

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Idaho Power Company and PacifiCorp (doing business as Rocky Mountain Power), collectively known as the Proponents, applied to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a right-of-way (ROW) grant to use the National System of Public Lands for portions of the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (Gateway West or Project) on May 7, 2007. The original application was revised in October 2007, August 2008, May 2009, and January 2010 to reflect changes and refinements in their proposed Project and in response to feedback from the public regarding routing alternatives. The Plan of Development (POD) has been revised several times in response to Project changes and recommendations from BLM, other reviewing agencies, and public comment. The most recent update was submitted January 2013. This application was assigned the case file numbers of IDI-35849 for Idaho and WYW-174598 for Wyoming.

The Proponents are proposing to construct and operate approximately 990 miles of new 230-kilovolt (kV) and 500-kV alternating current (AC) electric transmission system consisting of 10 segments between the Windstar Substation at Glenrock, Wyoming, and the Hemingway Substation approximately 30 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. Figure 1.1-1 illustrates the initial siting study area (see Section 1.7.1 for a definition of the study area): the route proposed by the Proponents is shown in red, and the alternatives that are being analyzed in detail in this environmental impact statement (EIS) are shown in green. Greater detail is shown for each segment in maps found in Appendix A.

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 Proponents' larger service areas and to other interconnected systems. The Project is principally necessary to serve the Proponents' customers, though other markets may also be served. While the earliest phase of the Project needs to be in service by 2018, each segment has its own construction schedule. A more detailed description of the route, design, and schedule is presented in Chapter 2.

Under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) tariff requirements, utilities must plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain an adequate electric transmission system that meets not only the customers' energy demands (measured in megawatt-hours) but also meet the customer's peak load demands (measured in megawatts). Both are important in determining the need for the project.

BLM is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and will coordinate the preparation of the environmental analysis. The cooperating agencies include the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service) (the Caribou-Targhee, Medicine Bow-Routt, and Sawtooth National Forests [NFs]); the National Park Service (NPS; including the National Trails Office, Minidoka National Historic Site, Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Fossil Butte National Monument, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, and the City of Rocks National Reserve); the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS; Ecological

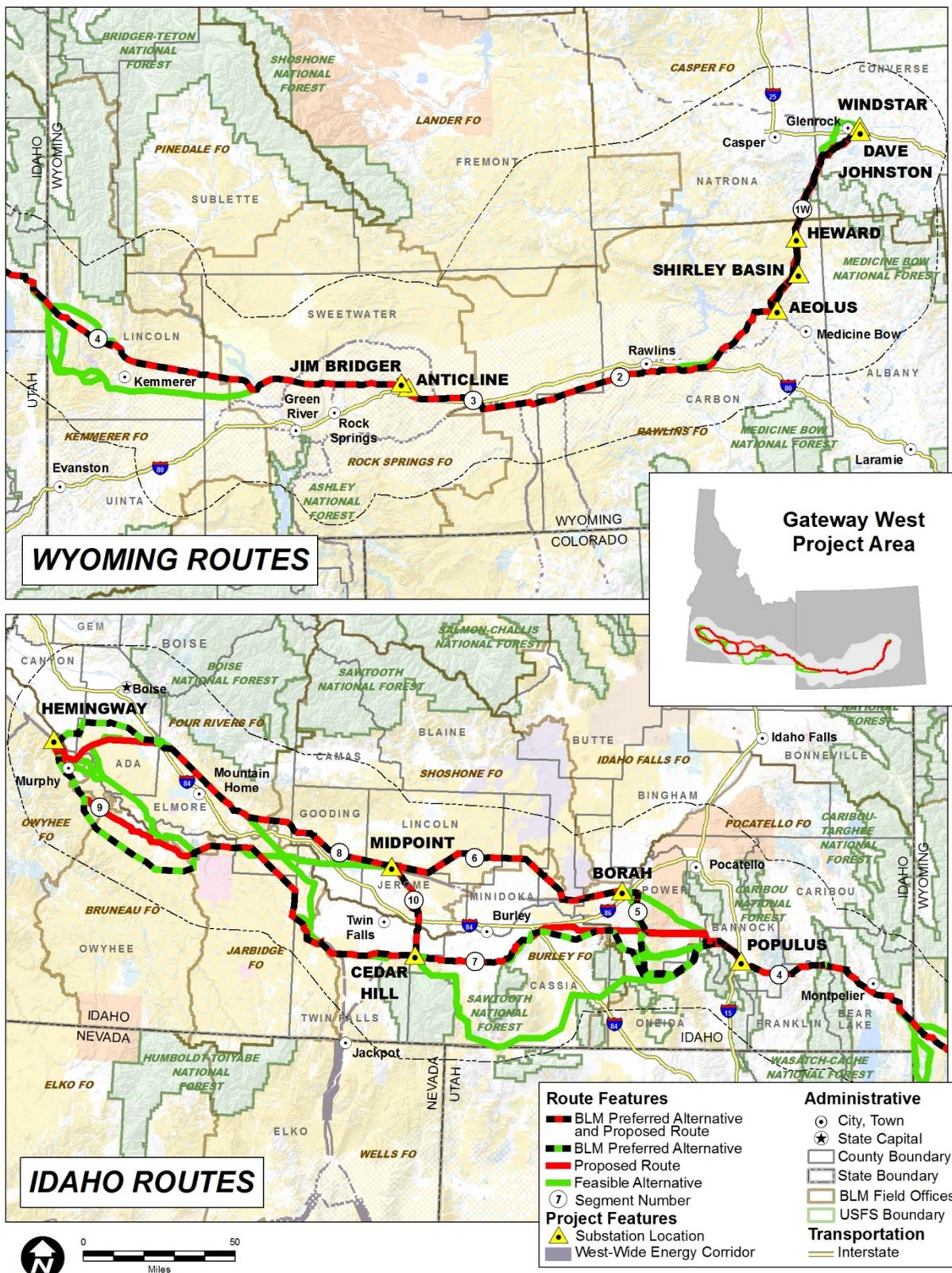


Figure 1.1-1. Project Overview

Services Division, Seedska-dee and Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuges [NWRs]); the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); the States of Idaho and Wyoming; Idaho Army National Guard (IDANG); Cassia, Power, and Twin Falls Counties, Idaho; Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Carbon Counties, Wyoming; the Medicine Bow and Saratoga Encampment-Rawlins Conservation Districts in Wyoming; and the City of Kuna in Idaho.¹

The role of cooperating agencies is derived from the NEPA requirement of federal, state, and local governments to cooperate with the goal of achieving “productive harmony” between humans and their environment. The Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ’s) regulations implementing NEPA allow the lead agency to invite any other federal, state, tribal, or local agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental issue which will be addressed by the NEPA analysis, to serve as cooperating agencies in the preparation of EISs (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1501.6).

1.1.1 Changes Between Draft and Final EIS

Numerous minor edits to the document were made between the Draft and Final EIS, many in response to comments by agencies and the public. These include corrections to the text, figures, and tables, as well as typographical errors. Changes to the Project are listed below. Changes in the Proposed Route made by the Proponents are presented first, followed by changes in Alternatives made by the BLM, and then changes by chapter and appendix.

