Scoping Report

Gateway West Transmission Line Project

Prepared for:

Bureau of Land Management

5353 Yellowstone Road
PO Box 1828
Cheyenne, WY 82003-1828
(307) 775-6116
Fax (307) 775-6203

Prepared by:

Tetra Tech

3380 Americana Terrace, Ste. 201
Boise, ID 83706
Phone: (208) 389-1030
Fax: (208) 389-1183

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

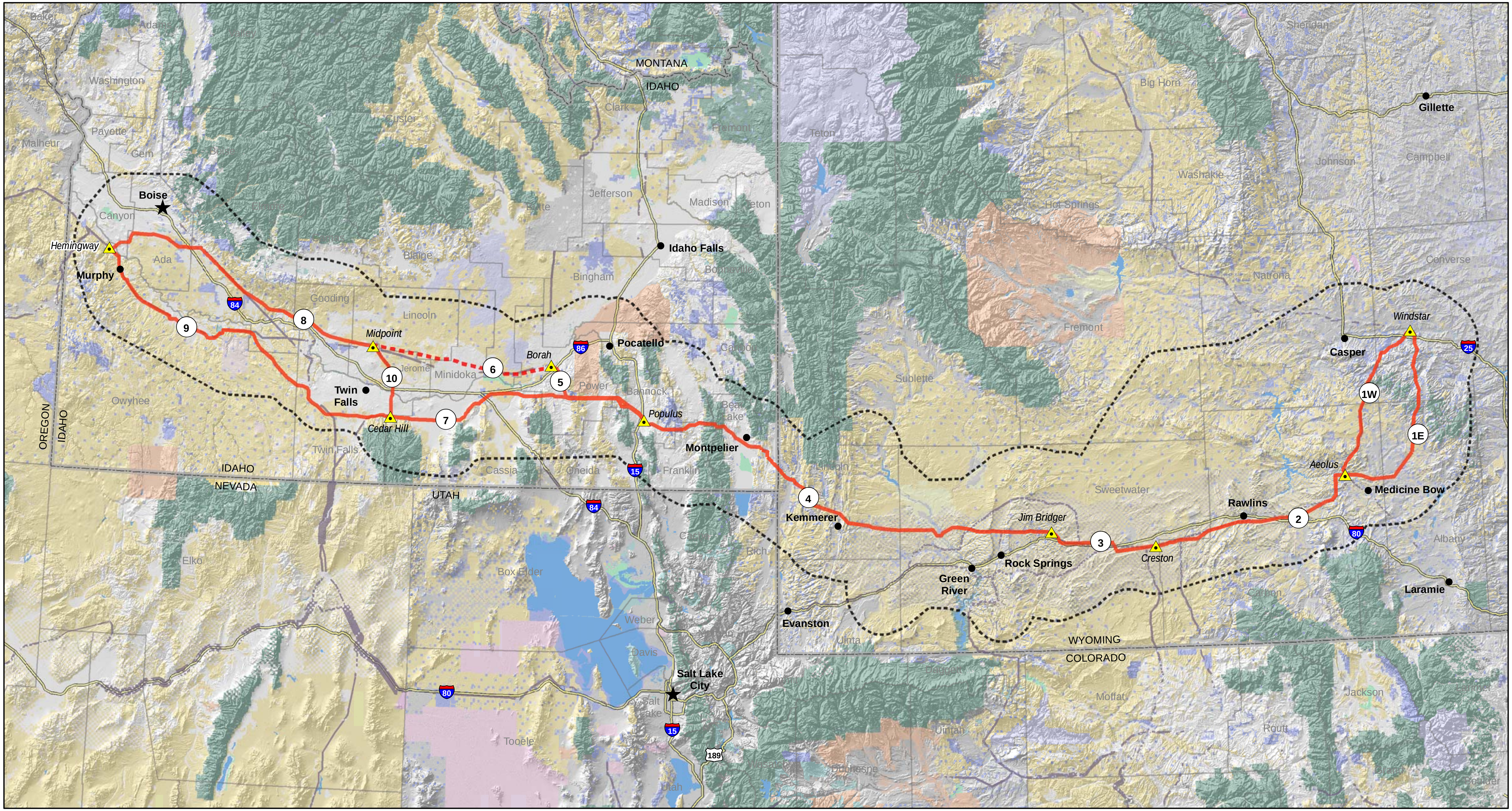
This report describes the public scoping process for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It documents outreach efforts, summarizes the comments received, and identifies any issues raised and suggested alternatives to the proposed action. Comments will be addressed in the Draft EIS rather than in this summary. The document has been prepared for the public, decision-makers, and EIS team members to easily see the common themes in scoping comments and issues. While writing the DEIS, the individual comments will be evaluated more in depth. Additionally, the comment tracking database will include a brief description of how each comments was handled during development of the DEIS.

