the initial phase, the Companies reviewed maps of the area to identify significant constraints and opportunities for selecting corridors between the proposed, planned and existing substations between the planned Windstar Substation near Casper, Wyoming and the proposed Hemingway Substation in Owyhee County, Idaho. Constraints included a wide array of natural resources and man-made features such as the Oregon Trail, sage grouse leks, airports, urban areas, rural residences, agricultural features (center pivot irrigation, feedlots, dairies), visual resource management areas (VRMs), areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs), National Monuments and National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). Opportunities include existing transmission corridors, West-wide Energy (WWE) corridors, pipelines, a USFS utility corridor, and railroads. Using these factors, the Companies selected a proposed general corridor and then conducted a detailed evaluation of constraints to identify a proposed and alternate corridor between the above-referenced points of interconnection.

Corridors were identified with the goals of maximizing the use of opportunities and minimizing crossings of areas with higher-level constraints. This step took into account corridors defined by existing transmission lines and other linear facilities as well as any additional corridors identified to date by the BLM, the Companies, and the WWE Corridor study. The Companies evaluated each corridor for a variety of environmental and engineering factors to identify the proposed and alternate corridors. This approach included development and use of an attribute matrix, which

established the relative importance of each attribute and, as appropriate, analysis tools. Analysis tools included GIS-based routing and weighting, aerial photography, topographic maps, and limited field reconnaissance. The proposed and alternative corridors were then presented at BLM sponsored scoping meetings. Following scoping, BLM Field Offices reviewed proposed and alternative routes to determine which should be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS.

Specifically, the Companies acquired geographic information system (GIS) data and qualitative input from the USFWS, BLM, Forest Service, IDFG, and WGFD regarding known and potential locations of special status species and their habitats in the Project area. These data were used to develop the list of special status species of concern in the Project area.

At the request of these agencies, the Companies conducted additional data collection in 2008 to fill certain data gaps in the Project area, including a sage grouse lek survey, a raptor nesting survey, and detailed habitat mapping.

The datasets described above were used during routing of the proposed corridor and substation siting. Certain plant and wildlife resources were identified as constraints to be avoided, including:

- A 0.25-mile “no surface occupancy” buffer of all greater sage-grouse leks, regardless of recent occupancy, was entirely avoided during routing;
- A 0.65-mile buffer of greater sage-grouse leks was avoided unless there was a compelling reason not to (e.g., a non-wildlife resource such as a home to be avoided);
- A 0.50-mile buffer of raptor nests was avoided unless there was a compelling reason not to (e.g., a non-wildlife resource to be avoided); and
- Special management areas established for the protection of plant or wildlife species were avoided, where possible.

Other plant and wildlife resources (such as big game winter range and calving and fawning areas) were not necessarily avoided during routing and siting but were considered a constraint and were taken into consideration during design of the proposed Project. Additionally, proximity of the corridor to urban areas, agricultural areas and rural residences were taken into consideration during the routing and siting.

The proposed and alternative routes are presented in the September 2008 Gateway West Transmission Line Project Siting Study (Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power, 2008), and Supplement Siting memo dated October 23, 2008. As site-specific environmental and engineering analyses are conducted along these routes, the proposed transmission line ROW will be refined to further avoid resources or minimize impacts upon them.

4.1.2 Planned Right-of-Way Refinement

The Companies are conducting a comprehensive Project-wide habitat mapping effort that identifies habitats in the Project area and assesses the quality of those habitats for selected special status species. The habitat mapping is comprised of two field components: aerial photography acquisition and field verification. Based on the results of the habitat mapping, the Companies will identify areas within the corridor where species-specific surveys may be necessary to either inform ROW refinement or specify where and when conservation measures apply.

Based on preliminary evaluation of the habitat mapping, the Companies may conduct where necessary, surveys prior to construction and in the appropriate season to meet agency survey and timing requirements for the following species:

- Black-footed ferret;
- Pygmy rabbit;
- White-tailed prairie dog; and
- Special status plants.

