

Tri-State Montrose-Nucla-Cahone Transmission Improvement Project

5:00 - 5:30pm

Sign In & Open House

5:30 - 6:15pm

BLM Presentation

6:15 - 7:00pm

Continue Open House



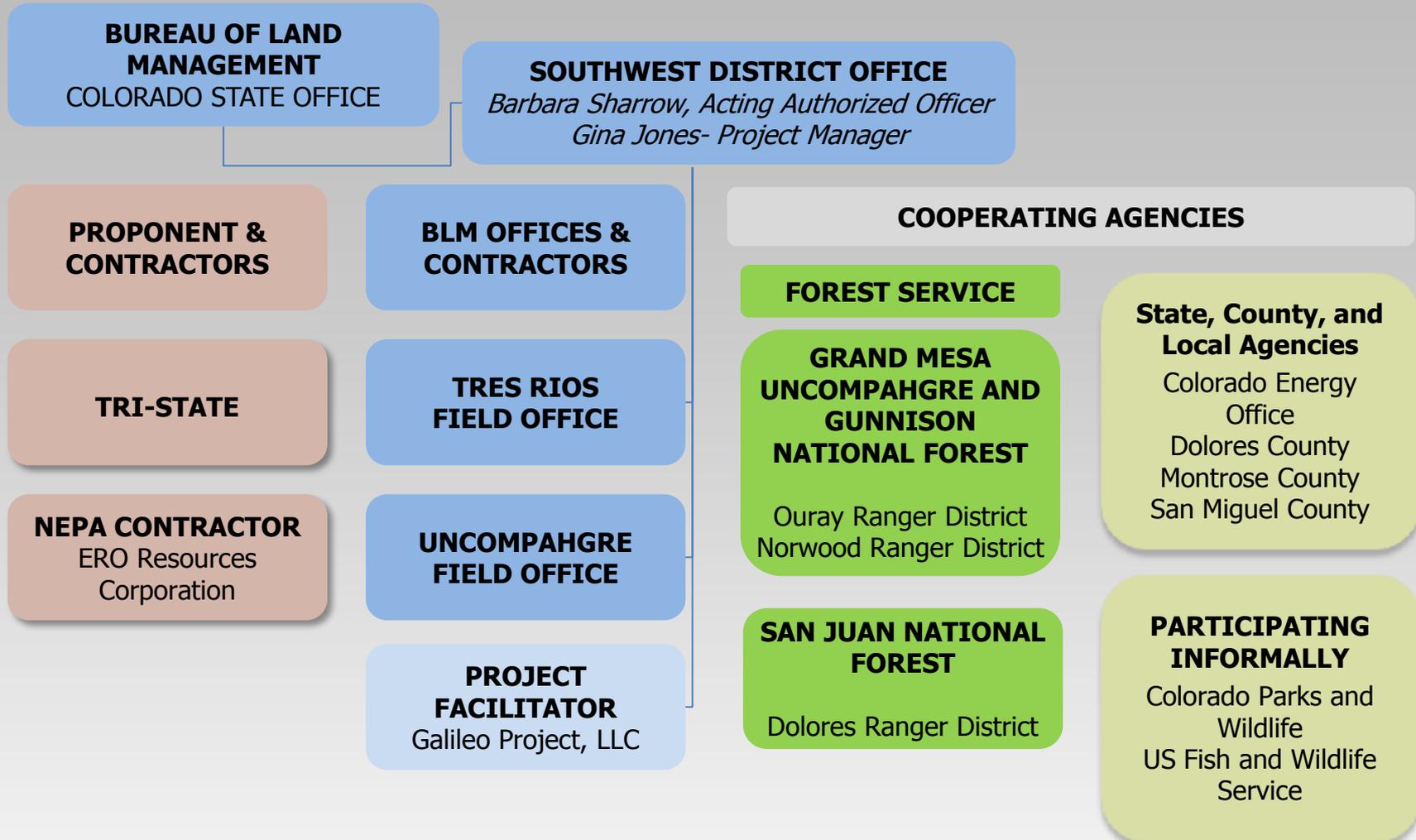
Tri-State Montrose-Nucla-Cahone Transmission Line Improvement Project