1.1. Brief Project Description

Idaho Power Company and PacifiCorp, collectively known as the Companies, applied to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a Right-of-Way (ROW) Grant to use public lands for portions of the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (Gateway West of Project) on April 18th, 2007. The original application was amended in July 2008 to reflect changes in Project facilities. BLM is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and will coordinate the preparation of the environmental analysis and related environmental laws with cooperating agencies. The BLM will consider these applications in accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2800, and decide whether to issue the ROW Grant.

Activities in the project include construction or reconstruction (increasing capacity) of a transmission line, substations, access roads, and communication sites. The transmission line would be built to 500 kilovolt (kV) standards, although some of it would be energized at 230 kV initially. The support structures would generally be steel lattice structures, with some monopole where needed to minimize effects on land uses.

The route for the proposed line is divided into 10 segments, with a substation at the end of each segment. Figure 1 shows the general route of the proposed transmission line and locations of the substations and access roads.



Project Features

- Approximate Substation Location
- Segment Designation
- Preliminary Proposed Corridor
- No New Transmission Facilities Required
- Study Area Boundary
- Potential West Wide Energy Corridor

Administrative

- City
- County Boundary
- State Boundary

Transportation

- Limited Access Highway

Ownership

- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Bureau of Recreation
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Indian Reservation
- U.S.Department of Defense
- U.S. National Park Service
- State Land
- Water
- Private

Enlarged Area This Sheet

0 20 40 Miles

Revised 06-24-08

Transmission Line Segments
Gateway West 230/500kV
Transmission Line Project
Idaho, Wyoming
FIGURE 1

2.0 SCOPING PROCESS

This section provides a description of the public scoping process, the techniques that were used to notify the public about their opportunity to be involved in scoping, and a brief summary of the public scoping meetings. The scoping comment period occurred from May 16 to July 3, 2008.

2.1. Scoping Announcements

Initiation of the EIS process and the public scoping meetings were announced through the *Federal Register*, press releases, paid advertisements in the media, the BLM Wyoming project web site (http://www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/cfodocs/gateway_west/), as described below.

Federal Register

The Gateway West public scoping process began with the publication in the *Federal Register* of BLM's NOI to (1) prepare an EIS to support BLM's consideration of the Proponents' application for a ROW grant to use public lands for portions of the Gateway West Transmission Line Project; and (2) conduct public scoping meetings. The NOI was published on May 16, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 96, Pages 28425-28426). The NOI is presented in **Appendix A**, **Exhibit A-1** and on the project web site, referenced above).

Web Site

BLM prepared news releases to introduce the project, announce the scoping period, and publicize the scoping meetings and their respective locations. The news releases were posted on the Wyoming BLM project web site (see BLM News Releases contained in **Appendix A**, **Exhibit A-2**).

Media Releases and Public Service Announcements

Announcement regarding the public scoping meetings and scoping process were issued as news releases on May 16 and June 16, 2008, to local and regional newspapers, radio stations and TV stations in Idaho and Wyoming. Legal notices were published in the newspapers of record. **Table 1** shows the newspapers that printed the legal notice (contained in **Appendix A, Exhibit A-3**) on the dates indicated:

Table 1. Legal Notices in Newspapers of Record

Publication Date	Publication	Publication Location
May 18, 2008	*The Times News*	Twin Falls, Idaho
May 18, 2008	*The Casper Star Tribune*	Casper, Wyoming
May 18, 2008	*The Idaho State Journal*	Idaho Falls, Idaho
May 19, 2008	*The Idaho Statesman*	Boise, Idaho
May 20, 2008	*The Rocket-Miner*	Rock Springs, Wyoming
May 21, 2008	*The Rawlins Daily Times*	Rawlins, Wyoming
May 21, 2008	*The News Examiner*	Montpelier, Idaho
May 21, 2008	*The Owyhee Avalanche*	Murphy, Idaho
June 11, 2008	*The Little Chicago Review*	Kemmerer, Wyoming

