

# Appendix I

## Framework Stream, Wetland, Well, and Spring Protection Plan

### Gateway West Transmission Line Project

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>PURPOSE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>REGULATORY OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>OVERVIEW OF STREAMS, WETLANDS, WELLS, AND SPRINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
4.1	Streams and Drainages.....	3
4.2	Wetlands.....	3
4.3	Wells and Springs.....	3
<b>5.0</b>	<b>MITIGATION MEASURES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
5.1	Specific Stipulations and Methods for Streams and Wetlands .....	4
5.2	Stream Crossing Methods .....	4
5.3	Wetland Crossing Methods .....	5
5.4	Spill Prevention.....	6
5.5	Erosion and Sedimentation .....	6
5.6	Soil Storage Near Streams.....	6
5.7	Stream Obstruction and Flash Flood Hazard .....	6
5.8	Protection of Wells and Springs .....	6
<b>6.0</b>	<b>LITERATURE CITED.....</b>	<b>6</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table I-1.	Vehicular Wetland Crossing Methods and Construction Details .....	5
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rocky Mountain Power and Idaho Power Company (Companies) are proposing to construct and operate approximately 1,000 miles of new 230-kilovolt (kV), 345-kV and 500-kV alternating current electric transmission system, called the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (Project), consisting of 10 segments between the Windstar Substation at Glenrock, Wyoming, and the Hemingway Substation approximately 30 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. The proposed transmission line is needed to supplement existing transmission lines in order to relieve operating limitations, increase capacity, and improve reliability in the existing electric transmission grid, allowing for the delivery of up to 1,500 megawatts (MW) of additional energy for the Companies' larger service areas and to other interconnected systems. The Project includes ground-disturbing activities associated with the construction of above-ground, single-circuit transmission lines involving towers, access roads, multiuse areas, fly yards, and pulling sites as well as associated substations, communication sites, and electrical supply distribution lines. The Project crosses private land and public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), and the states of Idaho and Wyoming.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Stream, Wetland, Well, and Spring Protection Plan is to provide measures to protect these resources from potential impacts during construction, operation, and maintenance activities. This plan incorporates mitigation measures contained in the Project. This plan is intended for use as a guide to determine the appropriate site-specific measures to be implemented during construction activities. The goals of this plan are to:

- Control Project-related erosion and sedimentation into streams and wetlands and minimize disturbance and erosion of streambeds and banks.
- Protect springs and wells in the Project area from impacts due to blasting and hazardous materials contamination.

This document provides a template for the detailed Final Stream, Wetland and Spring Plan to be developed by the Construction Contractor.

## 3.0 REGULATORY OVERVIEW

The construction, operation, and maintenance phases of the Project are subject to various regulations designed to protect environmental resources and the public. Regulations relevant to water resources are outlined below.

General water quality is protected under the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and a permit may be required if a project will result in the alteration of, or discharges into, jurisdictional watercourses (waters of the United States) and wetlands. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) regulate the placement of fill into waters of the United States under Section 404 of the

1 CWA. Waters of the United States include lakes, rivers, streams and their tributaries,  
2 and wetlands.

3 The Project will result in the alteration of, or discharge into, jurisdictional waters of the  
4 United States.

- 5 • Point and non-point discharges are regulated by the National Pollutant  
6 Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process (CWA Section  
7 402). NPDES permitting authority is administered by the USEPA in Idaho  
8 and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) in  
9 Wyoming. Projects that disturb one or more acres are required to obtain a  
10 Construction General Permit (CGP). The CGPs require the development  
11 and implementation of a SWPPP. The SWPPP describes BMPs the  
12 Proponent would use to protect surface water from stormwater runoff. A  
13 framework plan for the SWPPP is described in Appendix F of the Plan of  
14 Development (POD).
- 15 • If hazardous materials, including fuels and lubricants, are used or stored in  
16 quantities exceeding certain minimal quantities, a Spill Prevention,  
17 Containment, and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan is required. Section 311  
18 (j)(1)(c) of the CWA contains the regulations preventing discharge of oil to  
19 surface water. A framework plan for the SPCC is described in Appendix G  
20 of the POD.
- 21 • Section 401 of the CWA requires that any activity, including river or stream  
22 crossings during road, pipeline, or transmission line construction that may  
23 result in a discharge into a state waterbody must be certified by the Idaho  
24 Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) or WDEQ. This certification  
25 ensures that the proposed activity does not violate state and/or federal  
26 water quality standards.
- 27 • Section 404 of the CWA authorizes the USACE to regulate the discharge  
28 of dredged or fill material to the waters of the United States. Discharges  
29 are authorized through issuance of nationwide permits or individual  
30 permits for specific activities.
- 31 • Section 303(d) of the CWA requires states to establish Total Maximum  
32 Daily Load (TMDL) programs, which are approved by the USEPA for  
33 streams and lakes that do not meet certain water quality standards. In  
34 compliance with the federal CWA, the IDEQ and the WDEQ have  
35 identified Section 303(d) water quality limited streams and lakes for  
36 development of TMDL criteria. TMDLs have been established for surface  
37 waters in Idaho and are in the development process in Wyoming.

