

3.7 RECREATION

3.7.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the potential effects of the Project to recreation. The analysis was based upon the existing level of recreation within the Project Area, as well as a review of studies and reports analyzing the effects of wind development upon recreation and tourism in other locations throughout the United States and in other countries.

The existing recreation resources within the study area were developed and described based upon information provided by each managing entity of that recreation resource. Management of recreation resources within the Project Area are the responsibility of a variety of entities including federal, state, and county agencies and private parties. Public lands make up approximately 80 percent of Harney County. Recreational areas in the county include the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR), Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area, and the Diamond Craters Outstanding Natural Area. There are numerous camping alternatives and recreational activities within these recreational areas, including but not limited to wildlife viewing, geological sightseeing, hunting, fishing, running, and hiking.

This analysis explores recreation sites in the Project Area and discusses the possible effects from the Project to recreation based upon changes in recreation quality. Likewise, the Proposed Action and alternatives are evaluated in the context of existing recreational plans on lands in the Project Area.

3.7.2 Methodology

This analysis evaluated the effects the Project would have upon recreation areas by evaluating whether the Project would directly disturb recreation areas, restrict access to recreation areas, or reduce the scenic value of recreation sites. For the purposes of this analysis, the Project Area included where the transmission line alignments and the wind turbines would be visible. A thorough literature review, as well as interviews, was conducted to determine the existing level of recreational participation in each of the areas. Similarly, a literature review was conducted to determine the possible effects that transmission lines and wind turbines could have upon recreation.

This analysis also evaluated the visual effects that these alternatives could have upon the existing level of recreation at each of the recreational sites. This visual effects analysis evaluated the presence of the transmission line alternatives, route options, and Echanis Wind Energy Project (Echanis Project) from Key Observation Points (KOPs). For the recreation analysis, photographs were taken from recreation area KOPs within the Project Area. If the Echanis Project or transmission lines or both are in the viewshed from the perspective of the recreational area, it was considered to have an effect upon recreationists in that area.

The analysis was informed by comments from the public scoping process that occurred from July to September 2009 and the DEIS comment period from July to September 2010. Specifically, comments from agency representatives, local organizations, and private citizens requested that potential effects be assessed to recreational activities from modifications to the visual and acoustic environments. See the Methodology portion of both the Noise (Section 3.17) and Visual Resources (Section 3.9) sections for a more detailed description of the potential noise and visual effects of concern to the public.

3.7.3 Affected Environment

Currently, no wind farm developments are located within the Project Area. However, two transmission lines are located in close proximity to the Project Area, the Harney Electric Cooperative (HEC) transmission line along Highway 205 and the HEC line located along Highway 78 (see Figure 3.7-1). There are a number of recreational sites within the Project Area and these are outlined in Table 3.7-1. The installation of a wind

turbine facility and other transmission lines would potentially create a change in the existing visual quality of recreating in the area. Table 3.7-1 identifies the annual visitation estimates for recreational sites in the area, along with a brief description of their potential visual exposure to the Project. In our analysis, emphasis is placed upon the recreation areas more likely to experience effects from the transmission line alternatives, route options, and the Echanis Project. The following section identifies and classifies each recreation area by the managing agencies, which include the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), State of Oregon, and private parties.

3.7.3.1 Federal Lands

As described in Section 1, the two federal agencies that manage lands and recreation activities within the Project Area are the BLM and USFWS. Below are details of specific recreation areas within the Project Area, organized based upon which federal agency manages these sites.

Bureau of Land Management

The BLM manages approximately 60 percent of the land within Harney County. There are a number of recreational activities that occur on BLM-managed land in the Project Area, including hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, wildlife/landscape viewing, geological sightseeing, horseback riding, biking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, high altitude running, historic buildings, and hot springs. The BLM also offers a number of developed recreational sites within the Project Area. Table 3.7-1 identifies the developed recreational sites managed by the BLM within the proximity of the transmission line alternatives, route options, and the Echanis Project. The BLM-administered sites are grouped into campgrounds, viewing areas, trails, and a race.

Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area

The CMPA is a part of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The system includes over 886 federally recognized areas and approximately 27 million acres of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Conservations Lands of the California Desert. The NLCS program focuses on the opportunities and management needs of these national treasures.

The boundary of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA) includes the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area (SMWA) and six Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The CMPA encompasses approximately 496,133 acres of land in Harney County, accounting for approximately 20 percent of the County's total land area. It is a popular destination for runners, hikers, hunters, horseback riders, and outdoor enthusiasts. Visitation at the CMPA increased from an estimated 44,000 visitors in 2004 to 113,000¹ visitors in 2009, and illustrating that the area is a popular destination for outdoor recreation in the region (BLM 2010). Campgrounds alone generated approximately \$39,000 in revenue for the CMPA in 2009 (BLM 2010).

¹ BLM updated their methodology for estimating visitation between 2004 and 2009. Although the methodology update could account for a portion of the difference between 2004 estimated visitation and 2009 estimated visitation, the majority of the difference is due to increased visitation at the CMPA in recent years.

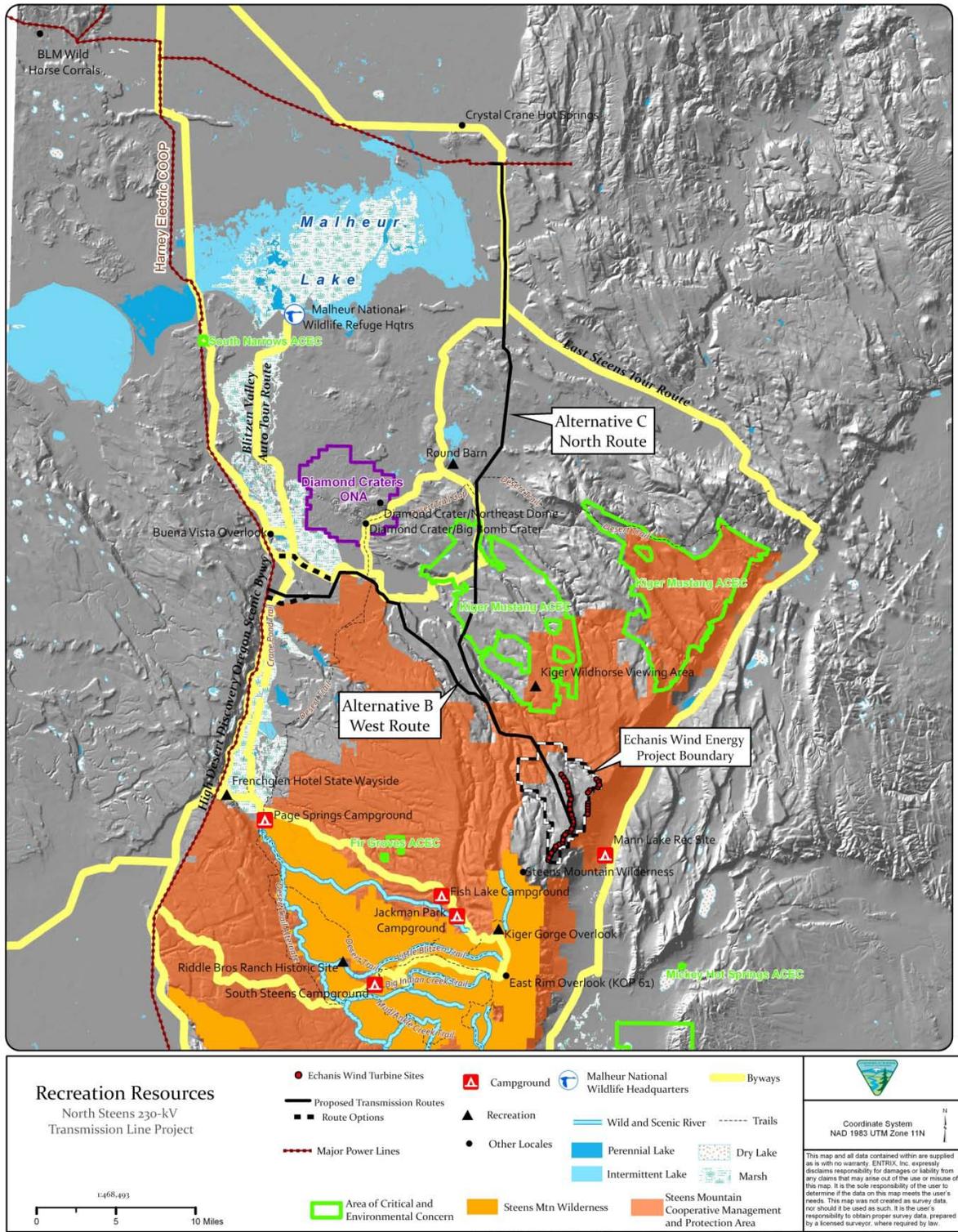


Figure 3.7-1 Recreation Resources.