In addition to legal notices, meeting notices were also published in community calendar listings in local newspapers. This list of publications is listed in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Community Calendar Notices in Newspapers	
Publication	**Publication Location**
The Times News	Twin Falls, Idaho
The Casper Star Tribune	Casper, Wyoming
The Casper Journal	Casper, Wyoming
The Idaho State Journal	Idaho Falls, Idaho
The Idaho Statesman	Boise, Idaho
The Owyhee Avalanche	Murphy, Idaho
The Rocket-Miner	Rock Springs, Wyoming
The Rawlins Daily Times	Rawlins, Wyoming
The News Examiner	Montpelier, Idaho

2.2. Public Scoping Meetings

BLM hosted nine public meetings in June 2008 to provide planning and NEPA information to the public and agencies and allow them to identify issues and concerns to BLM. Public scoping and the scoping meetings were advertised on the BLM project web site, and through the local media. As summarized in **Table 3**, a total of 140 members of the public attended the various public meetings.

Table 3. Public Scoping Meeting Dates, Locations, and Attendance		
Meeting Date	**Meeting Location**	**Attendance**
June 3, 2008	Twin Falls, ID	20
June 3, 2008	Murphy, ID	13
June 4, 2008	Pocatello, ID	11
June 4, 2008	Boise, ID	22
June 5, 2008	Montpelier, ID	7
June 9, 2008	Casper, WY	22
June 10, 2008	Rawlins, WY	12
June 11, 2008	Rock Springs	16
June 12, 2008	Kemmerer, WY	17
Total		140

A scoping packet was provided to all who attended the public meetings and is also available on the BLM's web site and in **Appendix B**.

3.0 COMMENT ANALYSIS

3.1. Comment Analysis

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA define scoping (1508.7) as a way to determine the scope, significant issues to be analyzed, and not significant issues.

To accomplish this, all comments submitted were reviewed by a team of analysts. The team was instructed to look for comments that could be defined as the following types of comments:

- Purpose and Need for the Project.
- Alternative Development Comments – These are comments that indicate another alternative needs to be reviewed.
- Alternative Description and Mitigation Measures – These comments suggest modifications to already defined alternatives that reduce or avoid potential impacts.
- Effects Analysis – These comments specify concerns over the effects on resources or suggest effects that need to be considered and disclosed.

3.2. Processing Comments

A comment database was established to help track comments received throughout the life of the NEPA process. This database received each comment, note, letter, email, or recorded oral communication. Each is assigned a unique number, which is associated both with the one or more comments identified within that communication falling into the above categories and with the commenter name and address. Each identified comment is entered verbatim into the database together with its proposed disposition in the Draft EIS.

Once a comment was identified that met the criteria listed above, the comment was given a code that corresponded with a category listed below. Some comments fit into more than one category. The coding structure was established before analysis began, so not all of the codes listed were used. Due to the way that scoping comments are managed during the EIS development, comments that indicated both a potential alternative or mitigation and a specific resource subject were coded for the alternative proposed. This method was used so that additional alternatives and mitigation could be easily identified.

Codes

10 = Purpose and Need
11 = Company's Purpose and Need
20 = Proposed Action – flaws, more info needed.
30 = Alternative that should be considered.
40 = Mitigation measures suggested
50 = Data request
100 = Social Issues
    101 = demographics
    102 = public services
    103 = housing
    104 = education
    105 = community safety
    106 = transportation
    107 = Environmental Justice
200 = Economics
    201 = Employment
    202 = Income
    203 = Taxes/Taxpayers
    204 = cost to land owners
300 = Noise
400 = Visual Quality
500 = Historical/Cultural Resources, Native American interests
600 = Air Quality
700 = Water
800 = Wildlife
    801 = winter range
    802 = sage or sharptailed grouse

803 = water fowl
804 = passerine birds
805 = bats
806 = amphibians and reptiles
807 = raptors
808 = small mammals
809 = large mammals
900 = Recreation
1000 = Access
1100 = Vegetation/Weeds
1200 = Fish
1300 = Special Designations
1400 = Land Use
1401 = Eminent domain
1402 = irrigation
1403 = mining
1500 = GHG/Climate
1600 = EIS content/Focus
1700 = road construction
1800 = cumulative effects
2000 = comment associated with maps, noted by a sticker on the comment.