Preliminary Environmental Assessment Public Meeting

November 16, 2015

Gina Jones, BLM NEPA Specialist

Project Participants



Meeting Purpose

- *Summarize Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA)*
- *Review how to submit comments*
- *Discuss next steps*



EA Format

- *An EA is used when no significant effects are expected. An EA informs the agencies decision on a proposed action.*
- *The EA contains 5 chapters with supporting information in appendices.*
- *Tri-State's Plan of Development, which includes detailed project information, is one of the attachments.*

"Significance" is defined in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.27. See Chapter 7.3 of the BLM NEPA Handbook for more information



Agency Purpose, Need, & Decisions

- The **purpose** of the agencies action is to analyze and respond to Tri-State's applications as required by law and regulation.
- The BLM's **need** is to respond to a request from Tri-State, as required by law and regulation, to amend their right-of-way (ROW) grant for this Project on public land. The Forest Service is responding to a request for a new special use authorization (SUA).
- The BLM and Forest Service will **decide** whether to approve the proposed action, an alternative to the proposed action, or the No Action Alternative. If Alternative A or C were selected, the BLM and Forest Service would stipulate terms and conditions for mitigation, construction, maintenance, and reclamation in their decision documents that must be met by Tri-State.



Tri-State's Proposed Action

- Upgrade existing 115kV line to 230kV line; generally using similar, but taller structures
- Expand existing 100 foot-wide right-of-way (ROW) to 150 feet
- Use approximately 241 miles of road already in use (125 on federal land)
- Add approximately 6 miles of new access road/spur roads
- 80 miles of transmission line (57 on federal land)
- Realignment at Dolores River crossing
- Upgrade Montrose and Cahone substations; construct a new substation (Maverick) on private land near Nucla
- Existing line reauthorized in 2007



Proposed Action and Route Options

Alternative	Description
Alternative A: Proposed Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade existing line • Reroute current Dolores River crossing • Upgrade-in-place through Dry Creek Basin • New Nucla substation (Maverick) • Upgrades at Cahone and Montrose substations • Other minor route adjustments
Alternative B: No Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No upgrade of line • Increased maintenance activities • Dolores River crossing access impeded by eroding soils and dangerous slopes
Alternative C: Proposed Action with Routing Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dolores River Routing Option</i>: upgrade-in-place variation • <i>Dry Creek Basin Routing Option</i>: realignment parallel to SH 141 • <i>Both Routing Options</i>: incorporate both the upgrade-in-place option at Dolores River and realignment option at Dry Creek Basin



Tri-State Montrose-Nucla-Cahone Transmission Line Improvement Project Overview (November 16, 2015)

Montrose Substation

Nucla Substation

Proposed Maverick 230kV Substation

Dry Creek Basin Upgrade In-Place: Proposed Action

Realignment at Dry Creek Basin

Reroute at Dolores River Canyon: Proposed Action

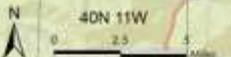
Upgrade In-Place at Dolores River Canyon

Cahone Substation

- Existing Substation Location
- New Nucla Substation Location (Proposed)
- Existing Transmission Line Corridor/Proposed Upgrade Route (Common to Both Action Alternatives)
- Routing Option Location

The BLM attempts to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The BLM reserves the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

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Dolores River Crossing: Issues