In addition to the avoidance and minimization accomplished through routing, the Companies have developed additional conservation measures, which are presented in this conservation plan and the POD. Some involve seasonal restrictions on construction, discussed in general in Section 4.1.3 and detailed by species in Section 5. Many of the measures detailed in Section 5 require preconstruction surveys to determine if and when they apply.

4.1.3 Construction Scheduling and Monitoring

Avoidance can be geographic and/or temporal. Where disturbance during construction is of concern, construction is proposed to be limited to periods of species absence or reduced presence. In addition to limited operating seasons, which categorically restrict construction, environmental monitoring is also proposed where construction may be permitted but its conformance with minimization measures should be monitored and enforced.

Environmental oversight will be conducted for construction activities. Monitoring entails being present during these activities, communicating with contractors, taking daily notes, ensuring that all impacts occur within the designated limits, ensuring that the requirements of the Project Environmental Protection Measures (EPMs) that the Companies have incorporated as part of the Project are being met, and using best professional judgment to ensure that Project activities do not adversely affect special status plant and wildlife species. A biological monitor has the authority to issue stop work where agreed conditions protecting wildlife or plant species are being violated by the construction contractor. A biological monitor will work with the construction contractor, the regulatory agencies, and the Companies to resolve non-compliances. The details of the Companies environmental compliance program including roles and responsibilities, preconstruction surveys, monitoring and reporting will be detailed in the construction POD.

4.2 Development of Conservation Measures

After taking into consideration wildlife and plant resources as well as other important resources during siting and routing, the Companies recognized the need for additional measures to minimize the impact from construction of the Project. The Companies used the following steps to develop the measures found in Section 5:

- Identified and reviewed the BLM and Forest Service land management plans applicable to the Project area (**Table 2**);
- For each land management plan, recorded the surface use stipulations specific to each species of concern;
- Provided to BLM and Forest Service resource specialists for their review a list of stipulations compiled from their jurisdiction;
- Incorporated BLM and Forest Service comments, which included clarifications and updates to stipulations provided in the land management plans;

- Distinguished between requirements and standards versus guidelines, recommendations, and BMPs;
- Distinguished between measures designed to avoid or minimize direct impacts to individuals and those designed for habitat management;
- Identified inconsistencies in requirements among jurisdictions;
- Determined exception or waiver criteria, if applicable;
- Identified data gaps, by species and by jurisdiction; and
- Evaluated the stipulations on a resource by resource basis and developed the proposed Project-wide temporal and spatial restrictions and exception criteria.

Table 2		
Land Management Plans for the Gateway West Project		
Jurisdiction	Plan Name	Plan Date/Status
Wyoming		
Casper BLM Field Office (FO)	Casper Resource Management Plan (RMP)	2007
Medicine Bow National Forest (NF)	Medicine Bow NF Revised Land and Resource Management Plan	2003
Rawlins BLM FO	Rawlins RMP	2008
Rock Springs BLM FO	Green River RMP	2004
Kemmerer BLM FO	Kemmerer RMP	1986
Idaho		
BLM Idaho Falls District, Pocatello FO	Pocatello RMP	1988
BLM Idaho Falls District, Pocatello FO	Malad Management Framework Plan (MFP)	1981
Caribou-Targhee NF, Caribou Administrative Unit	Caribou NF Revised Forest Plan (RFP)	2003
BLM Twin Falls District, Shoshone FO	Monument RMP	1986
BLM Twin Falls District, Shoshone FO	Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP	1980
Sawtooth National Forest	Sawtooth National Forest Revised Forest Plan	2003
BLM Twin Falls District, Burley FO	Cassia RMP	1985
Burley Field Office	Twin Falls MFP	1987
BLM Twin Falls District, Jarbidge FO	Jarbidge RMP	1987
BLM Boise District, Four Rivers FO	Kuna MFP	1983
BLM Boise District, Four Rivers FO	Cascade RMP	1987
BLM Boise District, Four Rivers FO	Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) RMP	2008