Scoping continues throughout the DEIS writing process. While the BLM requested that scoping comments be postmarked by July 3, 2008 to be of the most use, we have included comments that were received by July 11, 2008 in this summary. Comments that come in later than that date will be reviewed to determine if new issues were raised that need to be included in the EIS, but the specific comment was not identified in this summary. All comments received were included electronically in the comment database, along with a copy of the comments after the analysis which indicated how comments were coded. Appendix C contains a summary of the comment database through July 11, 2008.

Data requests were noted during comment analysis, but are not included as scoping comments in this report.

In the following sections, comments have been grouped, consolidated, and edit to highlight the specific concerns and make it easier to locate issues. The EIS team will use these comments in development of the EIS, and the individual comments will be evaluated more in depth if needed to understand the concern. Additionally, the comment tracking database includes a brief description of how each comments was handled during development of the DEIS. In most cases, they are not direct quotes from comments. Comments are not addressed in this summary, they will be addressed in the Draft EIS.

3.3. Purpose and Need for the Project

The proposed project has a purpose and need developed by the proponents and one developed by the agencies.

3.3.1 Comments Related To The Agencies' Purpose and Need (Code 10)

- Consider the need to meet energy needs versus supplying environmental amenities/needs
- Where is energy development appropriate and inappropriate and why?
- It is inappropriate to define the purpose and need as allowing electricity to be transferred from point A to point B.
- Could the need for the power lines be avoided altogether with conservation and efficiency?

3.3.2 Comments Related To The Proponents' Purpose and Need (Code 11)

- Demand-side management may reduce or eliminate need for new transmission.
- What existing or proposed lines could be upgraded to eliminate the construction of parts or the entire Project?

- Has investing in local wind projects been considered rather than the transmission line?
- Why are this line and all the other existing proposed and foreseeable corridors needed?
- Describe the structure of the industry and parties involved in transmission and power and large and small projects.
- Western Area Power Administration may require a contractual agreement to ensure the integrity of the Federal power system.

3.4. Alternatives (Code 30)

In addition to comments summarized below, comments in this category included statements for or opposed to the Proposed Action as described in the scoping material.

3.4.1 Co-Locate With Other Facilities

- The route should closely follow existing highway corridors or other transmission line /utility corridors.
- The power line should more closely track Interstate 80.
- Coordinate with the new alignment and ROW for the Kuna Mora Road in such major long-range planning efforts in the Treasure Valley and use the same ROW where possible.
- Evaluate the road and transportation network to avoid impacts to sage-grouse habitat where feasible, and close or decommission unneeded roads and corridors.
- Follow the freeway to Salt Lake and then head north along existing routes.
- Include a fully-considered alternative aligned directly adjacent to the existing transmission line corridor throughout Segment 4.
- Consider an alternative that follows the existing PacifiCorp 500kV line from Midpoint to Hemingway north of the Snake River.

3.4.2 Generation

- Consider a “renewables-only" alternative that would result in the transmission of energy coming solely from renewable, non-carbon emitting sources with little to zero carbon emissions.
- Consider placement of the transmission line in such a manner to enhance the broader development of alternative energy sources.

3.4.3 Specific Routing Requests

- Route corridors to avoid direct impacts or visual impacts to the settings of these sites to the greatest extent possible.
- Consider a route that avoids the FMC mining area.
- Located south of Kemmerer, the alternative corridor would avoid many, if not all, of the visual effects on the setting of the Sublette Cutoff, Emigrant Springs and the emigrant gravesites.
- Require the power line to follow existing roads and power line corridors, closely parallel I-80 through its entire route in Wyoming, and on into Utah in Salt Lake City. There it could turn north and follow the 1-15 corridor north to I-86 and then run west from there.
- Take a more conservative approach to routing and constructing power lines within this segment (Bates Hole Management Area).