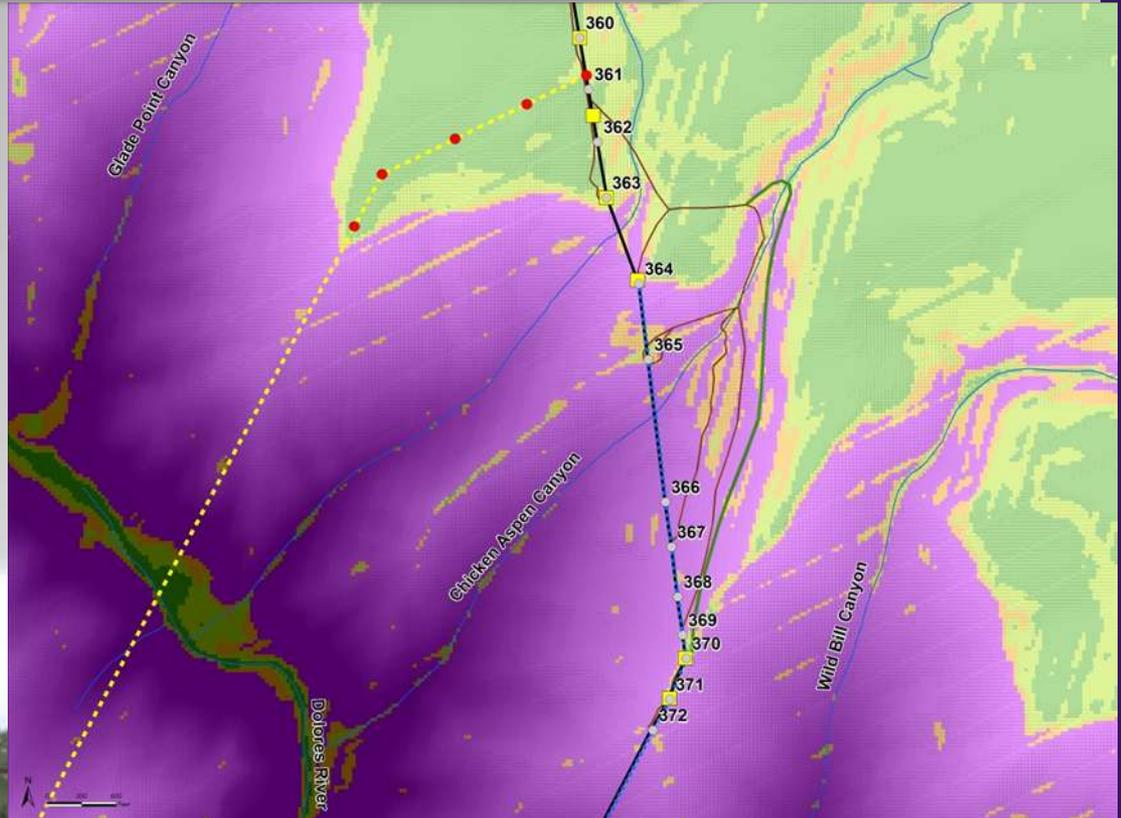
Tri-State Concerns at Crossing

- Steep slopes make access dangerous
- Erosion affects access, stability of crossing structure, & ground cover

Agency Issues from Scoping

- Larger structures and metal poles may diminish scenic quality

Access Issues for Existing Crossing



Dolores River Crossing Slope Map



Alternative A: Proposed Action (Realignment)

- Reroute on stable soils with less slope
- 2.2 miles of new access road
- 3.3 miles reclaimed access road

Alternative B: Current Condition (No Action)