Table 2		
Land Management Plans for the Gateway West Project		
Jurisdiction	Plan Name	Plan Date/Status
BLM Boise District, Bruneau FO	Bruneau MFP	1983
BLM Boise District, Owyhee FO	Owyhee RMP	1999
Nevada		
Wells Field Office	Wells RMP	1985

4.2.1 Land Management Plans

Wyoming land management plans within the Project area are recent, and overall, the specific temporal and spatial restrictions for a given species are consistent across these jurisdictions. Most of the relevant Idaho plans within the Project area are outdated, and additional information provided by the agencies in Idaho is very limited. In addition, these plans tend to have information gaps, contain restrictions that are not consistent across jurisdictions, and contain stipulation language that is not specific and require interpretation. RMPs from both states have phrases such as “avoidance where possible”, “request”, “recommend” “review on a case by case basis”, and “exceptions may be made” indicating many of the stipulations and restrictions need to be reviewed on a species by species basis within each field office.

4.2.2 Stipulation Selection

One set of measures is proposed for each species across the entire Project area. The Companies propose Project-wide measures because they are easier to administer and explain to construction personnel. As a result, there are cases in which the proposed conservation measures deviate from those found in some of the land management plans.

Many of the stipulations are designed to assume species presence and, in the case of seasonal restrictions, to broadly bracket the interval of time in which there could be adverse impacts. The Companies include conditions for those stipulations that allow for flexibility on a case by case basis based on species occupancy and other local conditions.

Finally, the Companies did not include all measures found in all land management plans. Measures not included are those which are not specific enough to define a measurable stipulation, measures that describe general goals for the Federal lands but do not address new projects specifically, measures that address habitat management and treatment versus discrete temporal and spatial restrictions on project activities, cases in which the expectations of one land management plan extends well beyond that of the other plans, and measures that are not practical from a project design and development perspective.

4.2.3 Land Ownership

The Wyoming segments of the proposed Project cross a relatively large percentage of Federal land, and private lands tend to be unsigned and isolated sections of land in a checkerboard pattern. Therefore, in these segments the temporal and spatial restrictions on Federal lands will be applied to the entire segment (i. e., including the private and state land) in order to have a Project conservation plan that is consistent and thus easier to plan and implement. Exceptions to this strategy are:

- The proposed substation and regeneration sites located on private land;
- Stipulations that are only applicable to National Forest System lands; and

- Variances on private property that are at the request of the property owner.

In Idaho, land ownership patterns vary by segment. The proposed corridors for Segments 6, 8, and 9 are largely Federal land, with private and state land interspersed. Segments 4, 5, 7 and 10 are predominantly private ownership in agriculture and other development, and for the most part, the Federal land in these segments is clustered. As with the Wyoming segments, the Companies intend to implement the temporal and spatial restrictions for Federal land on all lands along these segments, with the exception of the proposed substation locations which will be on private land.

4.2.4 Species-Specific and Site-Specific Variation

The proposed Project conservation measures are framed with the understanding that the applicability of each measure is dependent upon species-specific and site-specific criteria. The Companies have designed an intensive plan of habitat assessments, field surveys, and field monitoring that will identify the specific conditions under which each proposed measure must be implemented. This approach provides for protection of the species of concern while not unnecessarily limiting Project activities. The proposed conservation plan varies by species, based on factors such as:

- The anticipated prevalence of the species in the Project area;
- The sensitivity of the species to the activities that will be conducted in the Project area;
- The listing status of the species;
- The land management plan guidance and requirements regarding the presence of the species or its habitats; and
- The quality and extent of the existing data related to the species.

The proposed species conservation measures are presented in Section 5. Ultimately, the specific Project mileposts and schedule for which each measure applies will be identified. The POD will contain a plan that will provide the site-specific means of complying with the listed measures.