- Consider a route that follows the existing power line ROW to Dempsey Ridge; follow ridgeline north to Coke Mountain; turn westerly and follow Sublette Canyon west-northwest; proceed northwesterly to Quealy Reservoir; follow Quealy Canyon westerly to the existing corridor.
- From Kemmerer, proceed westerly-northwesterly across the Elko Mine and along the existing pipeline corridor to Fossil; proceed westerly in the bottom of the Twin Creek drainage to T2IN; R118W; Sec. 10; turn southwesterly at this location to the extreme southern boundary (center section) of T21N; R118W; Sec. 9; proceed due west to the extreme southeastern comer T21N; R119W; Sec 12; proceed generally westerly to Sage Junction; proceed northwesterly across Wyoming Highway 89; proceed northerly to the existing pipeline corridor (T22N; R120W; Sec 26); proceed northwesterly to a point .25 mile west of Lincoln County Road 7; follow this road northerly to the existing power line ROW.
- Route the Hammett to Hemmingway section north of the Snake River, through the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) to limit visual obstructions.
- Consider a route on the east side of U.S. 30 to the lines South of Cokeville to avoid Cokeville Meadows.
- Follow Demsey Ridge up to Sublette Canyon then NW to Quealy Reservoir instead of the green lines south of Highway 30.
- Avoid the Shirley Basin and Bates Hole, and pass to the west of the Shirley Mountains following east of the Kortes Dam and Hanna-Leo Roads.
- In Rawlins, consider the solid red line to avoid impacts on wetlands.
- Route the line between Hammett and the Hemmingway substation north of the Snake River, through the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA).
- Consider route alternatives in the Populus to Cedar Hill segment to minimize sage grouse leks and associated habitat.
- Avoid the proposed irrigation water storage reservoir on Sublette Creek southeast of Cokeville, Wyoming.
- Consider a route farther south, indicated by the green line near Kemmerer to avoid impacts on the Sublette Cutoff, Nancy Hill and Alfred Corum grave sites, and Emigrant Springs.
- Move the line completely away from the (historical) trails.
- Route away from sage grouse habitat.
- What other areas, close to cities and close to existing grids, would provide suitable sites?
- North Kemmerer Alternative. The red line that begins at Point C and extends to Point F. This alignment is north of the existing transmission corridor and it is our understanding that this is currently the proponent's preferred alternative
- Avoid OCI leases because of potential conflicts with future trona extraction and possible subsidence concerns.

3.5. Mitigation Measures and Monitoring (Code 40)

- Detail mitigation steps that will be taken to minimize air quality impacts.

- Bury the lines where practical or feasible and locate the line where burying it is feasible.
- Design the proposed project to include an effective feedback element, including implementation and effectiveness monitoring.
- Define, and prevent, unnecessary or undue degradation in an equally direct, positive fashion.
- The southern route crosses various buried pipelines (e.g., tailings, natural gas). Locate support structures to avoid being directly over these lines.
- Mitigate conflicts with other uses of public lands.
- Require that project proponents set aside significant sums for purchase of private lands with important biological values and grazing permits and permanent permit retirement (including plan amendment) for the specific region where the corridor or linked new development is located.
- A structural review will be required and accepted by Western for excavation within 100 feet of any Western Area Power Administration transmission line tower foundation or the structure itself.
- Western will prepare a license agreement to address safety and other provisions related to construction, operation and maintenance activities associated with the new 230 and 500-kV transmission lines and to ensure no activities will interfere or conflict with Western's transmission lines.
- Construction work needs to be coordinated with Western Area Power Administration

3.5.1 Water

- Require affirmative steps toward reducing that impaired water quality status, regardless of whether the State has made a specific allocation of pollutant load to BLM lands.
- Implement accepted best management practices to ensure that all sediments and other pollutants are contained within the boundaries of the work area.
- Promptly re-vegetate disturbed areas that are contributing sediment to surface waters as a result of project activities to maintain water quality.
- Service and fuel equipment away from streams and riparian areas.
- Locate equipment staging areas at least 150 feet from riparian areas.
- Identify measures to protect the drinking water protection areas.
- Identify measures necessary or beneficial in reducing adverse impacts to water quality.
- If dredged or fill material would be discharged into the waters of the U.S., then discuss alternatives to avoid those discharges.

3.5.2 Noxious Weeds

- Prohibit wind energy development along in the Hams Fork, Commissary Ridge and Dempsey Ridge areas.
- Monitor to ensure a weed problem does not develop.
- Wash off the tires and undercarriage of access vehicles prior to site access to dislodge noxious weeds.

3.5.3 Fish and Wildlife

General

- Avoid habitat for sensitive species such as mature to overmature, dense sagebrush stands and other habitats required by the pygmy rabbit as well as dry, gravelly ridges that appear to be the obligate habitat for the Wyoming pocket gopher.
- Avoid prairie dog colonies.
- Avoid sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and other galliform lek areas.
- Avoid areas of critical habitat for species of concern, minimize soil disturbance and erosion on steep slopes,
- Avoid construction activity within big game crucial ranges from November 1 through April 30 to minimize disturbance to wintering wildlife.
- Protect habitat potentially occupied by raptors, such as previously utilized nests.
- Implement protective measures for all winter range areas (not just critical winter range)
- Restore crucial habitat for fish and wildlife populations and mitigate negative effects of the project.
- Mitigate impacts on important wildlife species from construction (including travel and housing) from Lander Region-Ft. Steele to Wamsutter.
- Monitor the effects on fish and wildlife resources and habitats
- Detail mitigation steps that will be taken to minimize or eliminate adverse impacts on listed species.