The Proponents submitted the following revisions to the Proposed Action as part of revisions to their POD, submitted May and September 2012, and January 2013:

- The Proponents developed additional engineering for Project facility locations along portions of the Proposed Route in Segments 1W(a), 1W(c), 2, 3, 4, and 7. Changes from the centerline identified in the Draft EIS resulted from improved information; compliance with clearance and set-back codes for mine operations, railroads, and highways; and as the result of consultations with landowners and the proponents of other transmission lines. These changes range from less than 100 feet to several miles.
- Segment 1E (the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives 1E-B and 1E-C) has been dropped from further consideration. The Proponents determined that a second new 230-kV line between Glenrock and Aeolus would not be needed because of the lack of timely development of planned wind resources within the Project timeframe. This also results in the elimination of some equipment in the Windstar and Aeolus Substations. This reduces the amount of land that would be disturbed for construction and the amount needed for access roads.
- Approximately 20.9 miles of the Proposed Route in Segment 1W(a) near the city of Glenrock were revised to follow the existing transmission line east of the city (formerly Alternative 1E-A). This change is consistent with the Governor’s recommendation and also responds to comments from the City of Glenrock and members of the public. The Proposed Route also was adjusted to avoid a landing strip and to modify the approach to the Aeolus Substation. The original

¹ BLM and the cooperating agencies may be referred to collectively hereafter as “the Agencies.”

route north and west of Glenrock has been retained as an alternative, referred to as Alternative 1W(a)-B in the Final EIS.

- The Aeolus Substation would require a distribution line to provide electrical power during construction and operation. The 11-mile distribution line would be located within the ROW of County Road 121 and access roads to the substation.
- Proposed Route in Segment 1W(c) has been revised, a tie-in to the Shirley Basin Substation was added, and the approach to the Aeolus Substation was modified.
- The second circuit originally proposed for Segments 2, 3, and 4 (Aeolus to Populus) has been dropped from consideration. A single 500-kV circuit is now proposed. This reduces the ROW width from 300 feet to 250 feet, reduces the amount of land that would be disturbed for construction and the amount needed for access roads, and replaces the double-circuit structures with smaller single-circuit structures, which also allows for the option of helicopter installation of the transmission structures.
- Elimination of the second circuit between Aeolus and Populus eliminates the need for the Creston and Bridger 230-kV Substations and some equipment in the Aeolus and Anticline Substations. (Although the Creston Substation has been eliminated, the location continues to be used as the terminus for Segments 2 and 3 to maintain the segment numbering system and naming convention. The location of the termination of Segment 2 and the beginning of Segment 3 is now simply called “Creston.”)
- Approximately 24.4 miles of the Proposed Route in Segment 2 have been revised to follow Alternative 2C. This change is consistent with the Governor’s recommendation. The portion of the original Proposed Route dropped from Proposed Segment 2 is no longer under consideration.
- Segments 3 and 3A have been revised. The approach to the Anticline Substation has been modified for both routes.
- Approximately 61 miles of the Proposed Route in Segment 4 have been dropped from further consideration. The Proposed Route in Segment 4 has been revised to follow the existing transmission lines that travel west from the Jim Bridger Power Plant (formerly Alternative 4A). This change is consistent with the Governor’s recommendation and also responds to comments from local governments and members of the public. The Proposed Route has also been adjusted across the Bear River Valley, in the Caribou-Targhee NF, and near the Thatcher and Downey areas in response to land-manager and landowner concerns. An alternative was added to the portion of Segment 4 within the Caribou-Targhee NF in response to additional soil survey information. This alternative is referred to as 4G.
- The Proposed Route in Segment 5 has been revised in the Hawkins Basin area in response to public comments. The Proposed Route was also adjusted to avoid springs and a popular recreation area near the East Fork of Rock Creek. The portion of the original Proposed Route in Hawkins Basin dropped from Proposed Segment 5 is no longer under consideration.
- The Proposed Route in Segment 7 has been revised in the Hawkins Basin and Rockland areas in response to public comments. Design changes in the irrigated

agricultural land in Cassia County were also incorporated into the Proposed Route. The portion of the original Proposed Route in Hawkins Basin dropped from Proposed Segment 7 is no longer under consideration.

- The Proposed Route in Segment 8 has been revised in the King Hill/Clover Creek area in response to public comments. Design components of the Proposed Route have been revised near the IDANG Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC) to meet safety concerns for aircraft using the Range.
- The Proposed Route in Segment 9 has been revised where it crosses Salmon Falls Creek in order to avoid crossing the “Wild” portion of the Eligible Wild and Scenic River (WSR). Design components have been revised along a portion of the Proposed Route in Segment 9 near the Saylor Creek Air Force Range to meet safety concerns for aircraft using the Range.
- The Proposed Route in Segment 10 has been revised to follow the Southwest Intertie Project alignment.
- The Schedule Variation, Structure Variation, and Design Variation alternatives are no longer part of the Project.
- The disturbance footprint analyzed for the proposed and alternative routes has been expanded to provide a more accurate estimate of road widths, fly yards, cable pulling yards, and staging area requirements. In addition, numerous aspects of the Proposed Action, including many of the environmental protection measures (EPMs) and mitigation measures, have been revised; see Table 2.7-1 and Appendix B to the Final EIS.

In consultation with cooperating agencies, the Proponents, and local landowners, the BLM analyzed in the Final EIS the following changes in alternatives:

- Alternative 5D was adjusted to avoid springs and the recreation area near East Fork of Rock Creek.
- Alternative 7H was dropped from further consideration following consultation with Cassia County and the Forest Service. The portion of Alternative 7I west of milepost (MP) 108 near Goose Creek and Alternative 7J were also dropped from further consideration following consultation with Cassia and Twin Falls Counties. None of the remaining routes cross into Nevada or directly affect resources within Nevada. Alternative 7K (sometimes referred to as the Goose Creek Alternative) has been added in response to discussions with Cassia County (Alternative 7K incorporates approximately the first 108 miles of Alternative 7I).
- Design components of Alternative 8D have been revised near the IDANG OCTC to meet safety concerns for aircraft using the Range.
- A compatibility review of Public Law (P.L.) 103-64 and the purposes for which the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (SRBOP) was created was undertaken. The BLM selected, as its preferred alternatives for Segments 8 and 9, routes that were consistent with the authorities that established the National Conservation Area, with respect to the associated compensatory off-site mitigation.

- Alternative 9D/G has been revised to cross the Cove Non-Motorized Area near the boundary to reduce impacts to the Non-Motorized Area. Alternative 9E has been revised to avoid preliminary priority sage-grouse habitat and to avoid impacts to a new subdivision near Murphy. Design components have been revised along Alternatives 9D, 9F, 9G, 9H near the IDANG OCTC to meet safety concerns for aircraft using these areas.