- Structures on unstable soil
- Access requires blading on steep slopes

Alternative C: Dolores River Upgrade-in-Place Option

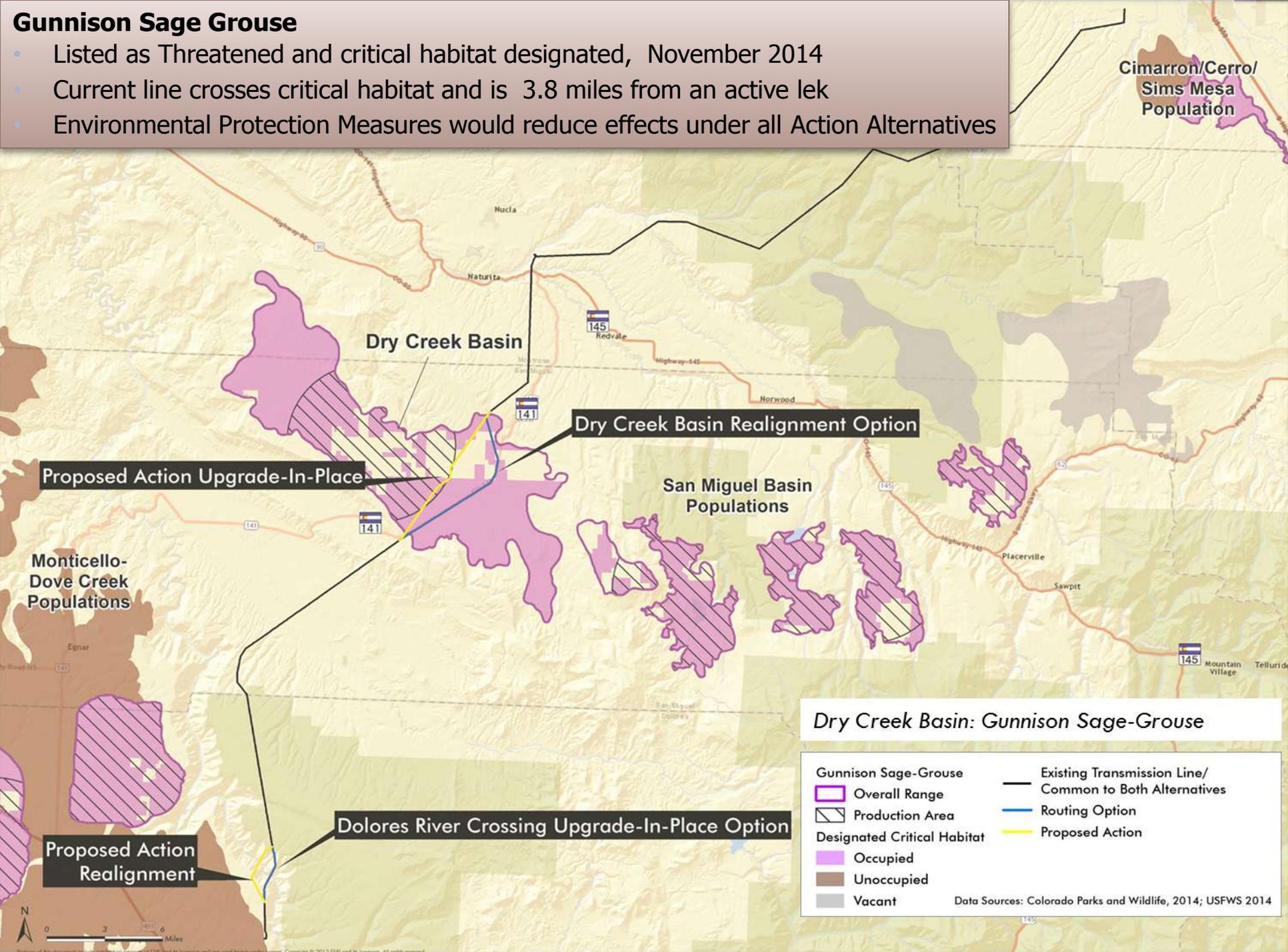
- Fewer towers than current
- Reclaim 1.7 mi of road
- New access road (0.9 mi) on +30% slopes

Dolores River Crossing Options



Gunnison Sage Grouse

- Listed as Threatened and critical habitat designated, November 2014
- Current line crosses critical habitat and is 3.8 miles from an active lek
- Environmental Protection Measures would reduce effects under all Action Alternatives



Cimarron/Cerro/
Sims Mesa
Population

Dry Creek Basin

Dry Creek Basin Realignment Option

Proposed Action Upgrade-In-Place

San Miguel Basin
Populations

Monticello-
Dove Creek
Populations

Dolores River Crossing Upgrade-In-Place Option

Proposed Action
Realignment

Dry Creek Basin: Gunnison Sage-Grouse

Gunnison Sage-Grouse Overall Range	Existing Transmission Line/ Common to Both Alternatives
Production Area	Routing Option
Designated Critical Habitat Occupied	Proposed Action
Unoccupied	
Vacant	

Data Sources: Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 2014; USFWS 2014