Table 3.7-1 Recreation Sites and Relevant Data

Recreation Area/Event	Managing Agency	Recreation Opportunity	Annual Visitation	Season
Malheur National Wildlife Refuge ¹	USFWS	Wildlife observation, wildlife photography, hunting, fishing, biking, interpretation, scenic viewing opportunities, historic points of interest	63,000	Year round
Buena Vista Overlook	USFWS	Interpretation and scenic viewing opportunity	63,000	Year round
Round Barn ²	State of Oregon	Historic point of interest	10,000	Year round
Frenchglen Hotel State Heritage Site	State of Oregon	Historic point of interest	Unknown	March 15 to Nov 1
Riddle Brothers Ranch Historic Site ³	BLM	Historic point of interest, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding	550	Mid-June to Oct
Crane Hot Springs ⁴	Private	Swimming	5,475	Year round
Steens Mountain Running Camp ⁵	Private	Running	330	July 18 to July 31
Diamond Craters Outstanding Natural Area ⁶	BLM	Geological sightseeing, and interpretation	16,500	Year round
Fish Lake Campground	BLM	Camping, swimming, picnicking, hiking, and fishing	10,300	July 15 to Nov 1
Jackman Park Campground	BLM	Camping and picnicking	293	July 1 to Nov 1
Kiger Wild Horse Viewing Area ⁷	BLM	Interpretation , wildlife observation, and wildlife photography	100	May 1 to Nov 15
Mann Lake Recreation Site	BLM	Fishing, geological site seeing, wildlife observation,	4,429	Year round
Page Springs Campground	BLM	Camping, picnicking , , fishing, and horseback riding	17,500	Year round
South Steens Campgrounds	BLM	Camping, hiking , horseback riding, and picnicking	9,000	May 15 to Nov 15
Kiger Gorge Overlook Key Observation Point (KOP 58)	BLM	Scenic viewing opportunities, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography		July 1 to Nov 1
High Desert <u>Discovery</u> Scenic Byway	Hamey County Chamber of Commerce	Scenic viewing opportunities, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography		Year round
Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail	Desert Trail Association	Hiking and scenic viewing opportunities	12	
East Steens <u>Tour Route (Highway 78; East Steens Road) #Fields-Denio Road</u>		Scenic viewing opportunities, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography		Year round
East Rim Overlook (KOP 61)	BLM	Scenic viewing opportunities, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography		July 1 to Nov 1
Steens Mountain Wilderness	BLM	Located within CMPA		
Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area ⁸	BLM	Includes most of the above recreation sites	113,000	
Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route ⁹	USFWS	Wildlife observation, wildlife photography, scenic viewing opportunities, interpretation, and geologic sightseeing	47,000	Year round
North Steens Loop Road	BLM	Jackman Park and Fish Lake Campgrounds are located on this section	23,800	July 1 to Nov 1

Table 3.7-1 Recreation Sites and Relevant Data

Recreation Area/Event	Managing Agency	Recreation Opportunity	Annual Visitation	Season
South Steens Loop Road	BLM	South Steens Campground is located on this stretch of road	16,800	July 1 to Nov 1
Entire Steens Loop Road	BLM	Road used to access many of the recreational sites near the Project Area	40,000	July 1 to Nov1

Source unless noted: McDonald, Fred, December 4-5, 2008, BLM, Burns District, Presentation to Steens Mountain Advisory Council, Website (http://www.blm.gov/or/rac/files/FinalMeetingMinutes_December4-52008.pdf) accessed October 27, 2009.

¹ Banking on Nature, 2007 accessed at http://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2007/BankingonNature2006_1123.pdf

² Jenkins, Dick, 2009, Round Barn, Personal communication with Lee Elder, ENTRIX Inc., October 21. The Round Barn also has a private element: the Visitor Center.

³ BLM, August 2005, Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan, Burns District, Hines.

⁴ Krieger, Denise, 2009, Crane Hot Springs, Personal communication with Lee Elder, ENTRIX Inc., October 27.

⁵ Harland Yriate, 2008, Steens Mountain Running Camp Director, Personal communication with Lee Elder, ENTRIX Inc., November 5.

⁶ BLM, 1992, Three Rivers Resource Management Plan: Record of Decision and Rangeland Program Summary, Burns District, Hines.

⁷ Wilson, Patti, 2009, BLM Program Analyst for Horses, Personal communication with Lee Elder, ENTRIX Inc., November 5, 2009.

⁸ Franulovich, Michele, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Burns BLM District, Personal communication with Lee Elder, ENTRIX, Inc., March 23, 2010.

⁹ Goss, Carey, MNWR, Visitor Services Manager, Personal communication with Lee Elder, ENTRIX Inc., March 29, 2010.

The Annual Steens Mountain Rim Run, better known as the Rim Run, is an annual event that began as a private event in 1983 and is now coordinated with BLM staff. This event occurs within the boundaries of the CMPA. The 10-kilometer race begins at an elevation of 7,835 feet near Jackman Park Campground and finishes at the East Rim Overlook at an elevation of 9,700 feet. The course follows the east rim of the Steens Mountains (BLM Website 2009f).

Another activity occurring within the CMPA is big game hunting. In 2008, 403 deer, antelope, and bighorn sheep tags were authorized for the Steens Mountain hunting unit. The high demand for hunting in the area is illustrated by the fact that 6,387 hunters had applied for these hunting tags. Elk hunting also occurs within the Steens Mountain hunting unit. However, elk management for the Steens Mountain hunting unit is combined with five other hunting units outside of the CMPA, making it difficult to quantify the number of elk hunting trips made specifically to this unit (ODFW 2008).

The Andrews Resource Area is governed by two land use plans, the CMPA RMP and the Andrews Management Unit RMP. The CMPA is managed by the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area Resource Management Plan, as identified in the Land Use section (Section 3.6). Amongst the many land use mission goals identified in the CMPA RMP, the recreation related land use mission goal calls for the BLM to provide opportunities for environmental responsible recreation within the CMPA (BLM Website 2005d).

DESIGNATED WILDERNESS AREAS

There is one Wilderness Area within the vicinity of the proposed Project Area, the SMWA. The SMWA is located within the boundaries of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area and encompasses 170,167 acres of land (Steens Mountain Website 2009). Developed recreation sites in proximity to the SMWA include the Page Springs, Fish Lake, Jackman Park, South Steens, and Mann Lake campgrounds, and 10 recognized trails (see Figure 3.7-1). The SMWA is managed pursuant to the Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan (August 2005). The Wilderness and WSRs Plan identifies the guidelines for public use and trails within the Wilderness Area. It should be noted that Project effects to primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities located within the Steens Wilderness are discussed in Section 3.13 Wilderness.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

Numerous WSAs are located within the boundaries of the CMPA, including the Blitzen River WSA, Bridge Creek WSA, High Steens WSA, Home Creek WSA, Lower Stonehouse WSA, South Fork Donner and

Blitzen WSA, and the Stonehouse WSA. A relatively small portion of the High Steens WSA acreage is located outside of the CMPA boundary. It should be noted that Project effects to primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities located within the WSAs are discussed in Section 3.13 Wilderness.

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Two Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) are located within the Project Area: the Kiger ACEC and the Fir Grove ACEC. In these areas, travel is only permitted on designated routes (Linn 2009). Little information exists about the formal or informal recreation opportunities within the Fir Grove ACEC. The relevant and important value of the Fir Grove ACEC is that it is a unique plant community type that consists of a grand fir forest on Steens Mountain. As described in Section 3.14 Transportation, the Three Rivers RMP designated the Kiger and Riddle Mountain HMAs as the Kiger Mustang Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The relevant and important values of the Kiger ACEC include the wild horses that are of historic and cultural value because they represent a genetic heritage that originated from some of the Spanish Mustangs introduced by European explorers. Visitors to the Kiger HMA participate in wild horse viewing, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, photographing, and OHV use.

OUTSTANDING NATURAL AREA

Diamond Craters Outstanding Natural Area contains basaltic lava flows, lava tubes, cinder cones, and maars (Benedict 1985). Three Rivers Resource Management Plan (Three Rivers RMP) stipulates that the BLM is responsible for the maintenance of Diamond Loop Road.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Several river segments within the CMPA are considered WSRs and some have roads, recreation facilities, and historic structures that existed at the time of designation (BLM 2005d). For example, there is a concrete bridge spanning the Donner und Blitzen WSR, along the South Steens Loop Road. These facilities would continue to be maintained and would be replaced as necessary. Generally, the majority of river segments in this area remain primitive in character (BLM 2005d).

Other BLM Areas

Other areas managed by the BLM include multiple campgrounds, viewing areas, and trails. Details about these recreation sites are provided below.

CAMPGROUNDS

Below is a list of the campgrounds that are in close proximity to the Project and could be affected by their proximity to the Proposed Action and alternatives.

Fish Lake Campground: Fish Lake Campground is located on Steens Mountain, approximately 20 miles from the town of Frenchglen. It is located at an elevation of 7,400 feet and contains 23 campsites. Some of the most popular activities include camping, swimming, picnicking, cross county hiking, and fishing in the stocked lake. The campground has running water, bathrooms with vault toilets, firepits, and a boat launch.

Jackman Park Campground: The Park is located on Steens Mountain at an elevation of 7,800 feet. It has six campsites and is located in an aspen grove, making for spectacular fall colors. The campsite is located near the Kiger Gorge Overlook and the campground has picnic tables, firepits, and restrooms with vault toilets (BLM Website 2009a).

Mann Lake Recreation Site: Mann Lake is located below the east face of Steens Mountain. The lake attracts anglers because of the opportunity to catch Lahontan cutthroat trout. Visitors also enjoy camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, and geological sightseeing. The recreational area also has restroom facilities with vault toilets (BLM Website 2009d).

Page Springs Campground: Page Springs Campground is located at the base of Steens Mountain at an elevation of 4,200 feet. The campground is located 3 miles from Frenchglen and includes 36 campsites. The Blitzen River trailhead is located within the campground. The sites have concrete picnic tables, fire rings, ADA-approved water lines, faucets, culverts, and ADA restroom facilities with vault toilets (BLM Website 2009d).