Following is a summary by chapter and appendix of the more substantial changes made between the Draft and Final EISs:

- Chapter 1: The Proponents' Project objectives have been updated and a section on the public comment process has been added. The Proponents have indicated that they would be willing to accept phased decisions for their proposal.
- Chapter 2: The Proposed Action and Route Alternative descriptions have been revised/updated to reflect changes. The descriptions of alternatives eliminated from detailed study have been combined and moved to a separate subsection. The Design, Structure, and Schedule Variations are no longer being considered and have been dropped from the EIS. The timeline for Phase 2 of the Project (Segments 5–9) has been extended. Design information on night lighting required for military operations near portions of Segments 8 and 9 has been added. The section on the Preferred Alternatives has been revised and moved forward. Information on EPMs, mitigation measures, proposed plan amendments, and comparison of effects of alternatives has been revised.
- Chapters 3 and 4: Information has been revised to reflect changes in the Proposed Action and Alternatives, as well as new data collected or developed.
- Chapter 5: Information about the public comment process has been revised and updated.
- Chapter 6: New entries have been added.
- Chapter 7: New references have been added.
- Appendix A: The maps have been revised to reflect changes in routes and to add or correct map details.
- Appendix B: The Proponents submitted an updated version of their POD. The entire POD has been included as Appendix B, replacing and expanding the information contained in Appendices B and C of the Draft EIS.
- Appendix C: The Proponents submitted mitigation plans for Cultural Resources (C-1), Wetlands (C-2), and Sage-Grouse (C-3), copies of which are included here.
- Appendix D: All tables have been updated and/or revised based on changes in routes and data acquired or created since the Draft EIS was prepared.
- Appendix E: Maps have been revised to correct errors in Key Observation Point (KOP) locations and to add map details. Additional photosimulations have been included and other simulations have been revised to reflect Project changes.
- Appendix F: Plan amendments associated with alternatives dropped from further consideration were removed. Additional amendments were proposed for new or revised routes, and some proposed amendments are no longer being

considered. (Tables 2.2-1 through 2.2-3 and resource discussions in Chapter 3 of the EIS have been revised to reflect these changes.)

- Proposed amendments to the Casper Resource Management Plan (RMP) associated with Segment 1E and Alternative 1E-C were dropped from further consideration because these routes are no longer being considered. Proposed amendments associated with Segment 1W were dropped. The small parcels of BLM-managed land shown as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II in the Draft EIS were determined by the Field Office to be incorrectly mapped. The correct designation is VRM Class III; therefore, the proposed amendments for these parcels are not needed. Also, a Plan Maintenance Action reclassified the West-wide Energy (WWE) corridor, which contains an existing 230-kV transmission line, as VRM Class III, eliminating the need for the Bates Creek amendment in Segment 1W.

Proposed amendments to the Medicine Bow National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) associated with Segment 1E and Alternative 1E-C were dropped from further consideration. Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) are within the WWE corridor; therefore, the proposed amendment to designate the area a Utility Corridor is no longer needed. However, road improvements are needed for Forest roads outside the WWE corridor; therefore, an amendment to designate the area crossed by these roads as Roded Natural, as well as amendments for threatened, endangered, and sensitive (TES) species and scenery, would still be needed.

- Proposed amendments associated with the portion of the Proposed Route analyzed in the Draft EIS that was within the area managed under the Kemmerer RMP were dropped from further consideration due to a change in the Proposed Route.
 - Proposed amendments associated with the portion of the Proposed Route within the Caribou-Targhee NF have been modified.
 - Proposed amendments to the Sawtooth Forest Plan associated with Alternatives 7H, 7I west of the Sublett Division, and 7J were dropped from further consideration.
 - The Malad Management Framework Plan (MFP) and the Pocatello RMP in effect at the time the Draft EIS was released have been replaced by the Revised RMP approved in July 2012. Proposed amendments associated with these documents have been revised accordingly.
 - Amendments to the Cassia RMP and the Twin Falls MFP associated with Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J are no longer needed. An amendment to the Cassia RMP associated with Alternative 7K (the Goose Creek Alternative), which crosses a BLM-managed area classified as VRM Class II, has been added.
 - The discussion of the proposed amendment to the SRBOP RMP for Alternative 9D/G where it crosses the Cove Non-Motorized Area has been revised.
- Appendix G: The appendix has been updated to reflect route revisions (described above), and photosimulations and other figures have been added.

Figures have been revised to reflect route changes and to add information or correct errors.

- Appendix H: This appendix has been revised to update cross-references to the Proponents' POD and the Final EIS.
- Appendix I: The wildlife seasonal stipulations have been updated where appropriate.
- Appendix J: The sage-grouse analysis has been updated and includes the results of the Habitat Equivalency Analysis and its public review that occurred in August 2012.
- Appendix K: Information on the economic effects of the proposed project on agricultural operations that was developed at the request of counties in southern Idaho has been added as a new appendix.
- Appendix L: The Agencies' response to comments on the Draft EIS has been included in table form.
- Appendix M: The Biological Assessment of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife, Fish, and Plant Species has been included as a new appendix.
- Appendix N: The final draft Programmatic Agreement (PA) has been added as a new appendix.
- Appendix O: Maps showing the alternatives eliminated from detailed study are presented in this new appendix.

1.2 FEDERAL AGENCIES' PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need of the federal action is to respond to the Proponents' ROW application to use federally managed lands for a portion of the Gateway West transmission line pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 43 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 1701 *et seq.* In addition, the USACE must respond under the Clean Water Act² (CWA) to an application for a permit to dredge or fill waters of the United States, including wetlands. The purpose and need for major federal authorizing actions requested for the proposed Project to proceed are further described below.

1.2.1 BLM Purpose and Need

The BLM has received ROW applications from the Proponents and must determine whether to allow the use of the National System of Public Lands for portions of Gateway West. In accordance with FLPMA and the BLM's ROW regulations, 43 CFR Part 2800, the BLM must manage public lands for multiple uses that take into account the long-term needs for future generations of renewable and non-renewable resources. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to grant ROWs for "systems for generation, transmission, and distribution of electric energy" "over, upon, under, or through [public] lands" (43 U.S.C. § 1761(a)(5)). Taking into account the BLM's multiple use mandate, the BLM's purpose and need is to respond to an FLPMA ROW application submitted by Idaho Power Company and PacifiCorp to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission the Gateway West transmission line and associated infrastructure on public lands administered by the BLM in

² Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, 33 U.S.C. § 1251

compliance with FLPMA, BLM ROW regulations, and other applicable federal laws and policies. In making its decision, the BLM must consider the environmental impact of granting a ROW across the National System of Public Lands. The BLM will decide whether to grant, grant with modifications, or deny the application. Modifications may include granting only a portion of the Project, modifying the proposed use, or changing the route or location of the proposed facilities if the BLM determines such terms, conditions, and stipulations are in the public interest (43 CFR § 2805.10(a)(1)).

The BLM must consider the existing RMPs and MFPs in the decision to issue a ROW grant in accordance with 43 CFR § 1610.0-5(b). RMPs and MFPs allocate public land resource use and establish management objectives. Applicable RMPs and MFPs are listed in Table 1.5-1. Portions of the proposed transmission line are not in conformance with several BLM land management plans and therefore amendments to these plans are analyzed as part of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives.

The BLM will decide whether to grant, grant with modifications, or deny the Proposed Action, an Action Alternative, or any portion of a proposed route or alternative with independent utility, which will be documented in the BLM's Record of Decision (ROD) with all terms and conditions deemed appropriate by the BLM. The BLM decisions to be made are to:

- Decide whether to grant, grant with modifications, or deny the all or part of the ROW application for the transmission line;
- Decide if one or more BLM land use plans should be amended to allow the proposed transmission line;
- Determine the most appropriate location for the transmission line on the National System of Public Lands, considering multiple-use objectives; and
- Determine the terms and conditions (stipulations) that should be applied to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line on the National System of Public Lands.

The BLM has prepared this EIS to meet the disclosure requirements under NEPA, to facilitate public participation, to assist the BLM decision-makers in determining whether to issue a ROW grant, and to determine under what terms and conditions the ROW grant would be issued. The BLM Wyoming state director is the agency official who will be making the decision(s) in the ROD.

Based on the environmental analysis in this Final EIS, the Wyoming state director will decide whether and how to approve all or a portion of this Project and associated Plan Amendments. This decision will be documented in the ROD and may include phased decisions for the Project, in which case a separate ROD would be issued for each phase.