Alternative A: Proposed Action

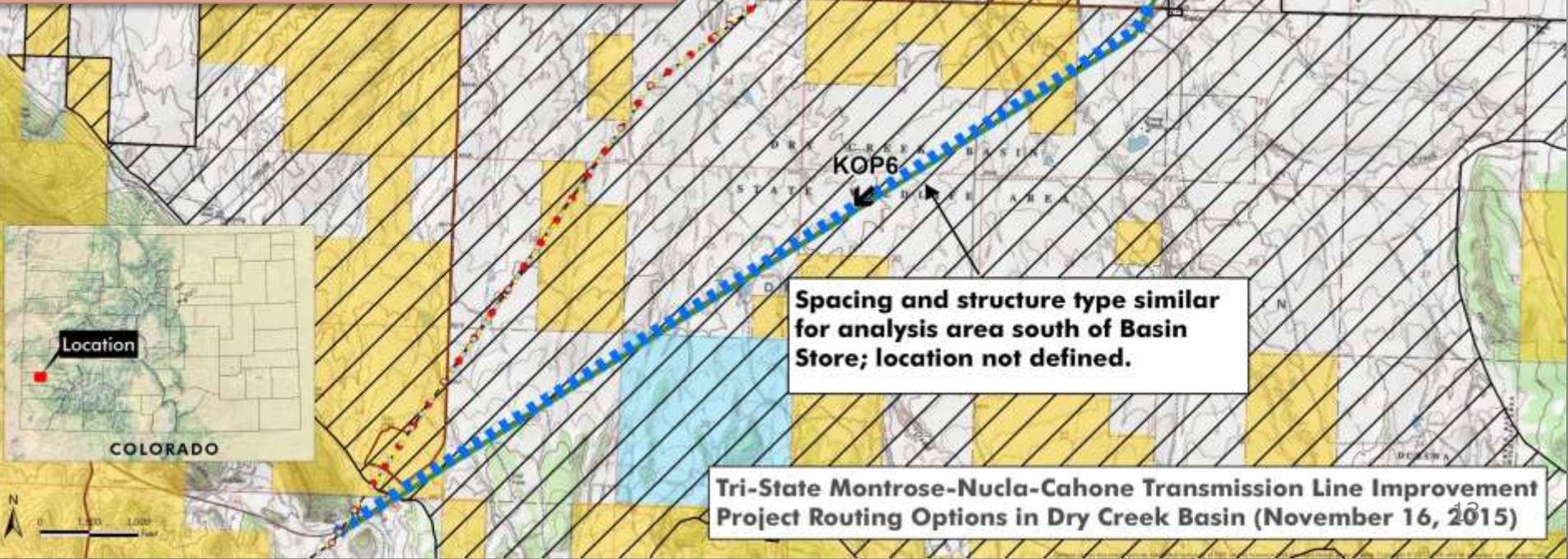
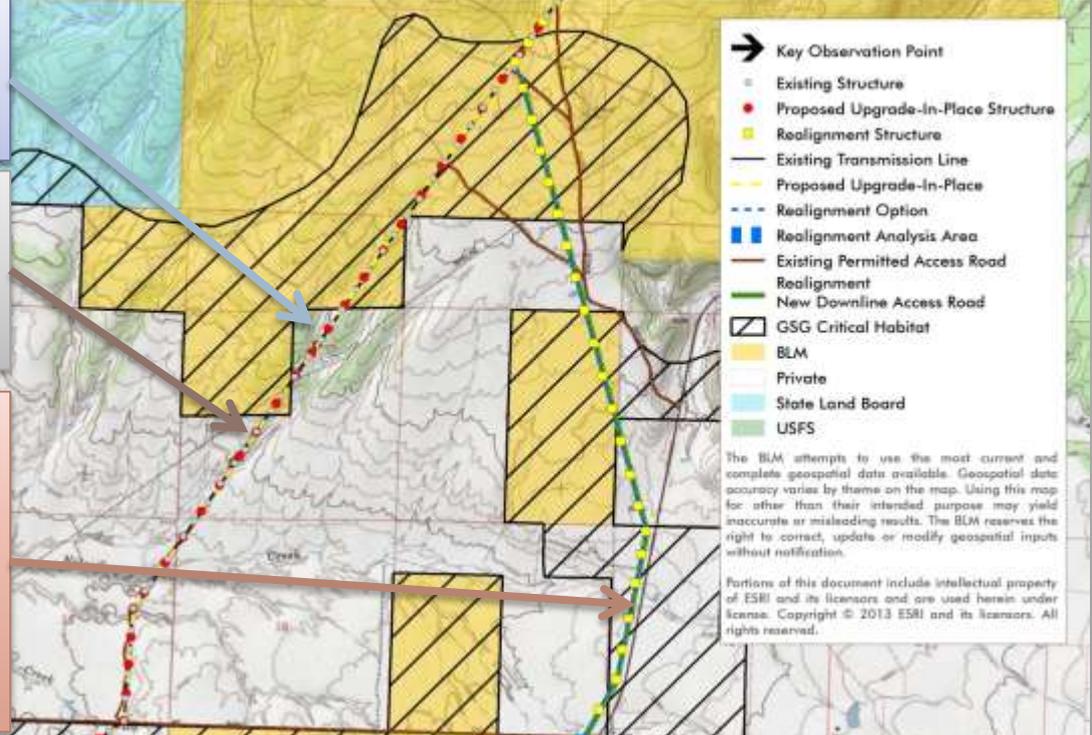
- Does not consolidate disturbance corridors
- No new access roads or landowner crossings