South Steens Campground: The South Steens Campground is located on Steens Mountain approximately 18 miles from Highway 205, on the south loop of the Steens Mountain Loop Road. The campground has 36 campsites, picnic tables, grills, restrooms with vault toilets, and running water. The campground is located near Riddle Brothers Ranch. There are also hiking trails in both Little Blitzen and Big Indian Gorges. A 15 spot equestrian campground is located adjacent to the main campground and includes hitching posts (BLM Website 2009d).

BLM Primitive Campsites and Cabins: There are approximately 120 primitive campsites within the CMPA on BLM-administered land. For those located within the CMPA but not within wilderness, visitors can access these sites with vehicles while for those sites in the wilderness users must hike in (Haakenson 2010). The primitive cabins located in the CMPA are in a state of disrepair and are typically what remains from the early homesteader's cabin. BLM does not actively manage these cabins for recreational use. Similarly, the primitive campsites are not actively managed and no facilities of any type are located onsite. Typical users for these sites are backpackers and hunting parties (Haakenson 2010).

VIEWING AREAS

The viewing areas within close proximity of the Project include the Kiger Wild Horse Viewing Area, the Riddle Brothers Historic Site, the Kiger Gorge Overlook, and the East Rim Overlook. The following paragraphs describe each of these viewing areas.

Kiger Wild Horse Viewing Area: The BLM manages approximately 100 Kiger Mustangs (BLM 2008, Karges 2010). These horses are believed to be the direct descendants of the original horses brought to North America by Spaniards in the late 1500s. The viewing area for these horses is located in the 37,000-acre Kiger mustang habitat area. Trees and brush have grown somewhat in the viewing area and viewing opportunities may be unsuccessful (BLM Website 2009b).

Riddle Brothers Historic Site: The Riddle Brothers Ranch was settled in the early 1900s by three brothers and was purchased by BLM in 1986. The ranch has homemade items, such as furniture and wagon wheels. Although the vehicle access gate is at times closed, access by foot, bicycle, or horse is permitted anytime. Given the rough road conditions, it is recommended that a four-wheel drive vehicle be used to access the site (BLM Website 2009e).

Kiger Gorge Overlook: The Kiger Gorge Overlook provides views of the glacially formed trenches on Steens Mountain from an elevation of 8,970 feet. The overlook is along the shoulder of the Steens Mountain Loop Road.

East Rim Overlook: The East Rim Overlook is also located along the Steens Mountain Loop Road and is south of the Kiger Gorge Overlook. From the overlook, visitors can see into neighboring states (Burns Times Herald Website 2010).

Wildhorse Lake Overlook: The Wildhorse Lake Overlook is located on the Steens Mountain Loop Road near the summit. The overlook has a parking lot and the overlook also offers a 0.4 mile foot trail to access the summit. The Wildhorse Lake Trail also begins at the overlook (NW Magazine Website 2010).

Big Indian Overlook: The Big Indian Overlook is a viewing area that overlooks the Big Indian Gorge. There are no parking lots or amenities at the location (Franulovich 2010).

Little Blitzen Overlook: The Little Blitzen Overlook provides a view of the Little Blitzen Gorge. A hiking trail begins a few miles below this overlook, near the South Steens Campground (PSU Website 2010).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The BLM manages approximately 60 percent of the land within Harney County. In addition to this federal land management, the USFWS also manages three percent of lands within Harney County. The USFWS provides oversight of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR) which encompasses an area of 187,757 acres and is located within the Project Area. Recreation opportunities within the MNWR are discussed below.

MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The MNWR encompasses Malheur, Mud, and Harney Lakes; the Blitzen Valley; and the Double-O unit in Harney County, Oregon. The MNWR was established in 1908 and is headquartered on the south side of Malheur Lake. The MNWR is an internationally famous wildlife and, more specifically, wildlife observation and photography destinations with over 320 species of birds and 58 species of mammals. Recreation activities within the MNWR include wildlife observation, wildlife photography, scenic viewing opportunities, historic points of interest, hunting, fishing, interpretation, bicycling, and hiking. Camping is prohibited within the MNWR, but visitors have access to hotels, resorts, RV parks, and camping in the surrounding communities (USFWS Website 2009). The MNWR is the only national wildlife refuge within close proximity to the Project. Recreation on the MNWR is currently managed under the Refuge's Master plan. Future recreational opportunities would be managed by a Comprehensive Conservation Plan, when the Plan is completed in 2012.

According to a study prepared by ECONorthwest in May 2010, the USFWS reported 59,220 non-resident visitor days to the MNWR in 2006, reflecting low growth of 3.6 percent compared to a decade earlier. The study also stated that, for scenic and wildlife viewing tourists only, USFWS data shows visitor days rising 17.2 percent from 48,134 in 1996 to 56,400 in 2006 (ECONorthwest 2010).

The ECONorthwest study also found that scenic visitation to the MNWR had increased by 17 percent over the 1996 to 2006 period. However, it also found that over this same timeframe hunting and fishing visitation to the MNWR had declined by 60 and 74 percent, respectively. The study concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that scenic tourism had grown considerably in the area over the past decade (ECONorthwest 2010).

Buena Vista Overlook: The Buena Vista Overlook is located in the MNWR and has views of the Steens Mountain, Blitzen Valley, Diamond Craters, Diamond Valley, and portions of Diamond Lane. This site contains interpretive panels and a hiking trail (USFWS Website 2009).

Hiking Trails

The trails located within the Project Area are located on lands managed by multiple entities. Therefore, discussion relative to trails is not separated based upon management. Wilderness trail registration information recorded 2,475 visitors to Steens Mountain Wilderness (SMW) and WSRs for fiscal year 2003 and 2,127 for 2004, including both day-trip and multi-day trip visits. The actual number of visitors to the SMWA and WSRs for the year is believed to be greater, due to the unknown rate of visitor compliance with voluntary wilderness registration. The trails located within or near the Project Area are described below. Unless otherwise noted, the following information was obtained from the *Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan* (BLM 2005d).

Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail: Approximately 32.5 miles of Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail traverses the MNWR, Steens Mountain Wilderness, and WSRs. This route is not an actual trail but rather a corridor marked by occasional cairns. The use on this trail is low, with 12 people

being spotted on the trail's portion in MNWR in late July 2009. Signage on the trail is poor and maps are hard to understand. The trail is easy to lose east of Diamond. The trail provides great diversity of scenery, as well as outstanding opportunities for solitude and wildlife viewing.

Buena Vista Trail: The Buena Vista Trail is located along Buena Vista Lane, within the MNWR. The trail can be driven or walked, beginning at the parking area near Buena Vista Station and ending at the Buena Vista Overlook. This is not in the *Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan* (BLM 2005d).

Little Blitzen Trail: The Little Blitzen Trail is approximately 9 miles long. It begins east of South Steens Campground, then drops to Little Blitzen River, and then up Little Blitzen Gorge. The trail parallels the river and one spur trail exits the canyon. Trailhead facilities include a small dirt parking area with limited parking, one bulletin board, and a registration box. To reach the trail, visitors must walk 0.25 mile farther east on the South Steens Loop Road.

Nye Trail: This primitive, narrow, and steep 1-mile trail switchbacks 1,000 feet down the north wall of Little Blitzen Gorge to its intersection with Little Blitzen Trail. The Nye Trail is located near the mid-point of the gorge. No formal trailhead exists, however parking is allowed within 30 feet of the Cold Springs Road centerline, adjacent to the beginning of the trail.

Big Indian Trail: The Big Indian Trail is approximately 9 miles long and begins at South Steens Campground, where a registration box is provided. The portion of the trail to the first creek crossing is on a closed road presently being converted to a single-track trail. After crossing Big Indian Creek, it follows the creek for 9 miles.

Wildhorse Lake Trail: This 1-mile trail begins on a closed dirt road that leads to the old Wildhorse Lake Overlook. The trail then drops down the north wall of the head of Wildhorse Lake Basin and leads to the shoreline of the lake. The trail is extremely steep with several drop-offs. Limited parking and a registration box are located at the trailhead.

Steens Summit Trail: This 0.4-mile trail is gated and follows an old road that is closed to vehicle access. The trail reaches the 9,733-foot high summit of Steens Mountain and offers views of the surrounding area. Approximately half of the route is located within Steens Mountain Wilderness and the other half is on State of Oregon land. There is limited parking at the trailhead on Wildhorse Lake Overlook Road.

Pike Creek Trail: This 2-mile trail is located on the eastern slope of Steens Mountain, runs along the north side of Pike Creek, and finally follows up the canyon. The road leading to the trailhead crosses private land and, as a result the BLM, has access easements to allow public use. The trail passes through a portion of High Steens WSA and then enters the Steens Mountain Wilderness. The trailhead is at the end of a dirt road and has very limited parking. No facilities are present at this parking area.

Mud/Ankle Creek Trail: This 7.4-mile trail follows an unmaintained two-track dirt road and is open to vehicle traffic for the first mile. At that point, a small parking area and registration box are available. However, motor vehicle access is available to landowners and lessees who are permitted to access private land in the Ankle Creek area. This route provides access to Mud Creek and Ankle Creek, within Ankle Creek Basin. Visitors may park within 30 feet of the road centerline for the first mile of Newton Cabin Road, and are encouraged to park within existing disturbed parking spurs. Visitors may also park at South Steens Campground and walk 0.25 mile west on the South Steens Loop Road to reach Newton Cabin Road.