Sage Grouse

- Within the BLM BHMA, restrict surface activities from March 15 through July 15 within 4 miles of occupied sage grouse leks and avoid surface disturbing activities within sagebrush stands of greater than 10 percent canopy cover. Within this 4-mile buffer, install raptor deterrents on power poles and other high profile structures to help reduce predation on sage grouse.
- Route the powerline to avoid crucial habitat for this species. This includes core areas identified by the State of Wyoming. All surface activity should be prohibited within 5.5 km (3.3 miles) of active Sage Grouse leks. No surface occupancy is preferred to simply limiting use of areas to specific periods, as the latter does not appear to benefit Sage Grouse.
- Roads should not be placed within 5.5 km (3.3 miles) of active leks. If roads are present, they should be seasonally closed during the sage-grouse breeding season from 1 March to 20 June.
- In addition to these practices for protection of active leks, BLM should implement standards for protection of areas used by Sage Grouse in winter, spring, summer, and fall and throughout the lifecycle of the birds.
- To minimize disturbances to wildlife and wildlife habitats…avoid construction of power lines in occupied sage-grouse habitat, especially within 1/4 mile of leks.
- Avoid construction activity within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks from March 1 through May 15
- Avoid activities in known nesting habitat (within a 2-mile radius of leks) until after the

breeding season (July 15).

- In areas where the line must be constructed in Sage Grouse habitat, require the utilities to design towers and install perch deterrents to make the structures less attractive to ravens and raptors.
- Implement on and off-site habitat mitigation to offset any impacts to sage grouse.
- Design overhead power lines to prevent perching by raptors within 1/4 miles of sage-grouse leks. To prevent electrocutions, power lines and conductors should be constructed in accordance with raptor-safe design criteria as suggested in the following publication: Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), 2006. Suggested practices for avian protection on power lines: The state of the art in 2006. Edison Electric Institute, APLIC, and the California Energy Commission, Washington, D. C. and Sacramento, CA.

3.5.4 Reclamation

- Recognizing the difficulty of restoring vegetation on disturbed sites in areas with low precipitation, require more than simply "work to minimize surface disturbance."
- Some disturbance is unavoidable. Evaluate a full range of disturbance area, reclamation techniques available to ensure disturbed sites are quickly and properly reclaimed, and mitigate for unavoidable impacts.
- Replace trees close to where the loss occurred. Native saplings should be used, if practicable.
- Reintroduce and protect from grazing riparian canopy or bank stabilizing vegetation until well established (typically rested for a minimum of two grazing seasons).

3.5.5 Vegetation

- Prohibit disturbance in riparian areas and wetlands to ensure these critical resources are fully protected.
- Leave a buffer strip at least 150 feet wide on each side of streams and water courses undisturbed where healthy riparian vegetation is present.
- Prepare a vegetation management plan to address noxious weeds and exotic plants.

3.6. Effects Analysis

In addition to the comments listed below by resource, a few comments provided instructions on how to conduct NEPA.

3.6.1 Social Issues (Codes 100-107)

- In Idaho, there have been several wildfires from raptor electrocutions on lines falling to earth and igniting cheatgrass or other vegetation.

Environmental Justice

- Evaluate environmental justice populations within the geographic scope of the project.

3.6.2 Economics (Codes 200-204)

General

- As our country energy needs continue to grow, Wyoming can address some of those needs, which is good for Wyoming's economy.
- Wyoming is endowed with abundant wind resources, and this transmission project will

allow the state to take advantage of that endowment through low-impact energy development that brings jobs and tax revenue.

Income

- Construction of a transmission line would help maintain those open spaces and a viable income through wind energy development.

Cost to Land Owners

- Consider the impacts of destroyed cattle guards, increased number of vehicles in the area causing death or impairments of livestock, cut fences, opened gates, damaged range improvements, decreased AUMs and pastures for grazing, decreased palatability of vegetation and forage from road dust and development activities, unsuccessful reclamation of disturbed areas, introduction and spread of noxious weeds; and other detrimental social and economic impacts on livestock operators and livestock management operations.