Alternative B: Current Condition (No Action)

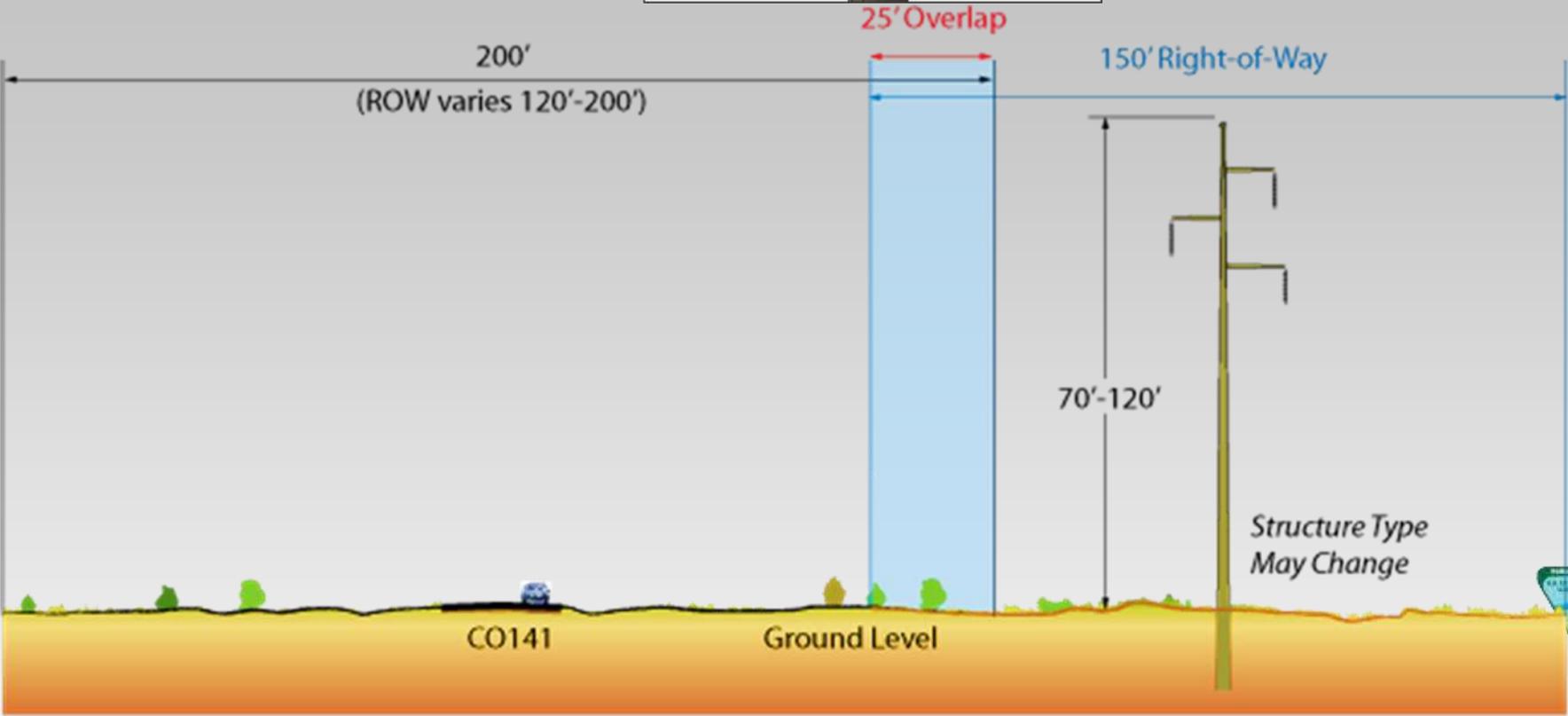
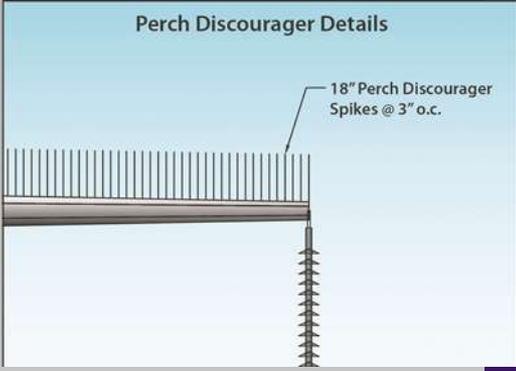
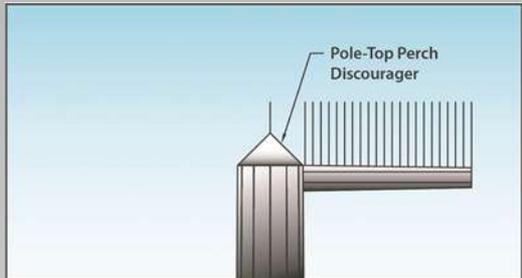
- No upgrade
- Continued maintenance issues