Blitzen River Trail: This 4-mile trail begins at the trailhead at the south end of the Page Springs Campground and the trail is located along the Donner und Blitzen WSR. The trail offers access to the river and the trailhead has a bulletin board and trail registration box. Camping, toilets facilities, and water are available near the parking area at the campground.

Wilderness Trail: Developed as a nature trail, this 1-mile trail begins at the Page Springs Campground. The trailhead provides limited parking. Facilities at this trailhead are limited to one brochure box. The entire trail length is marked with rock cairns.

Scenic Byways and Auto Tours

There are a variety of scenic byways and auto tour routes designated in the Project Area. Details regarding these scenic byways and auto tours are provided below.

Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway: There are two places to access the 69-mile Diamond Loop Back Country Byway, near the town of Princeton on State Highway 78, or at the junction of State Highway 205 and Diamond Lane. This byway offers wildlife viewing opportunities, historical landmarks, and geologic formations (BLM Website 2010).

Steens Mountain Backcountry Byway: The Steens Mountain Backcountry Byway is also known as the Steens Mountain Loop Road. The byway is approximately 60 miles long and forms a loop. This byway begins and ends in Frenchglen. It provides access to four developed campgrounds (e.g., Kiger Gorge, East Rim, Big Indian Gorge, and Wildhorse), Wildhorse and Little Blitzen Gorge Overlooks, fishing at Fish Lake and along the Donner und Blitzen River, wildflower and wild horse viewing, and an abundance of other sightseeing or photography opportunities. A high clearance vehicle or an all-wheel drive vehicle is recommended for portions of the byway (BLM Website 2010).

East Steens ~~Tour Route Road/Fields-Denio Road~~: This route covers 127 miles beginning in Burns on Highway 78 and ending in Fields. It passes the eastern escarpment of Steens Mountain and the vast expanses of the Alvord Desert. The road passes several hot springs, lakes, wildlife, salt flats, playas, and views of Steens Mountains (Travel Oregon 2011, BLM Website 2010).

Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route: The Blitzen Valley Auto Tour is a self-guided 42-mile auto tour that travels the length of Blitzen Valley. The auto tour route starts at the MNWR headquarters and ends at P Ranch near Frenchglen. The auto-tour route uses the Center Patrol Road and intersects with Diamond Lane and State Highway 205. The tour takes three to five hours to complete and travels past the historic Sod House Ranch, various geologic points of interest, and a variety of wildlife viewing opportunities (USFWS Website 2010).

High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway: The High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway begins at Burns, then proceeds south on Highway 205 and ends in the community of Fields. The byway provides opportunities to view wide-open spaces and solitude. It serves as a gateway to the Steens Mountains, Diamond Craters, Malheur Refuge, Peter French Round Barn, and the Alvord Desert (BLM Website 2010).

State Recreation Sites

The State of Oregon manages two recreation areas within the Project Area. The Frenchglen Hotel is located in Frenchglen and the Round Barn is located near the intersection of the Lava Beds Road and the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway. The State of Oregon completes a recreation plan every five years. This plan, called the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), provides guidance for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program and information and recommendations to guide federal, state, and local units of government, as well as the private sector, in making policy and planning decisions related to recreation. In addition, this plan provides guidance for other Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) administered grant programs and recommendations to the Oregon State Park System programs. Below is greater detail about two State-managed recreation areas in the Project Area.

FRENCHGLEN HOTEL STATE PARK SITE

The Frenchglen Hotel State Park is an eight-room hotel located in Frenchglen. The hotel was built in the 1920s in the architectural style of American Foursquare. The Civilian Conservation Corp remodeled and added to the hotel in 1938. Rooms are available from mid-March to November.

ROUND BARN

The Round Barn is located at the intersection of the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway and the Lava Beds Road. The Round Barn was constructed sometime during the 1870s and the 1880s as a wintertime horse training facility by Pete French. Adjacent to the site on private property is a visitor center, museum, and gift shop (Round Barn Website 2009). It is estimated that 10,000 people visit the Round Barn annually (Jenkins 2009).

Harney County

There are no recreation areas managed by Harney County within the Project Area. However, recreation within Harney County is guided by the Harney County Comprehensive Plan. The plan stipulates that the recreation needs of the county's residents should be satisfied while the need for park facilities would be met by the county. A summary of the recreation goals identified by the County within the plan are outlined below. Harney County may also promote those recreational activities that stimulate economic development.

Private Recreational Opportunities

Many of the recreational sites in the Project Area are located on public lands. However, there are some privately operated sites in or near the Project Area, including the Crystal Crane Hot Springs, Diamond Hotel, Frenchglen Hotel, Steens Mountain Resort, Round Barn Visitor Center, and Fields Station.

CRANE HOT SPRINGS

~~Located west of Crane, these natural outdoor springs are the result of geothermal activity. There are tent sites, recreational vehicle (RV) sites, and cabins. Other nearby activities included rock hounding, hunting, birding, and hiking. It is estimated that approximately 15 people visit the hot springs daily, for an annual total of 5,475 visitors (Krieger 2009).~~

STEENS MOUNTAIN RUNNING CAMP

The Steens Mountain Running Camp has operated in the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area since 1975, with approximately 330 runners and staff participating in one or two week-long camps to train youth for high altitude running each year (Yriate 2008). The base camp is located at an elevation of 7,500 feet near Fish Lake. The training sites include the Blitzen and Big Indian Gorges, Kiger Ridge, and McCoy Creek Canyon (Steens Mountain Website 2009).

3.7.4 Environmental Consequences and Mitigation

This section describes the effects of the transmission line alternatives, route options, and the Echanis Project to recreation resources. The construction and powering of the transmission line alternatives would be conducted in three phases. Phase I would involve the installation of the transmission towers, access roads, and the stringing of a single-circuit (i.e., three conductors or wires) along one side of the towers. This single circuit would operate at 115-kV, but would be designed and have the capacity to operate at 230-kV.

Phase II would be the second construction phase and would involve the installation of an additional 230-kV capacity line (three conductors) on the opposite side of the transmission tower, as was installed during Phase I. In total, six conductors would be installed on the towers, three on each side. This construction phase would occur at some undetermined future date and would not include the construction of new roads or towers. This

construction phase would use the same laydown areas, tensioning sites, and overland routes as was used for Phase I. This phase includes only the installation of transmission lines capable of transmitting 230-kV.

Phase III would not be a construction phase, rather it would involve the increase of power being transmitted 115-kV with Phase I to 230-kV. The transmission line installed in the first phase of the Project would be capable of transmitting this increase in power transmission.

This analysis relies in part upon studies that have evaluated how transmission lines and wind turbines affect recreation. Recreational tourism occurs in the Project Area when people visit the recreation areas identified in Table 3.7-2, drive the scenic byways, hike the trails, and view the landscape. The studies evaluate how the presence of wind farms have affected tourists who visit areas in Scotland and Walla Walla, Washington. Few if any studies have been completed that analyze the effects of transmission lines on recreation. However, evaluation of other recreational areas with transmission lines that traverse their respective properties offers insight into how transmission lines could affect recreation. (Scottish Renewables Forum 2002, Horizon Wind Energy 2007)

Table 3.7-2 outlines the distance and visibility of each alternative, route option, and the Echanis Project for each recreational site. This provides a frame of reference for each of the Project route alternatives discussed below.² This table has been updated since the DEIS was issued, after conducting additional analyses of the visibility of Project alternatives and to address public comments.

Table 3.7-2 Distances to Recreational Sites, Areas, and Events by Alternative (miles)

Recreation Area/Event and Ownership	Distance to Echanis Project	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with S. Diamond Lane Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with Hog Wallow Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative C	Visibility
Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters* (Federal)	33.5	16.5	15.2	16.5	13.2	All of the Alternative B transmission line options would be visible at locations within the MNWR. <u>Alternative C and the Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.</u>
Buena Vista Trail and Overlook (KOP 88) (Federal)	23.8	3.5	1.4	4.0	12.9	Likely that all Alternative B transmission line options would be visible. <u>Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.</u>
Round Barn (KOP 27) (State)	20.7	9.0	9.0	9.0	1.9	Alternative C would be visible within 1.9 miles of this recreation site. <u>Alternative B and the Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.</u>

² Effects due to lighting at the Echanis wind turbines (including lighting effects at nighttime) are addressed in Section 3.9.3.2 of this EIS.

Table 3.7-2 Distances to Recreational Sites, Areas, and Events by Alternative (miles)

Recreation Area/Event and Ownership	Distance to Echanis Project	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with S. Diamond Lane Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with Hog Wallow Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative C	Visibility
Frenchglen Hotel State Heritage Site (KOP 66) (State/Private)	20.6	13.0	15.0	12.5	17.1	Echanis Project wind turbines <u>and</u> all transmission line alternatives would <u>not</u> be <u>hardly</u> visible.
Riddle Brothers Ranch Historic Site (Federal)	14.4	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	Echanis Project wind turbines and the transmission line alternatives would not be visible.
Crane Hot Springs (Private)	41.3	28.9	28.9	28.9	3.0	Already located very close to an existing Harney Electric Cooperative transmission line. <u>Would have views of Alternative C.</u> <u>No views of Alternative B and the Echanis Project wind turbines.</u>
Steens Mountain Running Camp** (on Federal lands) (Private)	7.1	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	Echanis Project wind turbines and all transmission line alternatives would <u>not</u> be visible from the <u>Steens Mountain Running Camp.</u>
Diamond Craters Outstanding Natural Area (KOP 11) (Federal)	20.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	7.0	Alternative B options would be relatively close to the southern border of the Outstanding Natural Area <u>and</u> <u>would be</u> visible. <u>Alternative C and the Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.</u>
Fish Lake Campground (KOP 55) (Federal)	7.1	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	Echanis Project wind turbines <u>and</u> transmission line alternatives would <u>not</u> be visible from the Fish Lake Campground.
Jackman Park Campground (KOP 56) (Federal)	6.7	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	Echanis Project wind turbines <u>and</u> transmission line alternatives would <u>not</u> be visible from the Jackman Park Campground.