3.6.3 Visual Quality (Code 400)

- Use visual resource management guidelines.
- Sweetwater County has a large percentage of historic trails.
- What view sheds are affected?
- Conduct a viewshed analysis in each [monument] area create alternatives for areas where visual resources have the potential to be compromised.

3.6.4 Historical, Cultural Resources, Native American Interests and Paleontological (Code 500)

Comments in this category indicated a concern about the potential effects on historical features (mainly trails), treaties, and preserving historical and cultural features.

- Avoidance would seem to be the appropriate method for resolving effects in this case, give the practical difficulties of mitigating or minimizing the effects of the 170 foot steel towers and several hundred miles of transmission lines on a linear historic feature.
- Avoid significant historic and cultural resource sites.
- Identify areas where cultural sites are at risk, and employ measures to protect these resources.
- Discuss effects on historical or traditional cultural places of importance to the area's Native American communities.
- Assure that treaty rights and privileges are addressed appropriately and consult with all affected tribal governments, consistent with Executive Order (EO) 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments).
- Evaluate the potential to impact the setting of significant national historic trail resources in the vicinity of Emigrant Springs, White Hill, the Alfred Corum grave site and the Nancy Hill grave site.
- Corridors could degrade the viewsheds of sites and trails like the Cherokee trail, Overland Trail, and Oregon Trail.
- Evaluate the impact on historic trails and other known sites on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The trail is a long, linear progression of road from the Missouri River to the west coast

and the transmission line would wipe it out where it intersects the trail.

- The Historical Sublett Trail crosses the Dempsey Ridge and must be preserved for future generations.
- Conduct a full inventory of palentological and geological resources.
- Inventory and avoid impacts on cultural resources in parks.
- State agencies have raised serious concerns about paleontological resource conflicts associated with a southern alternative (south of Kemmerer) is warranted.

3.6.5 Air Quality (Code 600)

- Include detailed plans for addressing dust control for the project..
- Disclose the types of fuels to be used, increased traffic during operations, and related VOC and NOx emissions and the effects on air quality and human health evaluated.
- Detail mitigation steps that will be taken to minimize air quality impacts.

3.6.6 Water (Code 700)

- Evaluate the change in road miles and density that will occur as a result of the project and predicted impacts to water quality by roads.
- Ensure all components of State water quality standards are met, not just numeric standards.
- Disclose potential impacts on water including which pollutants are likely
- Include waterbodies listed on the States and Tribes' most current EPA approved 303(d) list.
- Consider impacts on drinking water.
- Require consistency with applicable storm water permitting requirements

3.6.7 Wildlife (Codes 800 - 809)

- Inventory migration routes and provide sufficient tracts of contiguous habitat.
- There are significant sage-grouse, migratory gamebird, and wintering mule deer concerns with the green line (or any line south of US 30).
- New construction and infrastructure will also change crucial habitat for pygmy rabbits, sage thrasher, sage sparrow, birds of prey, and so forth.
- Consider effects on sensitive, threatened, and endangered species.
- Evaluate impacts on rare and/or sensitive wildlife habitats including kipukas, lava tubes, caves (natural and man-made), permanent and seasonal wetlands, riparian areas, sensitive and listed plant species, and old growth forest stands.
- Analyze the effect on fire occurrence, frequency, and severity; especially as it relates to important shrub-steppe and forest habitats.
- Evaluate expected losses of bald eagles due to collisions with the power lines.
- Analyze effects on prairie dog colonies
- Analyze effects on sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and other galliform lek areas.
- Analyze effects of fragmentation of habitat for sagebrush obligate species.

- Analyze effects on interior forest species.
- Consider displacement of big game.
- Analyze effects on habitat for sensitive species (such as mature to overmature, dense sagebrush stands and other habitats required by the pygmy rabbit as well as dry, gravelly ridges that appear to be the obligate habitat for the Wyoming pocket gopher).

Winter Range

- Evaluate blocking or eliminating migratory corridors for elk, mule deer, moose, and pronghorn antelope.
- Evaluate possible negative impacts on elk, mule deer, moose and pronghorn winter range due to habitat loss and degradation.
- Analyze increased motorized access to winter ranges, especially big game winter ranges and its effect on wildlife and wildlife use of habitats.