5.0 PROPOSED PLANT AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PLAN

The conservation measures that the Companies propose to implement to avoid or minimize impacts to special status species in the Project area are presented below. This includes the special status species that have been identified by the Companies and the Agencies as occurring or potentially occurring in the Project area, and presents the following information for each species:

- Regulatory status, if any, which may include: Federally listed, candidate, proposed, or petitioned; state listed (only relevant for Idaho); BLM Sensitive; Forest Service Sensitive; Forest Service Management Indicator Species (MIS); Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA);
- Proposed methods of data collection;
- Proposed temporal and spatial surface use stipulations; and
- Proposed exceptions to the proposed surface use stipulations.

Big Game

For all species of big game exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated animals to disturbance. If the animals are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season. Proposed game conservation (PGC) measures are found below.

Antelope Fawning Areas

- PGC-1 No construction May 1 to May 30.
- PGC-2 Weekly monitoring will commence May 15.
- PGC-3 If animals are present after May 15, no construction until two consecutive weekly monitoring¹ sessions show no animals present or until July 1 if animals are present.

Antelope Winter Range

- PGC-4 Weekly monitoring will commence November 15.
- PGC-5 Construction may continue past November 15 if no animals are detected, but contractor must be prepared to shut down once four or more antelope are seen in mapped habitat, and may not start work until March 1 at the earliest and if the following conditions are met.
- PGC-6 Weekly monitoring will be reinitiated, beginning February 15.
- PGC-7 If animals are present, no construction until May 1 or until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions confirm no animals are present.

Bighorn Sheep Lambing Grounds

- PGC-8 No construction May 1 to May 30.
- PGC-9 Weekly monitoring will commence May 15.
- PGC-10 If animals are present after May 30, no construction until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions show no animals present or until July 1 if animals are present.

Bighorn Sheep Winter Range

- PGC-11 Weekly monitoring will commence November 15.
- PGC-12 Construction may continue past November 15 if no animals are detected, but contractor must be prepared to shut down once one or more big horn sheep are seen in mapped habitat, and may not start work until March 1 at the earliest, and if the following conditions are met.
- PGC-13 Weekly monitoring will be reinitiated beginning February 15.
- PGC-14 If animals are present, no construction until May 1, or until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions confirm no animals are present.

Bighorn Sheep Year-long Habitat

- PGC-15 Surface disturbance is prohibited year-round within mapped habitat.

Elk Calving Areas

¹ Monitoring constitutes two events per week with suitable weather conditions (no visual limitations – fog, precipitation) in a 1-mile buffer around active project facilities (for the following species: antelope fawning and winter range, big horn sheep lambing and winter range, elk calving and winter range, moose calving and winter range, and mule deer fawning and winter range).

- PGC-16 No construction May 1 to May 30.
- PGC-17 Weekly monitoring will commence May 15.
- PGC-18 If animals are present after May 30, no construction until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions show no animals present or until July 1 if animals are present.

Elk Winter Range

- PGC-19 Weekly monitoring will commence November 15.
- PGC-20 Construction may continue past November 15 if no animals are detected, but contractor must be prepared to shut down once four or more elk are seen in mapped habitat, and may not start work until March 1 at the earliest, and if the following conditions are met.
- PGC-21 Weekly monitoring will be reinitiated beginning February 15.
- PGC-22 If animals are present, no construction until May 1 or until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions confirm no animals are present.

Moose Calving Areas

- PGC-23 No construction May 1 to May 30.
- PGC-24 Weekly monitoring will commence May 15.
- PGC-25 If animals are present after May 30, no construction until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions show no animals present or until July 1 if animals are present.

Moose Winter Range

- PGC-26 Weekly monitoring will commence November 15.
- PGC-27 Construction may continue past November 15 if no animals are detected, but contractor must be prepared to shut down once one or more moose are seen in mapped habitat, and may not start work until March 1 at the earliest, and if the following conditions are met.
- PGC-28 Weekly monitoring will be reinitiated beginning February 15.
- PGC-29 If animals are present, no construction until May 1 or until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions confirm no animals are present.