Table 3.7-2 Distances to Recreational Sites, Areas, and Events by Alternative (miles)

Recreation Area/Event and Ownership	Distance to Echanis Project	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with S. Diamond Lane Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with Hog Wallow Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative C	Visibility
Kiger Wild Horse Viewing Area (KOP 21) (Federal)	5.8	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	Echanis Project wind turbines and transmission line alternatives would be faintly visible from this area.
Mann Lake Recreation Site (KOP 46) (Federal)	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	Echanis Project wind turbines would be visible along the ridge line as viewed from this recreation site. The site would have no views of the transmission line alternatives.
Page Springs Campground (KOP 64) (Federal)	18.0	14.2	14.9	13.7	15.7	Echanis Project wind turbines and transmission line alternatives would not be visible from this area.
South Steens Campgrounds (Federal)	13.4	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	Echanis Project wind turbines and transmission line alternatives would not be visible from this area.
Kiger Gorge Overlook Key Observation Point (KOP 58) (Federal)	5.3	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	Echanis Project wind turbines and transmission line alternatives would not be visible or hard to distinguish from this overlook.
High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway (KOPs 71, 72, 87) (Various)	20.0	0	0	0	11.5	Alternative B alignments would cross the Byway and would be visible. Alternative C and the Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.
Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail (Various)	8.1	0	0	0	0	Alternatives B and C would cross the trail and would be visible. The Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.

Table 3.7-2 Distances to Recreational Sites, Areas, and Events by Alternative (miles)

Recreation Area/Event and Ownership	Distance to Echanis Project	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with S. Diamond Lane Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with Hog Wallow Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative C	Visibility
<u>East Steens Tour Route (Segment of East Steens Road and Highway 78 /Fields-Denie Road) (KOPs 45, 46, 47, 48) (Various)</u>	2.3	3.1	3.1	3.1	0	Echanis Project wind turbines would be visible along portions of East Steens Road. Alternative C <u>transmission line</u> route would parallel the route and would be visible. Alternative B would not be visible.
East Rim Overlook (KOP 61) <u>(Federal)</u>	7.8	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	Echanis Project wind turbines would be visible <u>but difficult to distinguish</u> from this overlook. The overlook would not have any views of the transmission line alternatives.
Steens Mountain Wilderness <u>(Federal)</u>	1.8	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	Echanis Project wind <u>turbines</u> and the transmission line alternatives would be visible from areas within the Wilderness Area.
Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area <u>(Various)</u>	< 1 mile	0	0	0	0	All of the transmission line alternatives and the <u>Echanis Project wind turbines would be visible, would</u> traverse a portion of the CMPA on private lands.
Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route <u>(KOPs 71, 72, 87) (Various)</u>	19.2	0	0	0	11.5	Alternative B alignments would cross, and South Diamond Lane Option would parallel, the Route and would be visible. <u>Alternative C and the Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.</u>
North Steens Loop Road <u>(KOP 61) (Various)</u>	5.6	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	Echanis Project wind turbines could be visible from some sections of the road along the East Rim. <u>The transmission line alternatives would not be visible.</u>

Table 3.7-2 Distances to Recreational Sites, Areas, and Events by Alternative (miles)

Recreation Area/Event and Ownership	Distance to Echanis Project	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with S. Diamond Lane Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative B with Hog Wallow Route Option	Distance from Closest Section of Alternative C	Visibility
Annual Steens Mountain Rim Run (Federal)	6.7	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	Echanis Project wind turbines would be visible when running the race. <u>The transmission line alternatives would not be visible.</u>
Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway	13.8	0	0	0	0	Alternative B, Alternative C, and the South Diamond Lane Option would parallel the Byway and would be visible. <u>The Echanis Project wind turbines would not be visible.</u>

* Each of the western alternatives actually traverses MNWR, but distance is reflected as mileage to the MNWR headquarters.

** The base camp for the running camp is Fish Lake Campground and Steens Mountain Running Camp. Therefore, the distances are synonymous with one another.

NOTE: Readers are referred to Section 3.9 Visual Resources and Figure 3.19-19 in Cumulative Effects to better understand the visibility of Project facilities from Key Observation Points (KOPs). In many instances, when the chart refers to sites lacking views of the Project it is usually because of distance, intervening landscape features such as escarpments, or vegetation.

The potential effects to recreation during the short-term construction phase and the long-term operational phase of the Project are described below. It should be noted that a variety of Project design features and best management practices to reduce the effects upon recreation, from both the Echanis Project and the transmission line alternatives, would be implemented as part of Proposed Action. These measures are not repeated in the mitigation sections below, but are summarized in Section 2 and listed in Appendix A (A.1.8 and A.3.8).

3.7.4.1 Alternative A – No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, the Echanis Project and the associated transmission line alternatives would not be developed. Thus, no impacts would occur to recreation with this alternative.

3.7.4.2 Echanis Project Effects Common to All Action Alternatives

This section has been updated after the DEIS was issued, in response to public comments and after conducting additional analyses regarding the visibility of Project features from recreational sites. Additional information has also been added concerning the development of wind farms as recreational destinations.

PERMANENT EFFECTS

The Echanis Project would be visible from the Mann Lake Recreation Site (KOP 46; 3.5 miles from the Project) and the East Rim Overlook (KOP 61; 7.6 miles from the Project). ~~The boundary of the Echanis Project site includes approximately 2,353 acres of the CMPA. However, no wind turbines would be constructed within the CMPA. 6 miles from Kiger Wildhorse Viewing Area KOP 21 (KWVA), and 7 miles from the Jackman Campground and Fish Lake Campground. The visual analysis indicated that the wind turbines would be faintly visible from the KWVA, with the turbines being difficult to distinguish on the horizon. KOPs 55 (Whorehouse Meadows) and 57 (Steens Loop Trail) are in the vicinity of Jackman and Fish Lake campgrounds, and the Echanis Project turbines would be approximately 7 miles from these~~

~~locations. The visual analysis revealed that the Echanis Project would be visible at KOP 55 and the Echanis Project turbines would be difficult to identify from KOP 57. The Echanis Project would be visible, but difficult to identify, from the Kiger Gorge Overlook (KOP 58) and from this point of reference a recreationist would be looking down on the turbines from a distance of approximately 5 miles. [This text was removed, additional review (Figure 3.19-19 in Cumulative Effects) shows that the Project would not be visible at these KOPs.] The Echanis Project would be prominent along the ridgeline above the Mann Lake Recreation Site (KOP 46). Additionally, from the East Rim Overlook (KOP 61), the Echanis Project wind turbines would be difficult to distinguish from a distance of 7.6 miles. The Echanis Project would be prominent along the ridgeline above the Mann Lake Recreation Site (KOP 46). Travelers would be able to view the turbines along portions of the East Steens Tour Route (KOPs 45, 46, 47, and 48). When traveling from Frenchglen on the Steens Mountain Loop Road, the wind turbines would be barely noticeable and very small on the horizon from a distance of approximately 20 miles. From the southern boundary of the Diamond Craters ONA the wind turbines would not be visible. Similarly, the wind turbines would not be visible from South Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway near the middle portion of MNWR.~~

Although the Little Blitzen, Mud/Ankle, Big Indian, and Nye Trails are centered around the South Steens Campground, from which turbines would not be visible, the trails extend north and east from the campground and hikers along these trails would not have views of the turbines because of the steep topography of the area and the position of the existing trails.

Some visitors would likely feel that the visual quality of their trip had declined as a result of the wind turbines, while some visitors would find the wind turbines interesting and would travel to view the new development. An example of this is the Wild Horse Wind Energy and Solar Facility operated by Puget Sound Energy in central Washington. Puget Sound Energy constructed a Renewable Energy Center for the 149-turbine, 273-MW Wild Horse Wind and Solar Facility near the town of Vantage, in the Kittitas County, in central Washington. The Center is free to visit and open to the public from April through November. Since the visitor center opened in 2008, it has hosted more than 60,000 visitors. (PSE 2011)

However, it is expected due to the remoteness of this area, that there would be little to no change in the total number of visitors to the area if the Echanis Project were to be developed.

The noise analysis (Section 3.17) identifies three recreational sites (Fish Lake, Mann Lake, and Jackman Park Campgrounds) as sensitive noise receptors. Of these three sites, the site closest to the wind turbines would be the Mann Lake Campground located approximately 2.6 miles from the Echanis Project. Section 3.17 states that noise levels from Project operation or construction would not rise above ambient levels at Mann Lake Campground or the other two campgrounds, resulting from wind turbine operation (31 dBA to 38 dBA) would comply with local standards. Therefore, noise impacts to recreational sites are considered acceptable. Although no noise mitigation measures would be required, implementation of the Project design features specified in Section 2 and Appendix A (A.3.10) would reduce potential noise effects, including noise effects at recreational sites.