Analysis in the Final EIS covers the entire project, and Project-wide effects have been disclosed. The BLM is considering several factors, including the proposed construction schedule (see Table 2.1-3 in Chapter 2), other authorizing entities' preferred routes, environmental effects of the analyzed routes, and opportunities to reach complementary siting decisions with other authorizing entities in deciding whether or not to authorize the Project on public land and if all or only a portion of the Project should be authorized at

this time. The Proponents have indicated that portions of the Project would have independent utility.

If the BLM chooses to issue a ROW grant for only a portion of the Project, that decision will not preclude the BLM's ability to choose the "No Action" alternative for the remainder of the Project. The BLM may take this approach where the phase(s) that are approved cover portion(s) of the Project that, if constructed, could be operated without waiting for the rest of the Project to be approved.

A phased decision could provide additional time to allow the various federal, state, and local permitting agencies to potentially reach consensus regarding the siting of the route for one or more segments. In a phased decision process, the BLM would issue a ROW grant for certain segments with independent utility. The ROD would provide the agencies' rationale for a phased decision. The BLM could authorize the start of construction for the authorized route for the first phase covered in the ROD via a Notice to Proceed when all grant and other regulatory requirements are met.

For those segment(s) of the proposal not approved in the initial ROD, the BLM would initiate further siting discussions with cooperating agencies and stakeholders. Should these additional stakeholder discussions lead to new information and/or modifications to the alternatives for the remaining portions of the proposal, the BLM may need to prepare additional environmental analysis for public review and comment. Only the remaining portion(s) of the proposal would be addressed in such an analysis in accordance with the CEQ NEPA regulations and U.S. Department of the Interior policy. Proposed land use plan amendments for the second phase decision area would be subject to protest, as provided in 43 CFR § 1610.5-2, during the review period for any additional environmental analysis. The BLM would prepare a second ROD to approve the plan amendments once all protests are resolved and to grant, grant with modifications, or deny the remaining portions of the ROW. The opportunity to appeal the BLM decision in this ROD covering the second phase area would be allowed as provided in 43 CFR Part 4 and § 2801.10.

Should the BLM determine that the environmental analysis in the Final EIS was adequate and that no additional analysis was needed, the BLM would proceed with protest resolution for the applicable plan amendments. Should all protests be resolved, the BLM would then prepare a second ROD to 1) approve the proposed plan amendments and 2) grant, grant with modifications, or deny the remaining portions of the ROW.

1.2.2 Forest Service Purpose and Need

The Project as proposed would cross the Medicine Bow-Routt and the Caribou-Targhee NFs. An alternative route crosses portions of the Sawtooth NF. Therefore, the Proponents have applied for a Special Use Authorization from the Forest Service, which will determine whether to issue the Authorization. The Forest Service, as a cooperating federal agency, will participate in all aspects of the environmental analysis. The Forest Service will use this EIS as a basis for its decision regarding a preferred alternative and the issuance of a Special Use Authorization and to determine under what terms and conditions a permit should be issued. The agency official who will be making the decision(s) is the Forest Supervisor of the Caribou-Targhee NF.

Title 36 CFR Part 251, Subpart B provides authority for reviewing and granting Special Use Authorizations for transmission lines. Further direction is provided in Forest Service Manuals 2701 and 2710.1. For a transmission line with a capacity of 66 kV or higher, the Forest Service is required to notify the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) when an application is received (Forest Service Handbook 2709.11). The Proponents submitted an SF-299, Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands, to both the BLM and the Forest Service (Section 1.1).

Forest Plans³ establish similar management allocations and guidelines as BLM RMPs and MFPs (see Section 1.5). The Caribou portion of the Caribou-Targhee NF is managed according to the Caribou Forest Plan (Forest Service 2003a). The Medicine Bow portion of the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs is managed according to the Medicine Bow Forest Plan (Forest Service 2003b). The Sawtooth NF is managed according to the Sawtooth NF Amended Forest Plan (Forest Service 2003c, as amended 2012). Portions of the proposed Project are not consistent with aspects of these Forest Plans; therefore, the Forest Service has determined that amendments to these plans would be needed to implement some of the proposed action or alternatives (see Section 1.5, Table 1.5-1).

The decision whether to authorize the Proposed Action or an Action Alternative will be documented in a separate ROD prepared by the Forest Service. The Forest Service decisions to be made are to:

- Decide if a Special Use Authorization should be issued for the transmission line;
- Determine the most appropriate location for the transmission line on National Forest System (NFS) lands, considering multiple-use objectives; and
- Determine the terms and conditions (stipulations) that should be applied to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line on NFS lands.
- Decide if one or more Forest Plans should be amended to allow the proposed or alternative routes of the proposed transmission line:
 - The Responsible Official must decide whether or not to amend the Medicine Bow Forest Plan to allocate areas outside the WWE corridor where road improvement or new roads are proposed as Roded Natural (Management Prescription 3.31), and what additional amendments to the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and mitigation measures are necessary to authorize construction and maintenance of the transmission line, temporary and/or permanent access roads, and fly ways needed for construction.
 - The Responsible Official must decide whether or not to amend the Caribou Forest Plan to designate a new utility corridor (Prescription 8.1), and, if a new

³ The Caribou-Targhee NF includes two "proclaimed" National Forests, the Caribou and Targhee and portions of the "proclaimed" Cache NF that it administers. The Caribou and Targhee NFs each have their own management plan, and the Caribou Forest Plan also covers the portion of the Cache NF crossed by Segment 4 of the Proposed Route that it administers. Therefore, when referring to the Forest Plan, the term "Caribou Forest Plan" will be used. When referring to the administrative unit, the term "Caribou-Targhee NF" will be used.

The Medicine Bow-Routt NFs include two "proclaimed" National Forests, the Medicine Bow and Routt. The Medicine Bow and Routt NFs each have their own management plan. Therefore, when referring to the Forest Plan, the term "Medicine Bow Forest Plan" will be used. When referring to the administrative unit, the term "Medicine Bow-Routt NFs" will be used.

corridor of 8.1 is designated, what additional amendments to the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and mitigation measures are necessary to authorize construction and maintenance of the transmission line, temporary and/or permanent access roads, and fly ways needed for construction.

- The Responsible Official must decide whether or not to approve an alternative route and, if approved, what additional amendments to the Sawtooth Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and mitigation measures are necessary to authorize construction and maintenance of the transmission line, temporary and/or permanent access roads, and fly ways needed for construction.

1.2.3 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Decision

Authorization from the USACE is required for Project features that cross over, through, or under navigable waters as defined under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. § 401 et seq.). Navigable waters must be designated as such by the USACE Division Commander following procedures defined at 33 CFR Part 329. The Snake River is navigable up to river mile 445.5 near Noble Island. The Proposed Route would cross the Snake River upstream of the navigable reach. Alternative 8B would cross farther downstream near Brooks Island within the navigable reach.

Authorization from USACE is also required for any activity that results in discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States as defined under Section 404 of the CWA (33 U.S.C. § 1344). The term "waters of the United States" has been broadly defined by statute, regulation, and judicial interpretation to include all waters that were, are, or could be used in interstate commerce such as rivers, streams (including ephemeral streams), canals, reservoirs, lakes, and adjacent wetlands. The USACE Wetlands Delineation Manual dated January 1987 (USACE 1987) and its current supplements must be used to determine if an area has sufficient wetland characteristics to be a water of the United States.