Mule Deer Fawning Areas

- PGC-30 No construction May 1 to May 30.
- PGC-31 Weekly monitoring will commence May 15.
- PGC-32 If animals are present after May 30, no construction until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions show no animals present or until July 1 if animals are present.

Mule Deer Winter Range

- PGC-33 Weekly monitoring will commence November 15.
- PGC-34 Construction may continue past November 15 if no animals are detected, but contractor must be prepared to shut down once four or more mule deer are seen in mapped habitat, and may not start work until March 1 at the earliest, and if the following conditions are met.
- PGC-35 Weekly monitoring will be reinitiated beginning February 15.

- PGC-36 If animals are present, no construction until May 1 or until two consecutive weekly monitoring sessions confirm no animals are present.

Other Mammals

Proposed mammal conservation (PMC) measures are found below.

Black-Footed Ferret (bff)

White-tailed prairie dog colonies that are larger than 200 acres are considered suitable habitat.

- PMC-1 No surface disturbance will occur in bff non-block-cleared areas that are part of a white-tailed prairie dog complex that is greater than 200 acres and identified by USFWS as a potential bff reintroduction area (USFWS 1989) until cleared by species specific presence/absence protocol level surveys.
- PMC-2 When pre-construction presence/absence protocol surveys (USFWS 1989) need to be conducted, surveys will be conducted in the appropriate season to meet agency survey and timing requirements before the start of construction.
- PMC-3 In the event bff are documented, construction will cease and the USFWS will be notified. In addition, the transmission line or structures will be relocated to minimize direct impacts to prairie dog colonies to the extent possible.

Pygmy Rabbit

No surface disturbance of active burrows will occur.

- PMC-4 The year prior to construction, protocol level surveys (Ulmschneider 2004) will be conducted in suitable and occupied habitat (defined by project-specific mapping conducted in 2008) within 300 feet of, and including the ROW.
- PMC-5 During the protocol level surveys, any areas of occupied habitat will be mapped with a global positioning system (GPS) unit.
- PMC-6 Where feasible and if needed, the transmission line will be micro-sited to avoid mapped occupied habitat.
- PMC-7 Within 30 days prior to construction, previously occupied habitat will be re-visited to document presence. Occupied habitat will be re-mapped electronically and flagged in the field to allow additional micro-siting to avoid the occupied habitat to the extent possible.

White-Tailed Prairie Dog

Where possible, occupied habitat will be avoided. See proposed conservation measures associated with the black-footed ferret.

Wyoming Pocket Gopher

- PMC-8 Conduct protocol level surveys within suitable habitat in segments 2, 3, and 4 (Keinath and Beauvais 2006), to determine species occupation in ROW.
- PMC-9 Avoid ground disturbance where species is documented.
- PMC-10 Previously documented occurrences will be avoided during operation and maintenance activities.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated animals to disturbance. If the animals are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season.

Raptors

Proposed raptor conservation (PRC) measures are found below.

Bald EagleActive Nests

- PRC-1 A pedestrian or aerial survey of known nest locations within a 1 mile buffer of active project facilities will be conducted no more than 2 weeks prior to construction.
- PRC-2 If nesting bald eagles are present, the USFWS will be notified and monitoring will be conducted until the young have fledged or the nest fails, at which point construction can begin.
- PRC-3 If no nesting activity has been initiated by April 1, construction will be permitted for the remainder of the nesting season without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season. In addition, if topography is such that the Project activities are out of line of sight of the nest, the surface use stipulation will be waived.

Winter Roosts

Known winter roosts will be monitored and exceptions based on bird occupancy:

- PRC-4 If roosting activity has been initiated, then no construction will be initiated; however, if no roosting activity has been initiated by January 1, then construction will be permitted for the remainder of the roosting season without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated animals to disturbance. If the animals are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season. In addition, if topography is such that the Project activities are out of line of sight of the roost, the surface use stipulation will be waived.