TEMPORARY EFFECTS

Temporary road closures that could potentially result in recreational impacts would not occur with construction of the Echanis Project. Traffic would increase during the construction phase of the Echanis Project, however it would not likely be enough to deter recreationists from visiting the area. The trails and areas closest to the proposed turbine locations would be most affected during construction.

Additional temporary effects to recreation during the construction phase of the Echanis Project could involve noise and visual disruption to recreation areas as a result of the presence of workers, equipment, vehicles, and materials.

MITIGATION

To address public concerns regarding potential impacts to recreation caused by the visibility of wind turbines after the DEIS was issued, the BLM has expanded its consideration of potential mitigation measures to include the following:

- 1) Banning commercial messages or symbols (such as logos), trademarks, and messages on the turbines towers and and/or ancillary structures;
- 2) Developing aesthetic offsets where corrective or ameliorative actions are needed to improve the existing condition. Examples could include reclaiming unnecessary roads in the area, cleanup of illegal dumps or trash, or rehabilitation of existing erosion or disturbed areas; and
- 3) Developing interpretive materials or displays that provide information about the Echanis Project wind turbines for public distribution.

No other potential mitigation measures were identified through a selective analysis of wind energy environmental impact statements for projects involving federal lands, including the *Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS* (BLM 2005) and *West Butte Wind Power Right of Way EIS* (BLM 2011). The implementation of these measures would be beyond BLM's direct jurisdiction because the Echanis Wind Energy Project would be located on private land.

No additional mitigation measures would be required because To reduce the potential for short-term construction effects and long-term visual effects upon recreation, PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce effects (Appendix A.3.8). Examples would include:

- The coloration of all exterior components of the wind turbines would be off-white or light gray for the blades, the towers , and the nacelles. The finish of all of these exterior components would be flat, semi-gloss, or galvanized to avoid creating significant glare;
- Any outdoor (i.e., non-FAA required or recommended) lighting would be hooded and directed so as not to shine directly upon adjoining property or public road rights-of-way. Any lighting required or recommended by the FAA for air traffic marking would conform to approved standards established by the FAA;
- Ground disturbance would be limited to that necessary to safely and efficiently install the proposed facilities;
- Access roads and other areas of ground disturbance within the construction limits would be watered, as needed, to remain compact and to avoid the creation of dust;
- No paint or permanent discoloring agents would be applied to rocks or vegetation, to indicate the limits of survey or construction activity;
- Nonspecular conductors would be used to reduce impacts;
- All stakes and flagging would be removed from the construction area and disposed of in a State approved landfill; and
- The Applicant would explore opportunities to notify wilderness users prior to visiting the affected Steens Mountain Wilderness Area and Wilderness Study Areas by publication of the construction schedule in the local media, posting the schedule at administering agency offices, posting the schedule at trailheads or

other recreation access points to the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area, or other means of reaching visitors.

3.7.4.3 Alternative B – West Route (Proposed Action)

PERMANENT EFFECTS

Alternative B would intersect South Diamond Lane east of Diamond, generally follow the road briefly, and then reconnect near the intersection of Lava Beds Road and South Diamond Lane. The alignment would follow South Diamond Lane, then run south to the Center Patrol Road, and finally it would cross Highway 205 and intersect with the Harney Electric Cooperative transmission line.

Alternative B would be 28.87 miles long and the 150-foot ROW would encompass 525.32 acres of land. Of this total ROW acreage, 343.31 acres would be located on private land, 157.97 acres of BLM-administered land, and 24.05 acres of USFWS-administered land. Alternative B would cross 5.9 miles of the CMPA on private lands, 1.32 miles of the MNWR, and the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail. Very few travelers on the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail would likely be affected by walking under the Alternative B alignment, given that much of the trail currently follows existing roads in some sections. A hiking trail that could have distant views of the transmission line would include the Buena Vista Trail. Although the trails in the southern portion of the Project Area are centered around the South Steens Campground, the trails extend north and east from the campground, and hikers along these trails would not have views of the proposed Project because of the steep topography of the area and the position of the existing trails.

Alternative B would be approximately 3 miles from the KWVA; despite this, visual simulation analysis of the area surrounding the KWVA reveals that Alternative B would be faintly visible. Alternative B would cross the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route along the portion of the auto route that is located on Highway 205, and Alternative B would also be 4 miles from the Buena Vista Overlook.

Additionally, visitors traveling the High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway (Highway 205) would see Alternative B when it crossed the Byway at KOPs 71, 72, and 87. For those travelers using South Diamond Lane, the transmission line would likely be visible near the intersection of South Diamond Lane and Lava Beds Road and it would remain visible until near the town of Diamond.

Some visitors would likely feel that the visual quality of their trip had declined as a result of the additional transmission lines. However, given that the Harney Electric Cooperative line is currently visible from or while accessing the developed recreation areas, construction of Alternative B would likely result in little to no change in the total number of visitors to the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route, the High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway, or the Buena Vista Overlook.

Improvements to existing access roads, new access roads, and overland access roads (approximately 2.19, 0.19, and 25.68 miles, respectively) would be required for vehicle and equipment access to the transmission line corridor during initial construction, and for inspections, maintenance, and repair of poles, insulators, and conductors during long-term operation. Existing unpaved access roads would be widened and new access roads would be constructed across BLM and USFWS-administered lands (1.41 and 0.59 miles, respectively). Overland access roads would be located on private land (17.53 miles), BLM-administered land (7.43 miles), and a small amount of land administered by the USFWS (0.72 mile). Overland access routes would have a single 8-foot wide travel lane and would traverse the landscape over open ground; no roadbed improvements would be required. While approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA, none of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.

The creation of many miles of access roads would likely provide increased access to areas that were previously inaccessible. The public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the BLM and USFWS. To limit new or improved recreationist accessibility into areas, all new access roads not

required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate and in coordination with the BLM or USFWS-authorized officer. In the event of a conflict between the Applicant's road requirements and the BLM or USFWS, BLM or USFWS requirements would take precedence. For those roads where access to public lands could be obtained, no changes to recreation resources would likely occur because the principal recreation use of these lands is for dispersed recreation. BLM would retain the right to decide upon permanent road closures for its land.

TEMPORARY EFFECTS

Construction of Alternative B would not require temporary road closures and, thus, would avoid potential recreational impacts associated with such activities. However, temporary effects upon recreation during the construction phase of Alternative B, including the burying of the distribution line along the road, could involve noise and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, and materials. It is unlikely that Alternative B would have any effects upon visitation to the developed recreation areas.

FUTURE CONSTRUCTION PHASE – UPGRADE TO 230-kV

The upgrade of the initial single-circuit transmission line to a double-circuit 230-kV transmission line would require a second construction phase at a future date, when additional capacity was required on the transmission line. During the second construction phase, developed recreation sites would experience similar temporary construction related effects as described above, including the temporary closure of roads, noise, and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, and materials. Traffic would likely increase during the second construction phase of Alternative B, however it would not likely be enough to deter recreationists from visiting the area.

MITIGATION

To address public concerns regarding potential impacts to recreation caused by the visibility of transmission lines after the DEIS was issued, the BLM has expanded its consideration of potential mitigation measures to include the following:

- 1) Banning commercial messages or symbols (such as logos), trademarks, and messages on the transmission lines; and
- 2) Developing aesthetic offsets where corrective or ameliorative actions are needed to improve the existing condition. Examples could include reclaiming unnecessary roads in the area, cleanup of illegal dumps or trash, or rehabilitation of existing erosion or disturbed areas.

No other potential mitigation measures were identified through a selective analysis of wind energy environmental impact statements for projects involving federal lands, including the *Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS* (BLM 2005) and *West Butte Wind Power Right of Way EIS* (BLM 2011). The implementation of these measures would be beyond BLM's direct jurisdiction because the Echanis Wind Energy Project would be located on private land.

~~No additional mitigation measures would be required because PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce the recreation effects (see Section 2 and Appendix A.3.8).~~ To reduce the potential for short-term construction effects and long-term visual effects to recreation, PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce effects (Appendix A.3.8). Examples would include:

- Ground disturbance would be limited to that necessary to safely and efficiently install the proposed facilities;

- Access roads and other areas of ground disturbance within the construction limits would be watered, as needed, to remain compact and to avoid the creation of dust;
- No paint or permanent discoloring agents would be applied to rocks or vegetation, to indicate the limits of survey or construction activity;
- Nonspecular conductors would be used to reduce impacts;
- All stakes and flagging would be removed from the construction area and disposed of in a State approved landfill; and
- The Applicant would explore opportunities to notify wilderness users prior to visiting the affected Steens Mountain Wilderness Area and Wilderness Study Areas by publication of the construction schedule in the local media, posting the schedule at administering agency offices, posting the schedule at trailheads or other recreation access points to the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area, or other means of reaching visitors.

South Diamond Lane Route Option

PERMANENT EFFECTS

The South Diamond Lane Route Option would be easily and immediately visible to vehicles turning from Highway 205 onto South Diamond Lane. If travelers were to turn north onto Lava Beds Road and not complete the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway, they would be in direct contact with approximately 5 miles of transmission line under this route option. This route option would use existing ROW when traversing the MNWR and place approximately 3 miles of transmission line within the boundaries of the MNWR. The South Diamond Lane Route Option would run along the South Diamond Lane portion of the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route and would be 1 mile from the Buena Vista Overlook. Additionally, visitors traveling the High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway (Highway 205) would see the South Diamond Lane Route Option when it crossed at the intersection of the Byway and South Diamond Lane.