On June 5, 2007, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and USACE Headquarters in Washington D.C. implemented temporary guidance that requires an extensive evaluation and coordination procedure before exerting jurisdiction over many streams and wetlands. The guidance was based primarily on a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 19, 2006, in the case of *Rapanos et ux., et al. v. United States* (Nos. 04-1034 and 04-1384). The guidance was revised by Regulatory Guidance Letter 08-02 issued by USACE on June 26, 2008, clarifying appropriate uses of approved and preliminary jurisdictional determinations. The guidance was also revised by agency memoranda on January 28, 2008; October 16, 2008; and December 2, 2008. Additional revisions are likely in the future.

Many activities with "minimal" impacts on waters of the United States can be authorized by general permits and the most common are nationwide permits. On February 21, 2012, USACE published nationwide permits in the Federal Register (Vol. 77, No. 34). Nationwide permits provide authorization in accordance with Section 404(e) of the CWA. The permits are available for a period of 5 years, currently until March 18, 2017. Standard (Individual) permits are required for activities with more than minimal impacts on waters of the United States.

Individual permits authorize activities in accordance with Section 404(a) of the CWA. The permit evaluation must be conducted in accordance with Section 404(b)(1) of the

CWA as specified in guidelines promulgated by the USEPA (40 CFR Part 230). No discharge shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge that would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences. An alternative is practicable if it is available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of the overall project purpose. In addition, where a discharge is proposed for a special aquatic site (wetland), all practicable alternatives to the proposed discharge which do not involve a discharge into a special aquatic site are presumed to have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, unless clearly demonstrated otherwise.

Reasonable alternatives as defined under the NEPA and practicable alternatives as defined above are not necessarily synonymous because some reasonable alternatives may not be available to the Proponents. The BLM is the agency that must select the preferred alternative on federally managed lands. Executive Order (EO) 11990, promulgated in 1977 for the protection of wetlands, requires “each agency, to the extent permitted by law, [to] avoid undertaking or providing assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds (1) that there is no practicable alternative to such construction, and (2) that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use. In making this finding the head of the agency may take into account economic, environmental and other pertinent factors (Section (2)(b).” Further, “When Federally-owned wetlands or portions of wetlands are proposed for lease, easement, right-of-way or disposal to non-Federal public or private parties, the Federal agency shall (a) reference in the conveyance those uses that are restricted under identified Federal, State or local wetlands regulations; and (b) attach other appropriate restrictions to the uses of properties by the grantee or purchaser and any successor, except where prohibited by law; or (c) withhold such properties from disposal (Section 4).”

When the preferred alternative is selected and approved in the ROD, it will reflect the agencies’ full consideration of impacts to wetlands and all other resources. The ROD will then define the only alternative available to the Proponents for which a ROW could be granted on federally managed lands. The Proponents would be required to obtain ROW on non-federal lands through negotiated easements or under eminent domain laws. Therefore, ROW granted by the BLM, supplemented by acquisition of congruent ROW that can be obtained by the Proponents, will define the only practicable alternative for the transmission line. However, it may be necessary for the USACE to evaluate alternatives for specific activities within the ROW such as tower locations and road alignments during the authorization process.

The USACE will determine whether authorization of proposed activities by nationwide permits is appropriate or whether certain activities require an individual permit evaluation. Evaluation of practicable alternatives is not applicable to nationwide permit authorizations as specified in 40 CFR Part 230.7(b)(1). However, mitigation measures in the form of avoidance, minimization, and compensation would be considered in all permit decisions. Verification by the USACE that activities are already authorized by nationwide permits is not a new federal action. The USACE would prepare a separate ROD for individual permit authorizations because issuance of a permit would be a new federal action.

1.3 PROPONENTS' OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROJECT

This section provides basic information about why the Proponents are proposing this Project and a description of the electrical transmission system needs that would be met by the Project.

1.3.1 Proponents of the Project

1.3.1.1 Idaho Power

Idaho Power is a wholly owned subsidiary of IDA-CORP, a holding company. Idaho Power is responsible for providing electrical service to its service area, which includes most of southern Idaho and a portion of eastern Oregon. The number of customers in Idaho Power's service area is expected to increase from around 492,000 in 2010 to over 650,000 by 2030. Firm peak-hour load (the peak hourly electricity that the system must supply when demand is at its highest) has increased from 2,052 MW in 1990 to over 3,000 MW in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. In June 2008, the peak-hour load reached 3,214 MW, which was a new system peak-hour record.

Average firm load (the average annual demand from customers) has increased from 10,500,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) in 1990 to 15,800,000 MWh in 2008 (excluding Astaris/FMC) (IPC 2011a). While the economic downturn is expected to depress customer demand for electricity in the near term, Idaho Power forecasts that on average their load will continue to grow at about 1.4 percent per year (29 average MW annually) over the 20-year planning period. During the same 20-year planning period, the peak-hour load is expected to increase at 1.8 percent per year (69 MW annually) (IPC 2011a).

Idaho Power is a regulated public utility under the laws of the State of Idaho whose mission is to provide reliable, responsible, fair-priced energy. Idaho Power operates under the oversight and regulatory controls of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (IPUC). Under Title 61 of the IPUC regulations, Idaho Power "shall furnish, provide and maintain such service, instrumentalities, equipment and facilities as shall promote the safety, health, comfort and convenience of its patrons, employees and the public, and shall be in all respects adequate, efficient, just and reasonable."

Idaho Power is also a public utility under the jurisdiction of the FERC. Idaho Power is obligated to expand its transmission system to provide requested firm transmission service, and to construct and place in service sufficient capacity to reliably deliver resources to network and native load customers as provided in their Open Access Transmission Tariff (OATT) under Sections 15.4 and 28.3 (FERC 2008). Idaho Power's OATT requires planning for the expansion of the transmission system to provide network integration transmission service that complies with regulatory reliability standards.

Idaho Power's 2011 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) divides the 20-year planning horizon into two 10-year segments. The first 10-year period is analyzed first (2011-2020), followed by the second 10-year period (2021-2030). Idaho Power customer needs are largely met in the first 10-year period with the construction of the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line project (B2H).

For the second 10-year period, ten resource portfolios were analyzed in the IRP and some of these portfolios required Gateway West transmission capacity to deliver energy to major load centers in southern Idaho while others did not. The need for Gateway West capacity in each of these portfolios was driven by the assumed locations of the resources in each portfolio.

While the selected portfolio for the second 10-year period was marginally able to deliver energy to major load centers without additional transmission capacity across southern Idaho, many of the other portfolios analyzed did require additional transmission capacity. The selection of resources in the second 10-year period is largely an academic exercise, and is likely to change substantially every two years when the IRP is updated.

Idaho Power has reported in the most recent POD (December 2012, Appendix B of this EIS) that without adequate transmission capacity across southern Idaho, its ability to site future generation resources will be limited. The long lead time required to permit, design, and construct high voltage transmission lines simply will not allow new transmission capacity to be built in conjunction with the construction schedule of a new generation resource. Therefore, Idaho Power believes it is prudent to continue to pursue additional transmission capacity across southern Idaho through Gateway West.