38 The Departments of Environmental Quality for both Idaho and Wyoming must provide  
39 Section 401 Water Quality Certifications for the federally issued permits, including the  
40 404 permits in both states and 402 permits issued in Wyoming. The USEPA has 402  
41 jurisdiction in Idaho. An Idaho State Stream Alteration Permit must be obtained prior to  
42 altering any stream as defined by Idaho Administrative Code (37.03.07) which includes  
43 "... to obstruct, diminish, destroy, alter, modify, or change the natural existing shape of

1 the channel or to change the direction of flow of water of any stream channel within or  
2 below the mean high water mark.”

## 3 **4.0 OVERVIEW OF STREAMS, WETLANDS, WELLS, AND SPRINGS**

### 4 **4.1 Streams and Drainages**

5 A review of the National Wetland Inventory and field surveys conducted in 2009 through  
6 2012 identified perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams and drainages along the  
7 Project alignment. In addition, ephemeral streams, drainages, and irrigation ditches are  
8 crossed by the Project right-of-way, access roads, substations, and temporary work  
9 areas. Jurisdictional waters of the United States crossed by the Project are being  
10 delineated during pre-construction stream and wetland surveys and will be presented to  
11 the USACE for a jurisdictional determination.

### 12 **4.2 Wetlands**

13 Wetlands are defined for regulatory purposes as “those areas that are inundated or  
14 saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support,  
15 and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically  
16 adapted for life in saturated soil conditions” (33 CFR Part 328.3, 40 CFR Part 230.3).  
17 Wetlands are important ecological resources that perform many functions including  
18 groundwater recharge, flood flow attenuation and conveyance, erosion control, and  
19 water quality improvement. They also provide habitat for many plants and animals,  
20 including threatened or endangered species.

21 The initial wetland assessment was conducted during the development of the Draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Wetland delineations that follow the USACE  
23 Wetland Delineation Manual (1987) and Arid West Regional Supplement (2008) will be  
24 conducted prior to construction. The USACE Wetland Delineation Manual provides  
25 technical guidelines and methods for a three-parameter approach to determine the  
26 location and boundaries of potentially jurisdictional wetlands. This approach requires an  
27 area support positive indicators of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland  
28 hydrology to be considered a wetland. Surveyors gathered wetland determination  
29 information on data forms in the field and mapped wetland boundaries using GPS  
30 technology. Wetlands that met all three parameters were presented to the USACE for a  
31 jurisdictional determination.

### 32 **4.3 Wells and Springs**

33 Wells and springs in known blasting zones will be identified prior to construction by the  
34 Construction Contractor.

## 35 **5.0 MITIGATION MEASURES**

36 The Companies and the Construction Contractor will adhere to the mitigation measures  
37 and other specific stipulations and methods discussed in the following sections and  
38 Appendix Z of the POD to minimize project impacts to jurisdictional waters of the United  
39 States, including wetlands, and wells and springs where they occur along the Project  
40 ROW, access roads, substations, and temporary work areas. Other specific stipulations

1 and methods presented in Appendix D – Framework Reclamation Plan are designed to  
2 minimize the potential impacts to other non-jurisdictional drainages and dry swales  
3 found along the Project route.

4 However, it is expected the Construction Contractor will work cooperatively with the  
5 Compliance Inspection Contractor (CIC) and, as appropriate, USACE staff throughout  
6 construction to determine the most appropriate site-specific measures to be  
7 implemented based on a number of factors, including site characteristics, construction  
8 techniques to be used, anticipated weather conditions, mandatory permit requirements,  
9 and other variables.

## 10 **5.1 Specific Stipulations and Methods for Streams and Wetlands**

11 Specific measures will be followed as standard practices to protect and minimize  
12 impacts to streams and wetlands in the Project area. These measures are listed in  
13 Appendix Z of the POD.

## 14 **5.2 Stream Crossing Methods**

15 Streams that Project vehicles and equipment will cross or potentially impact will be  
16 identified in the final POD and Construction Operation and Maintenance Plans. If a  
17 stream or wetland cannot be avoided during construction, the CIC and Construction  
18 Contractor will work together to identify the appropriate crossing strategy for vehicular  
19 access. The various types of crossing methods are discussed in detail below.

20 When implemented, these crossing methods will help protect water quality by  
21 minimizing stream channel disturbance, erosion, and sedimentation due to Project  
22 activities. If the chosen crossing method is not adequately preventing and/or minimizing  
23 sedimentation and erosion, the CIC may require additional sediment controls when  
24 circumstances warrant. Streams crossed by the Project will be monitored by the CIC  
25 throughout construction for signs of bed and/or bank degradation. If disturbance  
26 resulting from installation of erosion control devices across shallow swales outweighs  
27 the benefits of having the devices in place, then the CIC, in consultation with the  
28 Construction Contractor, will have the option of not prescribing any temporary stream  
29 crossing or erosion control method.

30 The crossings of streams will be limited to vehicular crossings along spur roads or  
31 access roads as described in Appendix B of the POD.