Some visitors would likely feel that the visual quality of their trip had declined as a result of the additional transmission lines, however given that the Harney Electric Cooperative line is currently visible from or while accessing the developed recreation areas, construction of the South Diamond Lane Option would likely result in little to no change in the total number of visitors to the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route, the High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway, or the Buena Vista Overlook.

The South Diamond Lane Route Option would also require improvements to existing access roads, new access roads, and overland access roads (approximately 2.00, 0.19, and 21.29 miles, respectively). Existing unpaved access roads would be widened and new access roads would be constructed across BLM and USFWS-administered lands (1.60 and 0.59 miles, respectively). Overland access roads would be located on private land (16.65 miles), BLM-administered land (3.91 miles), and land administered by the USFWS (0.72 mile). Overland access roads would require no roadbed improvements. While approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA, none of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.

Public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the BLM and USFWS. To limit new or improved recreationist accessibility into areas, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate and in coordination with the BLM or USFWS authorized officer. In the event of a conflict between the Applicant's road requirements and the BLM or USFWS, the BLM or USFWS requirements would take precedence. For roads located on public land where access could be obtained, no effects would likely occur to recreational resources because the principal recreational use of these lands is dispersed recreation. BLM would retain the right to decide upon permanent road closures for its land.

TEMPORARY EFFECTS

Construction of the South Diamond Land Route Option would not require temporary road closures and, thus, would avoid the potential recreational impacts that would occur with such activities. However, temporary effects to recreation during the construction phase of South Diamond Lane Route Option, including the burying of the distribution line along the road, could involve noise and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, and materials. It is unlikely that the South Diamond Land Route Option would have any effects upon visitation to the developed recreation areas.

FUTURE CONSTRUCTION PHASE – UPGRADE TO 230-kV

The upgrade of the initial single-circuit transmission line to a double-circuit 230-kV transmission line would require a second construction phase at a future date, when additional capacity was required on the transmission line. During the second construction phase, developed recreation sites would experience similar temporary construction related effects as described above, including the temporary closure of roads, noise, and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, and materials. Traffic would likely increase during the second construction phase of South Diamond Land Route Option, however it would not likely be enough to deter recreationists from visiting the area.

MITIGATION

~~The potential mitigation measures, PDFs, and BMPs would be similar to those described for Alternative B. No additional mitigation measures would be required because PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce the recreation effects (see Section 2 and Appendix A.3.8).~~

Hog Wallow Route Option

PERMANENT EFFECTS

The Hog Wallow Route Option would cross Hog Wallow Seeding Road and could place some travelers in direct sight of the alignment. The Hog Wallow Route Option would increase the overall length of the Alternative B alignment by approximately 0.19 mile. It would cross Highway 205 at KOP 71 (see the Aesthetic/Visual Resources discussion in Section 3.10) and intersect the Harney Electric Cooperative transmission line. This route option would cross the MNWR 0.5 mile south of where the Proposed Action would cross, and would traverse a total of 0.62 mile of the MNWR. The Hog Wallow Route Option would cross the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route along the portion of auto route that is located on Highway 205. The Hog Wallow Route Option would also be 4 miles from the Buena Vista Overlook. Additionally, visitors traveling the High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway (Highway 205) would see the Hog Wallow Route Option where it would cross the Byway at KOP 71.

Some visitors would likely feel that the visual quality of their trip had declined as a result of the additional transmission lines. However, given that the Harney Electric Cooperative line is currently visible from the developed recreation areas, construction of the Hog Wallow Option would likely result in little to no change in the total number of visitors to the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route, the High Desert Discovery Scenic Byway, or the Buena Vista Overlook.

The Hog Wallow Route Option would also require improvements to existing access roads, new access roads, and overland access roads (approximately 2.00, 0.19, and 25.99 miles, respectively) (Table 3.14-3). Existing unpaved access roads would be widened and new access roads would be constructed across BLM and USFWS-administered lands (1.60 and 0.59 miles, respectively). Overland access roads would be located on private land (17.55 miles), BLM-administered land (7.21 miles), and land administered by the USFWS (1.23 miles). As with Alternative B and the South Diamond Lane Route Option, overland access roads would require no roadbed improvements. While approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on

private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA, none of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.

Public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis with the BLM and USFWS. To limit new or improved recreationist accessibility into areas, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate and in coordination with the BLM or USFWS authorized officer. In the event of a conflict between the Applicant's road requirements and the BLM or USFWS, BLM or USFWS requirements would take precedence. BLM would retain the right to decide upon permanent road closures for its land.

TEMPORARY EFFECTS

Construction of the Hog Wallow Route Option would not require temporary road closures and, thus, would avoid the potential recreational impacts that could occur with those activities. However, temporary effects to recreation during the construction phase of Hog Wallow Route Option, including the burying of the distribution line along the road, could involve noise and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, and materials. It is unlikely that the Hog Wallow Route Option would have any effects on visitation to the developed recreation areas.

FUTURE CONSTRUCTION PHASE – UPGRADE TO 230-KV

The upgrade of the initial single-circuit transmission line to a double-circuit 230-kV transmission line would require a second construction phase at a future date, when additional capacity was required on the transmission line. During the second construction phase, developed recreation sites would experience similar temporary construction related effects as described above, including the temporary closure of roads, noise, and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, and materials. Traffic would increase during the second construction phase of the Hog Wallow Route Option, however it would not likely be enough to deter recreationists from visiting the area.

MITIGATION

The potential mitigation measures, PDFs, and BMPs would be similar to those described for Alternative B. ~~No additional mitigation measures would be required because PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce the recreation effects (see Section 2 and Appendix A.3.8).~~

115-kV Transmission Line Option

PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY EFFECTS

The installation of a 115-kV transmission line would be a reduction in capacity along the same route as that described for Alternative B and the route options. The 115-kV Transmission Line Option would have half of the capacity of the options described above. The design and construction of the other options would be identical to the 115-kV Transmission Line Option and would require the same pole height, line location, pole spacing, ROW widths, and access roads. All temporary effects outlined for Alternative B, the South Diamond Lane, and the Hog Wallow Route Options apply to the 115-kV Transmission Line Option, except that the temporary effects from the future construction phase would not occur with the 115-kV Transmission Line Option.

MITIGATION

The potential mitigation measures, PDFs, and BMPs would be similar to those described for Alternative B. ~~No additional mitigation measures would be required because PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce the recreation effects (see Section 2 and Appendix A.3.8).~~

3.7.4.4 Alternative C – North Route (Preferred Alternative)

PERMANENT EFFECTS

Alternative C would include 612 acres of private land, 221 acres of BLM-administered land, and 3 acres of state land. Alternative C would intersect the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway east of the town Diamond and would cross this Byway in four different locations. The transmission line would then separate from the Diamond Loop Road, run parallel to Lava Beds Road, and then intersect Highway 78 near the intersection of Lava Beds Road and Highway 78. The North Route would parallel Highway 78 for approximately 10 miles and the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway for 6 miles. This would place travelers along these two routes directly in view of the transmission line for extended periods. In 2008, the traffic count for Highway 78, 0.02 mile north of its intersection with Lava Beds Road, was 330 vehicles daily. Just south of that intersection (0.02 mile), the average daily vehicle count was 240 vehicles per day.

Alternative C would be relatively close to a number of developed recreation sites. It would be approximately 3 miles from both the KWVA and Crane Hot Springs, 2 miles from the Round Barn, parallel Highway 78 for approximately 10 miles, parallel the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway for approximately 6 miles, and cross the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail. The transmission line would traverse 6 miles within the CMPA on privately-owned land and 7 miles of its length would be within the Kiger Mustang ACEC. The recreation portion of the *Riddle and Kiger Herd Management Plan* does not indicate that the construction of a transmission alignment would create a conflict with recreation in the ACEC. Construction of the Alternative C would not likely create a recreation conflict within the Kiger Mustang ACEC.

There would likely be little to no conflict with area visitors given that the Harney Electric Cooperative line is currently visible at points along Highway 78 and that visitors using the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway currently view transmission lines while accessing the area. Additionally, some travelers on the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail would likely cross ~~be minimally affected by walking~~ under the Alternative C alignment ~~where the trail and the alignment intersect. given that much of the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail currently follows existing roads in some sections.~~ Construction of Alternative C would likely have little to no change in the total number of visitors to Highway 78, the East Steens Tour Route Road/Fields Denio Road, Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail, or the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway.

~~Other than the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail, Recreational hikers using the Buena Vista Trail could have distant views of the transmission line. Although the trails in the southern portion of the Project Area are centered around the South Steens Campground, the trails extend north and east from the campground, and hikers along these trails would not have views of the proposed Project because of the steep topography of the area and the position of the existing trails.~~

New access roads and overland access roads (approximately 5.03 and 25.05 miles, respectively) would be required for vehicle and equipment access to the transmission line corridor during initial construction, and for inspections, maintenance, and repair of poles, insulators, and conductors during long-term operation (Table 3.14-4). New access roads would be constructed across private lands and BLM-administered lands (0.48 and 4.55 miles, respectively). Overland access roads would be located on both private land (17.68 miles) and BLM-administered land (7.37 miles). Overland access routes would have a single 8-foot wide travel lane and would traverse the landscape over open ground; no roadbed improvements would be required. Of this total, approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA; however none of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.