Sage or Sharp-tailed Grouse

- Consider impacts on sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse populations and habitats.
- Effectiveness of anti-perching devices on the towers needs further study.
- Evaluate impact of construction of overhead power lines on concentration of raptor predation on sage grouse.
- New transmission through the core area southwest of Kemmerer is incompatible with the core area designation and should be avoided if feasible.

Water Fowl

- Analyze impacts on waterfowl and shorebird high-use areas and migration routes, wildlife management areas, national wildlife refuges, and areas of high and concentrated use during spring and fall migration, nesting and brood rearing seasons.

Passerine Birds

- Consider impacts on seasonal passerine bird migration routes.

Bats

- Evaluate bat populations and habitats.

Amphibians and Reptiles

- Evaluate effects on reptile and amphibian populations and habitats, particularly hibernacula.

Raptors

- Evaluate effects on resident and migratory raptor populations and habitats.
- Evaluate effects of noise on raptors during nesting season or near to occupied nests.
- Consider avian mortality due to collisions with high tension lines.

Small Mammals

- Evaluate loss and fragmentation of pygmy rabbit habitat from disturbance and habitat fragmentation.

Large Mammals

- Consider effects on large carnivore (i.e., grizzly bear, wolf, and wolverine) populations

and habitats, including linkage corridors and genetic interchange.

- Effects on crucial wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors.

3.6.8 Recreation (Code 900)

- Analyze the impacts of ORV use along transmission corridors and describe the ability for the BLM to monitor and control ORV use as permitted by land management agencies.
- Impact of noise on hunters and the hunting experience.

3.6.9 Access (Code 1000)

- How many of the lands in or near the corridor are Forest Service roaded, or potentially suitable for BLM WSA status?
- Western Area Power Administration needs continuous, uninterrupted access to its facilities.

3.6.10 Vegetation/Weeds (Code 1100)

- Analyze the effects on noxious weeds and exotic plants.
- Evaluate effects on rare plants.
- Analyze full disturbance effects on sagebrush.

3.6.11 Fish (Code 1200)

- Use best management practices to protect perennial and fish bearing waters.
- Restore disturbed instream habitats.

3.6.12 Special Designations (Code 1300)

- Analyze effects on citizen-proposed wilderness areas roadless areas.
- Evaluate impacts on the Bates Hole Sage Grouse Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

3.6.13 Land Use (Codes 1400)

- Consider effects on livestock grazing from increased off- and on-road traffic, increased number of speeding vehicles, construction of new roads, and modifications to existing roads.
- Consider effects on food and habitat for domestic animals.
- Transmission line construction contractor will need to ensure that all electrical safety clearances are maintained (including proper grounding).
- Wildfires can be started from raptor electrocutions on lines, falling to earth, and igniting cheatgrass or other vegetation.

Mining

- The southern route crosses an area that is subject to surface subsidence from underground mining activities.
- Consider the potential impact of subsidence on any surface structures that would be placed within the mining area.
- Evaluate restrictions an overhead powerline may place upon future drilling activities associated with the mine (to avoid clearance problems that a drill rig may encounter with an overhead powerline).

- Consider that the location of a support tower in the immediate vicinity of two impoundment ponds may interfere with line maintenance or impoundment cleaning activities.

3.6.14 GHG/Climate (Code 1500)

- Analyze greenhouse gas emissions from associated power generation sources and impacts of climate change in the West.
- Analyze impacts from greenhouse gasses emitted by the transmission line and the fossil fuels that will be mined.

3.6.15 Road Construction (Code 1700)

- Evaluate effects of any proposed road improvements, new road construction, and general ROW construction and operation activities on the area.

3.6.16 Cumulative Effects (Code 1800)

- Take into consideration the possibility that whatever route is chosen may eventually carry more transmission lines and pipelines when choosing this route.
- Clearly depict and evaluate reasonably foreseeable direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to groundwater and surface water resources.
- For groundwater, identify the potentially affected groundwater basin and analyze any potential for subsidence and impacts to springs or other open water bodies and biologic resources.
- Consider cumulative impacts of developments upon livestock grazing that affect the livelihoods of grazing permittees.
- BLM must fully examine new corridors/lines/disturbance-including natural gas (Ruby, Bronco), DOE corridors, and others in the region of Idaho, Wyoming and Utah.
- Analyze the impacts of developing wind, geothermal, fossil fuel, etc. in the path of this line.
- Will this line be related to nuclear power plants? INEEL? If so, how might nuclear energy here endanger human health and the environment?