1.3.1.2 PacifiCorp (Rocky Mountain Power)

PacifiCorp is an electric utility that transmits electricity via a grid of transmission lines located throughout a six-state region and a distribution system that serves more than 1.7 million retail customers. Rocky Mountain Power, a business unit of PacifiCorp, delivers electricity to approximately 1 million customers in Utah, Wyoming, and Idaho. As an essential service provider, Rocky Mountain Power is required to operate under the oversight and regulatory controls of the Public Service Commission of Utah, the Wyoming Public Service Commission, and the IPUC. Pacific Power, another business unit of PacifiCorp, provides service to approximately 730,000 customers in Oregon, Washington, and California, and is subject to the regulatory oversight of the Oregon Public Utility Commission, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, and the California Public Utilities Commission. Although the objectives of these multiple commissions vary somewhat, they do share a common goal of ensuring utilities such as Rocky Mountain Power provide safe, reliable, adequate, and efficient delivery of electricity.

PacifiCorp's system peak-hour load is forecast to increase from 10,450 MW in 2011 to 12,609 MW in 2020, a 2.1 percent average annual growth rate. PacifiCorp's eastern system peak is expected to continue growing faster than its western system peak, with average annual growth rates of 2.4 percent and 1.4 percent respectively, over the forecast horizon. PacifiCorp's system-wide average customer load is also forecasted to grow at a 2.1 percent annual rate from 2011 to 2020, increasing from 63,131,000 MWh in 2011 to 76,137,000 MWh in 2020. This average forecasted growth rate is moderately higher than the average growth rate experienced from 1995 to 2005 when the average increase per year was 1.6 percent. PacifiCorp's three highest state loads—Oregon, Utah and Wyoming (included in the MWh loads above)—are forecasted to grow at a rate of 1.4 percent, 2.4 percent, and 2.9 percent, respectively, through the same 2011–2020 period (PacifiCorp 2011). PacifiCorp's customer base in Wyoming is anticipated to increase by approximately 340 MW in the same timeframe. The growth rate is reflective of all customer loads.

PacifiCorp is a public utility under the jurisdiction of the FERC. PacifiCorp is obligated to expand its transmission system to provide requested firm transmission service and to construct and place in service sufficient capacity to reliably deliver resources to customers requesting service and existing customers as provided in their OATT under Sections 15.4, 28.2, and 28.3 (FERC 2008). PacifiCorp's Attachment K of the OATT also requires planning for the expansion of the system to ensure that its transmission system meets industry, regulatory, and reliability standards.

1.3.1.3 Team Constructional and Operational Responsibilities

Rocky Mountain Power and Idaho Power signed an agreement in 2007 to approach permitting the Project as a team. That teaming agreement is still in place, though RMP has taken the lead in the place of Idaho Power in the permitting effort as of January 2012. Rocky Mountain Power is responsible for the construction and operation of Segments 1 through 4. Construction and operation of Segments 5 through 10 is still under discussion between the two Proponents as of December 2012.

1.3.2 Federal Oversight of Transmission Planning

The Proponents are subject to federal and state oversight and regulation for the planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of their energy transmission system. Under the FERC's authority, the Proponents are required to conduct transmission planning necessary to reliably serve their native load customers and conduct planning for third-party transmission service requests in compliance with their FERC-approved OATT. Procedures and processes for transmission planning for network customers and for third-party requests are documented in OATT Section III - Network Integration Transmission Service and subsections 28 through 33. Gateway West, as part of the larger Energy Gateway concept, has been developed, engineered, designed, and will be constructed to reliably deliver designated network resources to network customer loads, both today and long-term.

FERC Order 890 presently provides the transmission planning requirements for public utility transmission providers nationwide, including all public utility transmission providers within the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC). Through Order 890, FERC requires that transmission providers participate in local planning processes as well as sub-regional and regional planning processes. PacifiCorp and Idaho Power both participate in the Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG), which is a sub-regional planning group comprised of transmission providers and customers. PacifiCorp and Idaho Power are also active in WECC regional transmission planning committees and studies.

FERC issued Order 1000 in July 2011 with the requirement that public utility transmission providers make compliance filings on most of the issues by October 2012. A summary of FERC Order 1000 is found in Appendix B, Page 2-3. NTTG members are in the process of identifying and modifying the existing compliance filings to address the requirements of Order 1000; however, it is believed that the transmission planning process under the Order 1000 requirements will remain largely unchanged from the Order 890 requirements within the NTTG footprint. NTTG's current planning process evaluates the reliability of the transmission system 10 years into the future. Each load serving entity provides 10-year projections for load and generation. The load and resource projections serve as the basis for analysis. The adequacy of the existing

transmission system is evaluated for the future projections. The adequacy of the future transmission system is then evaluated for various seasonal demand and generation scenarios with proposed transmission improvements.

An Order 1000 modification of note, as differentiated from Order 890 requirements, is that the NTTG regional transmission plan must identify transmission facilities that “more efficiently or cost-effectively” meet the region’s reliability, economic and Public Policy Requirements. In other words, a project’s relative benefit and cost will now be analyzed as part of the transmission planning process, and the transmission plan (a single plan) will be a compilation of proposed projects that most “efficiently and cost-effectively” meet a region’s needs.

Gateway West is one of the projects in the 2011 NTTG Biennial Transmission Plan and will be included in the 2012-2013 NTTG regional planning process. Once NTTG adopts the requirements of Order 1000, the transmission planning process will evaluate the efficiency and cost effectiveness of projects within the plan and consider any proposed alternatives that may address regional needs more efficiently or cost effectively than the projects proposed by the transmission providers in local transmission plans.

FERC granted the PacifiCorp incentive rate treatment and the Commission issued a 4-0 decision in which FERC stated:

...we find that PacifiCorp has adequately demonstrated that the Project (with the exception of segment A) will ensure reliability and reduce transmission congestion... We find that segments B through H of the Project⁴ would establish for the first time a backbone of 500 kV transmission lines in PacifiCorp’s Wyoming, Idaho and Utah regions. This would provide a platform for integrating and coordinating future regional and sub-regional electric transmission projects being considered in the Pacific Northwest and the Intermountain West, connection existing and potential generation to loads in an efficient manner, thus reducing the cost of delivered power. Also, the Petition cites the 2006 DOE National Electric Transmission Congestion Study and the 2004 Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study in stating that that proposed Project will reduce congestion or maintain reliability in the Western Interconnection. Additionally, the project would establish a direct link between PacifiCorp’s east and west control areas, providing numerous benefits including increasing transfer capability, reducing the need for curtailments, and reducing transmission congestion.

The WECC 10-Year Regional Transmission Plan was approved by the WECC Board of Directors September 22, 2011, and a Plan Summary can be found at: http://www.wecc.biz/library/StudyReport/Documents/Plan_Summary.pdf. Energy Gateway, including Gateway West, is an integral part of the Foundational Transmission Project identified for the Regional Plan as shown in Section 3.2.3, Transmission. Independent stakeholders involved in data input, development, and review of the plan are identified in Section 6, Organizations Involved in Development of the Plan.

1.3.2.1 WECC Path Rating Review Process

WECC has a three-phase process for rating proposed transmission projects. The rating process enables project sponsors to attain a WECC “Accepted Rating” and demonstrate how their projects will meet North American Electrical Reliability Corporation (NERC) and WECC planning standards. The rating process addresses planned new facility

⁴ Segment D in the FERC decision refers to Gateway West Segments 1 to 4 and Segment E refers to Gateway West Segments 5 to 10.

additions and upgrades and the re-rating of existing facilities. It includes coordination through a review group made up of the project sponsors and representatives of other systems that may be affected by the project.

Phase 1 begins when the project sponsor submits a progress report to the WECC or when WECC's Planning Coordination Committee and Technical Studies Subcommittee receive a formal letter of notification. It is the project sponsor's responsibility during Phase 1 to conduct sufficient studies to demonstrate the proposed non-simultaneous rating of the project. The project sponsor must also prepare a "Comprehensive Progress Report" that documents study results and describes project details. This report must also identify known simultaneous relationships between the proposed project and existing facilities. When the WECC accepts the project sponsor's comprehensive progress report, the project is granted a "Planned Rating."