Burrowing Owl

- PRC-5 Within 30 days prior to construction, protocol level surveys (CDOW 2007) will be conducted in suitable, or occupied habitat. Active burrows will be mapped electronically and flagged in the field to determine if transmission line features can avoid burrows. If avoidance is not feasible, construction will not begin until August 16.

Ferruginous Hawk

- PRC-6 A pre-construction pedestrian or aerial survey will be conducted two weeks prior to construction, to identify active nests within 1 mile of the ROW.
- PRC-7 If an active nest is present, monitoring will be conducted until the young have fledged or the nest fails, which ever occurs sooner, and no surface-disturbing activities will occur within 1 mile of the nest while the nest is active.
- PRC-8 If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction surveys construction will occur without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season. In addition, if topography is such that the Project activities are out of line of sight of the nest, the surface use stipulation will be waived.

Flammulated Owl

- PRC-9 Pre-construction protocol level surveys (USFS 1993, 2008) will be conducted during the appropriate seasonal timeframe prior to construction in suitable habitat, to identify active nests within 0.25 of a mile of the ROW.
- PRC-10 If an active nest is found during the protocol level surveys, construction is prohibited within 0.25 mile of the nest until monitoring shows that the young have fledged or the nest fails, which ever occurs sooner.
- PRC-11 If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction protocol surveys, construction will occur without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season.

Golden Eagle

- PRC-12 A pedestrian or aerial survey of known nest locations will be conducted weekly no more than 2 weeks prior to construction.
- PRC-13 If nesting eagles are present, monitoring will be conducted until the young have fledged or the nest fails, at which point construction can begin.
- PRC-14 If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction surveys construction will occur without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season. In addition, if topography is such that the Project activities are out of line of sight of the nest, the surface use stipulation will be waived.

Northern Goshawk

- PRC-15 Pre-construction pedestrian surveys (USFS 1993, 2008) will be conducted during the appropriate seasonal timeframe prior to construction in suitable habitat, to identify active nests within 0.5 of a mile of the ROW within suitable habitat.
- PRC-16 If an active nest is found during the protocol level surveys, construction is prohibited within 0.25 mile of the nest until monitoring shows that the young have fledged or the nest fails, which ever occurs sooner, and no surface-disturbing activities will occur within 0.5 mile of the nest while the nest is active.
- PRC-17 If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction surveys construction will occur without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season.

All Other Raptors

- PRC-18 Pre-construction surveys will be conducted during the appropriate seasonal timeframe prior to construction, to identify active nests within 0.5 of a mile of the ROW within suitable habitat.
- PRC-19 If an active nest is found during the protocol level surveys, construction is prohibited within 0.5 mile of the nest until monitoring shows that the young have fledged or the nest fails, which ever occurs sooner.
- PRC-20 If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction surveys construction will occur without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season. In addition, if topography is such that the Project activities are out of line of sight of the nest, the surface use stipulation will be waived.

Other Avian

Proposed avian conservation (PAC) measures are found below. It should be noted, the Companies are preparing a Sage grouse mitigation plan to be submitted under separate cover.

Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse

- PAC-1 All previously identified Columbian sharp-tailed grouse leks within 1 mile of the center line of the Project will be surveyed during the breeding season (March 15 to June 15) prior to construction to determine if the lek is active. If no lek activity is observed by April 15th, no further restrictions apply for that year. Measures PAC-2, -3, and -4 will not apply if lek is not active.
- PAC-2 Surface disturbance will be prohibited year-round within 0.25 mile of previously documented leks.
- PAC-3 No surface disturbance from 0.25 mile to 0.65 mile of a known active lek from March 1 to April 30. If no lek activity is observed by April 15th, no further restrictions apply for that year. If lek activity is observed, surface disturbance from 0.25 mile to 0.65 mile may not occur until after June 30.
- PAC-4 Surface disturbance occurring more than 0.65 mile from the lek may occur at any time.
- PAC-5 Notification will be placed in areas frequented by on-site personnel (such as break rooms) to advertise the importance of complying with these restrictions.
- PAC-6 Operation and maintenance activities will be scheduled to avoid working within 0.65 mile of previously documented leks from March 15 to July 15.