Public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the BLM and USFWS. To limit new or improved recreationist accessibility into areas, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed, as appropriate, and in coordination with the BLM or USFWS authorized officer. In the event of a conflict between the Applicant's road requirements and the BLM or USFWS, BLM or USFWS

requirements would take precedence. BLM would retain the right to decide upon permanent road closures for its land.

TEMPORARY EFFECTS

Construction of Alternative C would not require temporary road closures and, thus, would avoid the potential recreational impacts would occur with those activities. Although construction of access roads within the CMPA would conflict with the CMPA RMP, BLM would have discretion to build access roads for BLM administrative purposes. Gates would preclude public access to private roads. The public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis with the BLM (Columbia Energy Partners 2009).

Additional temporary effects upon recreation during the construction phase of Alternative C could involve noise and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, vehicles, and materials.

FUTURE CONSTRUCTION PHASE – UPGRADE TO 230-kV

The upgrade of the initial single-circuit transmission line to a double-circuit 230-kV transmission line would require a second construction phase at a future date, when additional capacity is required on the transmission line. During the second construction phase, developed recreation sites would experience similar temporary construction related effects as described above, including the temporary closure of roads, noise, and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, and materials. Traffic would likely increase during the second construction phase of the Alternative C alignment, however it would not likely be enough to deter recreationists from visiting the area.

MITIGATION

~~The potential mitigation measures, PDFs, and BMPs would be similar to those described for Alternative B. No additional mitigation measures would be required because PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce the recreation effects (see Section 2 and Appendix A.3.8).~~

115-kV Transmission Line Option

PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY EFFECTS

The installation of a 115-kV transmission line would be a reduction in capacity along the same route as that described for Alternative C. The 115-kV Transmission Line Option would have half of the capacity of Alternative C. The design and construction of both the 115-kV Transmission Line Option and Alternative C would be identical and would require the same pole height, line location, pole spacing, ROW widths, and access roads. Temporary road closures that could potentially result in recreational impacts would not occur with construction of the 115-kV Transmission Line.

Additional temporary effects upon recreation during the construction phase of the transmission line could involve noise and visual disruption to recreation areas from the presence of workers, equipment, vehicles, and materials.

MITIGATION

~~The potential mitigation measures, PDFs, and BMPs would be similar to those described for Alternative B. No additional mitigation measures would be required because PDFs and BMPs were incorporated into the action alternatives and would be implemented to reduce the recreation effects (see Section 2 and Appendix A.3.8). The same mitigation that was outlined for Alternative B, the South Diamond Lane Route Option, and the Hog Wallow Route Option would apply to this 115-kV Transmission Line Option.~~

3.7.4.5 Residual Effects after Mitigation

The residual effects after mitigation would be the views from recreational sites that are altered by the presence of turbines and transmission lines. ~~Since no mitigation is proposed for recreation resources for any of the Project alternatives, there would be no residual effects. The residual effects that would remain after implementation of the above described mitigation measures would include the addition of wind turbines and transmission lines to the visual landscape.~~

3.7.4.6 Summary Comparison of Alternatives

The effects to recreation from development of the Echanis Project, primary access roads, and each alternative are compared in Table 3.7-3.

Table 3.7-3 Summary of Effects to Recreation

Alternative A - No Action	Echanis Wind Energy Project	Alternative B			Alternative C – North Route (Preferred Alternative)
		West Route (Proposed Action)	S. Diamond Lane Route Option	Hog Wallow Route Option	
Under the No Action Alternative, the Echanis Wind Energy Project and the associated transmission line alternatives would not be developed. No impacts would occur to recreation.	<p>The Project boundary would include approximately 2,353 acres of the CMPA, but no wind turbines would be constructed within the CMPA.</p> <p>The Project would be most visible from the Mann Lake Recreation Site and travelers on <u>East Steens Road Fields-Denio Road</u>.</p> <p>No road closures would occur during construction.</p> <p>An increase in traffic would occur during construction but it would not be enough to deter recreationists from visiting the area.</p> <p>Hikers <u>would not</u> could have views of turbines from portions of the Little Blitzen, Mud/Ankle, Big Indian, and Nye trails.</p> <p>Noise and visual disruption to recreation areas could occur due to the presence of workers, equipment, vehicles, and materials during construction.</p> <p>There could be a slight increase in</p>	<p>The transmission line would cross 5.9 miles of the CMPA on private lands, 1.32 miles of the MNWR, and the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail.</p> <p>Hikers could have distant and intermittent views of the transmission line from the Buena Vista Trail. <u>Hikers along the and portions of the Little Blitzen, Mud/Ankle, Big Indian, and Nye trails would not have views of the transmission line.</u></p> <p>Few travelers on the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail would be affected by walking under the transmission line since much of the trail currently follows existing roads in some sections.</p> <p>The transmission line would cross the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route and visitors traveling this route would see the line, however there would likely be little to no change in the total number of visitors to the Route.</p> <p>The transmission line would be 4 miles from the Buena Vista Overlook.</p> <p>Visitors traveling the High Desert <u>Discovery Scenic Byway</u> (Highway 205) would see the transmission line when it crossed the Byway at KOP 72.</p>	<p>This option would use existing ROW when traversing the MNWR and place approximately 3 miles of transmission line within the boundaries of the MNWR.</p> <p>The transmission line would be easily visible from the moment vehicles turned from Highway 205 onto South Diamond Lane.</p> <p>Visitors traveling the High Desert <u>Discovery Scenic Byway</u> (Highway 205) would see the transmission line when it crossed at the intersection of the Byway and South Diamond Lane.</p> <p>The transmission line would run along the South Diamond Lane portion of the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route and would be 1 mile from the Buena Vista Overlook.</p> <p>Travelers on Lava Beds Road would be in direct contact with approximately 5 miles of transmission line.</p> <p>While approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA, none of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.</p> <p>The public use of</p>	<p>This option would traverse a total of 0.62 mile of the MNWR.</p> <p>This route would cross Hog Wallow Seeding Road where it would be visible to travelers.</p> <p>The transmission line would cross the Blitzen Valley Auto Tour Route and the High Desert <u>Discovery Scenic Byway</u> (Highway 205), where the line would also be 4 miles from Buena Vista Overlook.</p> <p>While approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA, none of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.</p> <p>No road closures are anticipated during construction. The public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis with the BLM. BLM would retain the right to permanently close roads on its lands.</p> <p>To limit recreation accessibility into areas via new or improved access roads, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate and in coordination with the BLM or</p>	<p>The transmission line would intersect the Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway east of the town of Diamond, and would cross this Byway in four different locations.</p> <p>The transmission line would run parallel to Lava Beds Road and intersect Highway 78, near the intersection of Lava Beds Road and Highway 78.</p> <p>The transmission line would parallel <u>segments of the East Steens Tour Route (Highway 78 - 330 cars daily)</u> for approximately 10 miles and Diamond Loop Backcountry Byway for 6 miles, which would place travelers along these two routes directly in view of the transmission line for extended periods.</p> <p>The transmission line would be approximately 3 miles from both the Kiger Wildhorse Viewing Area and Crane Hot Springs, and 2 miles from the Round Barn.</p> <p>The transmission line would traverse 6 miles within the CMPA on privately-owned lands, and 7 miles of its length would be within the Kiger Mustang ACEC. However, no recreation conflicts would likely occur in these areas.</p> <p>The transmission line would cross the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail. However, few travelers on the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail would be affected by walking under the transmission line since much of the trail currently follows existing roads in some sections. Hikers on the Buena Vista Trail <u>would have intermittent views of the transmission line.</u> Hikers on and portions of the Little Blitzen, Mud/Ankle, Big Indian, and Nye trails would not have could have distant and intermittent views of the</p>

Table 3.7-3 Summary of Effects to Recreation

Alternative A - No Action	Echanis Wind Energy Project	Alternative B				Alternative C – North Route (Preferred Alternative)
		West Route (Proposed Action)	S. Diamond Lane Route Option	Hog Wallow Route Option		
	noise levels at Mann Lake Campground.	<p>The transmission line would be visible near the intersection of South Diamond Lane and Lava Beds Road, and would remain visible until near the town of Diamond.</p> <p>Approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA. None of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.</p> <p>The public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the BLM and USFWS. To limit recreation accessibility, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate, in coordination with the BLM or USFWS Authorized Officer.</p> <p>Noise and visual disruptions to recreation areas could occur due to the presence of workers, equipment, vehicles, and materials.</p>	<p>access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis with the BLM. BLM would retain the right to permanently close roads on its lands.</p> <p>To limit recreation accessibility into areas via new or improved access roads, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate in coordination with the BLM or USFWS Authorized Officer.</p> <p>Noise and visual disruptions to recreation areas could occur due to the presence of workers, equipment, vehicles, and materials.</p>	<p>USFWS Authorized Officer.</p> <p>Noise and visual disruptions to recreation areas could occur due to the presence of workers, equipment, vehicles, and materials.</p>	<p>transmission line.</p> <p>Approximately 5.90 miles of overland roads would be located on private land within the Steens Mountain CMPA. None of the overland roads would cross Federal land within the CMPA.</p> <p>Public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis with the BLM and USFWS. To limit new or improved recreation accessibility into areas, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate and in coordination with the BLM or USFWS Authorized Officer.</p>	

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