In Phase 2 of the Rating Process, interested WECC members form a "Project Review Group" to evaluate the project's plan of service. When the appropriate committee or subcommittee of the WECC accepts the Project Review Group Phase 2 Rating report, Phase 2 is complete and the project is granted an "Accepted Rating." An accepted rating affords the project sponsor some protection against erosion of established capacity for its rated facilities as further expansion of the interconnection occurs or new limitations are discovered.

Phase 3 is the last part of the Rating Process. During Phase 3, WECC members and staff monitor the project and evaluate major changes in assumptions and conditions to enable the project to maintain its Accepted Rating. Phase 3 is complete when the project is placed into service.

The WECC path rating review is the foundation for determining Total Transmission Capability for transmission facilities in the Western Interconnection. WECC's approach for rating facilities, determining Total Transmission Capability, and calculating Available Transfer Capability are all intended to fully comply with applicable NERC, WECC, and FERC rules.

1.3.3 State Regulation of Transmission

The state commissions involved in the review of Gateway West are Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, California, and possibly Washington. These are the states where the Proponents serve retail customers. Each state has approved regulatory processes to review and determine the prudence and usefulness of any investment made on behalf of the Proponents' 2.2 million customers. Although each state has slight variations in the regulatory process, approval of investments occurs in the following two steps.

1. Each company files for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in the states physically impacted by the investment. For Gateway West, the Proponents will file in Idaho and Wyoming. This process determines that an investment proposed by the Proponents is in the public interest and is necessary to provide safe, adequate, and reliable electric service. The Proponents will initiate this process when the BLM publishes the final EIS.
2. The Proponents file for cost recovery of an investment through a rate case. This step occurs after the investment is made and the respective project is

constructed and placed in service. This review focuses on prudence of project alternative selection, cost control, customer benefits, and usefulness of the facilities resulting from the investment. Funds expended in advance of this prudency review and rate change approval by each state are ‘at risk’ as transmission projects are rarely “preapproved” by the states before they are initiated. There is no uniform pre-approval process for investments or for approval of project development investments in all states.

These regulatory processes change occasionally to facilitate additional and more comprehensive review by commissions and stakeholders. As an example, Rocky Mountain Power agreed in its recent 2010 Wyoming rate case settlement to provide additional justification for Gateway West and other Gateway segments through future regulatory filings in Wyoming. This will give the Wyoming commission and Wyoming customer’s additional information and insight into the need and benefits of these transmission investments prior to the Proponents initiating construction.

In support of this two-step process, the Proponents engage in a series of regional activities to inform commissions and stakeholders about its projects, their objectives, and investment requirements. The IRPs are examples of this informational process. As regulated utilities, both Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power are required to produce and periodically update an IRP for each state in which they operate, with the exception of Wyoming. The Public Utilities Commissions of the states where these utilities operate review and acknowledge these IRPs and their updates.

1.3.4 Demand-Side Management

Part of the planning process that results in the IRPs and their updates includes addressing conservation and other means of reducing or controlling the growth of the demand for electricity among the utilities’ customers. When the Public Utilities Commission for a given state acknowledges the IRP, it is agreeing that the balance of demand-side measures and development of additional generation resources, including associated transmission, is appropriate to meet the needs of the customers of its state while complying with the various laws and regulations on renewable energy requirements, carbon emissions, and other energy-related issues.

The Proponents have detailed their demand-side management in their respective IRPs, which have been acknowledged by the Public Utilities Commissions for which they were written (PacifiCorp 2011; IPC 2011a). Note that Wyoming does not acknowledge IRPs.

1.3.5 Existing Transmission System Reliability Constraints

Transmission systems in the United States must be planned, operated, and maintained under the NERC⁵ reliability performance standards. These mandatory national standards govern the level of performance and reliability of the Bulk Electric System operated within the United States. Additionally, the Proponents state that they are

⁵ NERC’s mission is to improve the reliability and security of the bulk power system in North America. To achieve that, NERC develops and enforces reliability standards; monitors the bulk power system; assesses future adequacy; audits owners, operators, and users for preparedness; and educates and trains industry personnel. NERC is a self-regulatory organization that relies on the diverse and collective expertise of industry participants. As the Electric Reliability Organization, NERC is subject to audit by the FERC and governmental authorities in Canada (NERC 2012).

governed by the WECC⁶ policy procedures, criteria, and standards that may be more stringent than those required by NERC. In compliance with the above standards, transmission systems must be planned, designed, built, and continually operated with sufficient levels of redundancy to enable the transmission system to reliably operate in the event of the loss of any single element (i.e., generation unit, transmission line segment or substation equipment) or loss of multiple elements, thereby providing adequate service to customers and to other interconnected utilities. Adding new transmission facilities to a network provides not only new transmission capacity but also levels of backup to each other during outage conditions when elements of the system are taken out of service during both planned and unplanned events.

Transmission paths consist of single lines or combinations of lines operated together as a single transmission unit to maximize capacity of the system and to maintain reliability. Path capacities are usually limited by the line in the path with the least capacity. The capacity ratings of the paths are based on maintaining established reliability criteria. The existing path capacity “bottlenecks” and how the path rating will increase with the Gateway West segments in place are shown in Table 1.3-1.

Table 1.3-1. Rating and Capacity of Paths with and without Gateway West

Path Name ^{2/}	Path Rating Limit (Present Operational Maxima) (megawatts)	Existing Available Transmission Capacity (megawatts)	Proposed Gateway West Parallel Segments ^{1/}	Planned Rating/Capacity Increase from Gateway West (megawatts)	Proposed Path Rating/Capacity with Gateway West (megawatts)
TOT 4A (WY East to WY Southwest)	937	–	Segment 1W Windstar-Aeolus	838	1,775
Aeolus West (WY Central to WY Southwest)	NA	NA	Segments 2 and 3 Aeolus-Anticline plus existing lines	2,670	2,670
Bridger West	2,400 ^{2/}	–	Segment 4 Jim Bridger-Populus	1,700	4,100
Borah West	2,557	–	Segments 5, 6, and 7 Populus-Borah, Borah-Midpoint, and Populus-Cedar Hill	1,893	4,450
Midpoint West	2,287	–	Segments 8, 9 and 10 Cedar Hill-Midpoint, Midpoint-Hemingway and Cedar Hill-Hemingway	2,113	4,400

1/ Refer to Figure 1.1-1 for segments and substations.

2/ Each of the paths listed in Table 1.3-1 is part of Gateway West and is dependent on the others to move power from east to west (Wyoming to Idaho).

⁶ WECC and the nine other regional reliability councils were formed due to national concern regarding the reliability of the interconnected bulk power systems, the ability to operate these systems without widespread failures in electric service, and the need to foster the preservation of reliability through a formal organization. The Western Interconnection encompasses a vast area of nearly 1.8 million square miles. It is the largest and most diverse of the eight regional councils of the NERC. WECC’s territory extends from Canada to Mexico. It includes the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, the northern portion of Baja California, Mexico, and all or portions of the 14 western states in between (WECC 2011).