Temporal and spatial restrictions do not apply when lek or nesting and brood rearing habitat is separated from Project activities by other forms of human disturbance (e.g., agriculture, highways) or by line of sight barriers.

Greater Sandhill Crane

- PAC-14 A preconstruction aerial survey of suitable habitat and historic nest sites will be conducted.
- PAC-15 Nesting pairs within 0.5 mile of the ROW will be monitored until the nest is vacated, the young are no longer dependent on the nest, or June 30, whichever occurs sooner, and no surface-disturbing activities will occur within 0.5 mile of the nest while the nest is active.

- PAC-16 If no nesting pairs are observed during pre-construction surveys, construction can begin.
- PAC-17 In the event that the nest site is separated from the Project activities by other forms of human disturbance (e.g., a highway or active cropland), or by line of sight barriers, construction may start

Long-Billed Curlew

- PAC-18 Within 30 days prior to construction, protocol level surveys will be conducted in known and occupied habitat within a 1 mile buffer of active project activities. Active nests will be mapped electronically and flagged in the field and monitored until the nest is vacated or June 30, whichever comes first, at which time construction can commence.

Mountain Plover

- PAC-19 Pre-construction protocol level surveys (USFWS 2002) will be conducted during the appropriate seasonal timeframe prior to construction in suitable habitat, to identify active nests within 0.25 mile of the ROW. If no nests are found, construction can commence.
- PAC-20 If an active nest is found during the protocol level surveys, monitoring will be conducted until the young have fledged or the nest fails, whichever occurs sooner, and no surface-disturbing activities will occur within 0.25 mile of the nest while the nest is active.
- PAC-21 If no active nests are discovered during the pre-construction surveys (USFWS 2002), construction will be permitted for the remainder of the nesting season without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season. In addition, if topography is such that the Project activities are out of line of sight of the nest, the surface use stipulation will be waived.

Three-Toed Woodpecker

- PAC-22 Pre-construction protocol level surveys will be conducted during the appropriate seasonal timeframe prior to construction in suitable habitat, to identify active nests within the ROW.
- PAC-23 If an auditory response is received and an active nest is found, monitoring will be conducted until the young have fledged or the nest fails, whichever occurs sooner, and no surface-disturbing activities will occur within 0.25 mile of the nest while the nest is active.
- PAC-24 If no nests are discovered, construction will be permitted for the remainder of the nesting season without further monitoring.

Exceptions include areas where regular human activity occurs (e.g., along highways) which has acclimated the birds to disturbance. If the birds are habituated to disturbance, the surface use stipulation will be waived for the entire season.

Plants

Proposed plant conservation (PPC) measures are found below.

Blowout Penstemon (*Penstemon haydenii*)

PPC-1 Surface disturbance will be allowed in suitable habitat where species-specific surveys have determined that no populations are present. The species-specific surveys will be conducted the year prior to construction, and the proposed disturbance areas will be redesigned to avoid direct impact to populations.

Colorado Butterfly Plant (*Gaura neomexicana coloradensis*)

PPC-2 Surface disturbance will be allowed in suitable habitat where species-specific surveys have determined that no populations are present. The species-specific surveys will be conducted the year prior to construction, and the proposed disturbance areas will be redesigned to avoid direct impact to populations.

Slickspot Peppergrass (*Lepidium pappileferum*)

PPC-3 Surface disturbance will be allowed in suitable habitat where species-specific surveys have determined that no populations are present. The species-specific surveys will be conducted the year prior to construction, and the proposed disturbance areas will be redesigned to avoid direct impact to populations.

Ute Ladies'-Tresses Orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*)

PPC-4 Surface disturbance will be allowed in suitable habitat where species-specific surveys have determined that no populations are present. The species-specific surveys will be conducted the year prior to construction, and the proposed disturbance areas will be redesigned to avoid direct impact to populations.

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