32 Flow of sediment into the stream will be prevented by installing waterbars on the travel  
33 route at or near the top of bank (or other slope break) to redirect road runoff away from  
34 the stream. If necessary, downslope protection will be increased by extending silt fence  
35 from the down-gradient end of the waterbar.

36 In cases where it is impractical and highly disruptive to the environment to construct  
37 temporary crossings, such as over very large watercourses or deep canyons, vehicles  
38 will not attempt to cross the watercourse. The conductor will be strung across these  
39 resources by hand or other method and construction equipment will be routed around.

**5.3 Wetland Crossing Methods**

Several areas containing wetlands are located along the Project route; however, if vehicular access is required through wetlands, the crossing methods discussed below will be implemented to avoid, minimize, and mitigate Project-related erosion, sedimentation, and other impacts.

These crossing methods have been developed based on numerous factors, including slope, hydrological regime, presence or absence of bank, and erodibility of substrate, soil surface disturbance, and disturbance of wetland plant communities.

The crossings of wetlands will be limited to vehicular crossings along spur roads or access roads as described below.

- **Avoidance Route in Proximity to Wetland:** Equipment and vehicles will avoid crossing wetlands to the greatest extent possible by driving around them or using an existing crossing if one exists nearby. If a wetland will be avoided, but a travel route will be bladed within 20 feet of the wetland edge, silt fence will be installed along the travel route on the wetland side unless the wetland is upgradient.
- **Wetland Crossing:** If the wetland cannot be avoided, vehicles and equipment will cross the wetlands while implementing the following specific stipulations and methods described in Appendix Z of the POD.

In addition, wetland soil will be temporarily stored either within the wetland or in upland areas close to the wetland boundaries and will be used to restore the site to pre-construction contours. Silt fence will be installed around tower sites where necessary to minimize the potential for sediment discharge from excavated spoil into adjacent, undisturbed wetlands. Table I-1 provides vehicular wetland crossing methods and construction details. For the purpose of this plan, wetlands have been divided into two categories: wetlands with dry crossing conditions and wetlands with wet crossing conditions.

**Table I-1.** Vehicular Wetland Crossing Methods and Construction Details

Type of Watercourse	Suggested Vehicular Crossing Method	Construction Detail
Wetland – Dry Crossing Condition	Drive around wetland to avoid it or use existing crossing, if possible. If crossing is unavoidable, restrict traffic corridor to 20 feet wide and minimize traffic to only the equipment necessary to do the work.	Appendix B: TA 501 – Roads - Construction Appendix B: TA 503 – Roads – Water Bars and Dips
Wetland – Wet Crossing Condition	If crossing is unavoidable, use prefabricated equipment pads over saturated areas, restrict traffic corridor to 20 feet wide, and minimize traffic to only the equipment necessary to do the work. The CIC may also require a silt fence or straw bale if the potential for erosion exists.	Appendix B: TA 501 – Roads - Construction Appendix B: TA 503 – Roads – Water Bars and Dips

Note: This is intended to provide general guidance and suggestions. The Construction Contractor and CIC will work together to determine the appropriate measures for site-specific treatments and alternative approaches if needed. It is intended to provide flexibility and workable options for the Construction Contractor to meet the goals of this plan and comply with permit requirements.

## 1 **5.4 Spill Prevention**

2 To prevent potential spills or discharges from entering and impacting streams and  
3 wetlands, the measures listed in Appendix Z of the POD will be implemented:

## 4 **5.5 Erosion and Sedimentation**

5 To limit erosion and sedimentation from affecting streams and wetlands, the measures  
6 listed in Appendix Z of the POD will be implemented:

## 7 **5.6 Soil Storage Near Streams**

8 Any soil or other organic debris piled by bulldozers and grading equipment near the  
9 stream banks during construction will be stored a minimum of 100 feet from the banks  
10 and appropriately re-spread and stabilized to prevent sedimentation during rainfall  
11 events. The Construction Contractor will also adhere to any additional soil storage  
12 measures as required by applicable Project permits.

## 13 **5.7 Stream Obstruction and Flash Flood Hazard**

14 The placement of transmission towers within the channel of a stream, drainage, or flash  
15 flood area will be avoided to the extent possible. If placement within these areas is  
16 unavoidable, the towers will be engineered to withstand the force of flood flows and will  
17 be constructed according to all applicable permits. Where placement of a transmission  
18 tower or road is unavoidable within a stream channel, permanent diversion structures,  
19 or culverts sufficient to carry the stream's normal conveyance capacity at the site, or  
20 armoring for the pole foundations will be constructed.

## 21 **5.8 Protection of Wells and Springs**

22 All applicable laws and regulations will be followed in respect to the protection for  
23 drinking water sources. Wells and springs in known blasting zones will be identified prior  
24 to construction by the Construction Contractor.

25 Refer to Appendix G – Framework Spill Prevention, Containment, and Countermeasure  
26 Plan; Appendix M – Framework Blasting Plan; and Appendix P – Framework Hazardous  
27 Materials Management Plan for additional measures pertaining to the protection of wells  
28 and springs.

## 29 **6.0 LITERATURE CITED**

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