Alternative C: Dry Creek Basin Realignment

- Consolidates disturbance corridors, improves habitat effectiveness for 2,163 acres
- New down-line access road and landowner crossings
- Increased visual effects along SH 141



Perch Discouragers and Realignment Cross Section



Dry Creek: Realignment Option



Existing Conditions at SH-141

Simulation of Alt. C Realignment at SH-141



Resources Analyzed

- Access and roads
- Cultural resources
- Forest and suitable timber
- Geology and minerals
- Lands with wilderness characteristics
- Soils
- Gunnison sage-grouse
- Visual resources



Upcoming Milestones

Preliminary EA and Draft POD 30-day Public Comment Period	November 3– December 3 2015
BLM Develops Responses to Public Comments and Revises EA	December – March 2016
Forest Service Issues Final EA & Draft Decision Notice	March 2016
BLM Issues Decision Record and Final EA, Forest Service Issues Final Decision Notice	Summer 2016



What Happens to My Comments

- Substantive comments and information submitted will be summarized and addressed in the Final Environmental Assessment
- All timely comments will be considered, but the BLM can best use your comments and information if received by **December 3, 2015**



Substantive Comments

The agencies will respond to substantive comments.
Substantive comments address one of more of the following:

- Question with a reasonable basis, the accuracy of, methodology for, or assumptions used in the environmental analysis;
- Present new information relevant to the analysis;
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed and/or cause changes or revisions in one or more alternatives.

Comments containing only opinions or preferences will not receive a formal response, but may be considered in the decision-making process.



Objections and Appeals

Comment periods are conducted jointly between the BLM and Forest Service. Each agency will be subject to its respective regulations for appeals (BLM) and pre-decisional objections (Forest Service).

Submitting comments during scoping (held May 5 - June 4, 2014) or the current Preliminary EA comment period (November 3 – December 3) will establish standing for appeals and objections.



Ways to Comment/More Info

Ways to Comment

- Tonight:
 - Submit written comments in the comment box
- After the meeting:
 - E-mail:
blm_co_tristatemnc@blm.gov
 - Mail: BLM Southwest District
 - Attn: Gina Jones
 - 2465 South Townsend Avenue
 - Montrose, CO 81401
 - Fax: 970-240-5367

For more Information

- Project website:
 - <http://www.blm.gov/dvld>
- Project contact:
 - Gina Jones, NEPA Coordinator
 - Phone: 970-240-5381
 - E-mail: gmjones@blm.gov