In siting new transmission facilities, the Proponents state that they are obliged to be prudent and site and install facilities to avoid a potential “common mode failure” (lines adjacent to each other on a common transmission tower or two parallel transmission lines in close proximity to each other). Common mode failures include, but are not limited to, a snagged shield wire from one line being dragged into the adjacent line, an aircraft flying into more than one line, smoke from a fire across the ROW shorting out more than one line, lightning strikes affecting more than one line, high winds, dust storms, ice storms, blizzards, landslides, earthquakes, vandalism, and equipment failure.

As a minimum requirement, NERC/WECC reliability performance standards require that a multiple contingency analysis (an analysis of the simultaneous failure of two lines) must be performed to evaluate the impact resulting from the loss of multiple transmission lines to the remaining transmission system. The power flowing on the two transmission lines removed from service must now flow across the remaining transmission system and may subsequently overload portions of the remaining system. In this event, the useable system capacity limit is reduced in order to protect the remaining system from this overload or unstable condition.

When transmission lines are separated from each other, common mode failures pose a significantly reduced risk and the NERC/WECC reliability standards only require evaluation of one line out of service at a time. Constructing transmission lines physically separated from each other allows the Proponents to operate their interconnected electric system at a higher electrical capacity than would otherwise be possible. The Proponents state that the net result of line separation is that fewer transmission lines are needed overall to adequately serve customers’ energy needs. Due to the high transfer capacity requirements necessary for Gateway West, high-capacity lines must be located on separate corridors to increase reliability and to provide the highest capacity possible.

Due to questions that have surfaced concerning common mode failure of transmission lines constructed adjacent to other transmission lines, the WECC Board of Directors approved a regional transmission planning criterion (TPL [001-004]-WECC-1-CR), on April 18, 2008. This planning criterion specifies that utilities must plan for two lines to be out of service at the same time if they are located adjacent to each other unless those lines are separated by at least “the longest span length of the two transmission circuits at the point of separation or 500 feet, whichever is greater, between the transmission circuits” (WECC 2008)⁷. This criterion has subsequently been revised, but the initial siting study for Gateway West was based on this criterion.

For the purposes of the initial Gateway West siting study, the longest span was assumed to be 1,500 feet, thereby dictating the minimum distance between existing and proposed transmission lines serving the same load. In the final design, the separation distance could increase where existing line spans are determined to be greater than 1,500 feet thereby requiring Gateway West to be located the maximum span distance away when adjacent to longer spans. This assumption is also incorporated into the proposed Project description (Chapter 2). This criterion in itself does not guarantee transmission system reliability or future system performance. Utilities are expected to use their history of experience and

⁷ A transmission “circuit” is a set of wires energized at transmission voltages extending beyond a substation which has its own protection zone and set of breakers for isolation, and the “span length” is the distance between two transmission line support structures. See also Glossary.

prudent judgment in planning, siting, and design of transmission systems to ensure the reliability of the interconnected grid. Utilities can and do elect to provide wider separation or select an alternate transmission line route to reduce the risk of multiple line outages along common routes used by high capacity lines.

The Proponents report that the recent WECC revision of this criterion affects only one of many criteria that need to be considered when planning transmission projects. Specifically, WECC has relaxed its definition of a common corridor from the greatest span or 500 feet from an existing line to a minimum of 250 feet from an existing line. The remaining criteria still obligate a transmission provider to take into consideration the potential impacts to reliability. For Gateway West, the Proponents state that the originally planned minimum separation is still needed when taking into consideration potential impacts to reliability of siting the proposed project closer than the span distance of that adjacency. The Proponents state that their approach remains the same and consistent with others, who have stated that “by far the most cost effective preemptive strategy against multiple simultaneous line loss involves ensuring adequate distance separation between lines at the planning stage” (DOE and BLM 2008).

Even though the WECC separation criterion has been revised, the WECC/NERC requirements to provide reliable electricity have remained the same. Acts of nature such as fires or micro bursts or other acts such as vandalism or required fire suppression management may impact the reliability of the bulk transmission system if lines are sited in close proximity. Common corridor outages, in particular outages caused by smoke and fire, are prevalent through the open areas of Wyoming and Idaho. During the drier parts of the year, fires can ignite and move extremely fast. When heavy smoke rises to the level of the conductors, the air between the conductors loses some of its insulation properties, and the conductor will begin to conduct electricity to ground, or “fault”; protective instrumentation will disconnect the transmission line from the electrical system. If Gateway West transmission lines are constructed close to other transmission lines and the two lines disconnect in rapid succession, the Proponents state that major problems may result for the electrical grid, potentially leading to wide-spread outages (area blackouts).

There have been numerous occurrences of fire, wind, geological, and other related corridor outages. If a major event did occur, preparation for a future similar outage would likely be mandated. The first step toward preparing for a similar occurrence would be to reduce the rating and capacity of the facilities, resulting in a project that is vastly inferior to the purpose and need. For example, following the WECC westwide disturbance in 1996, PacifiCorp was required to make a significant reduction in transmission system capacity ratings on its WECC rated Path C between southeast Idaho and northern Utah. A significant system capacity reduction, from 1,000 MW to 600 MW, was a direct result of the disturbance investigation by WECC, to reduce the stress on the system and gain more reliability. As a result PacifiCorp constructed the Populus to Terminal transmission line to restore reliability. The Proponents believe the first step to avoid a common corridor outage is to locate the lines as far apart as feasibly possible, without creating additional undue impact to the environment and surrounding areas. The Proponents state that forcing Gateway West into close proximity to other lines undermines the overall purpose and need of the Project.

The Proponents state that if BLM were to consider an alternative for Gateway West that studied the consequences of siting the proposed Gateway West only 250 feet from existing transmission in one or more corridors along the proposed Project route, the Proponents could not build that alternative because it would not meet minimum standards for reliability. The Proponents state that they received WECC approval to carry the proposed load found in the Purpose and Need for the Project based on the average separation distance, among several other factors, for the proposed Gateway West alignment.

The Proponents report several instances where outages on their systems and others have led to serious consequences. In 2007, a fire burned through the Jim Bridger transmission line ROW resulting in an outage of all three 345-kV lines and three of the four Jim Bridger generating units (Gerrard 2010). Also in 2007, a fire caused the Mona – Huntington and Mona – Bonanza 345-kV lines in Central Utah to de-energize (Gerrard 2010). In California, two adjacent 500-kV line transmission structures failed in 2005, leaving an estimated 5.2 million customers in California, Nevada, Oregon, and Texas without power (California ISO Corporation 2005).

ICF Study

The Wyoming Infrastructure Authority (WIA) commissioned a study on the minimum separation distances needed between transmission lines in Wyoming. This study, completed in August 2009 and revised in February 2010, was conducted by ICF International (2010a). This study presents a framework for analysis and an estimate using the analysis technique specific to Wyoming. It presents first an introduction to the need for the study, given multiple proposed new transmission lines; a literature review on transmission line separation; an analysis framework for evaluating line separation; and finally a chapter on estimating line separation distances in Wyoming.

The study concluded that the absolute minimum separation distance, based on tower height, would be 260 feet, and that regional factors such as fire, high winds, tornadoes, and lightning would increase that minimum to the span length, estimated for 500-kV lines at 1,500 feet. The study summarized mitigation measures that, if in place, could reduce the need for minimum separation to less than span length. In response to Data Request #33, the Proponents responded to each of the mitigation measures proposed in the ICF study as follows:

- Installing either a shield wire or transmission line arresters to mitigate lightning strikes.
 - **Response** – Two shield wires are installed to all transmission lines of the Gateway West project.
- Maintaining fire breaks, installing an early fire detection system, and implementing operational procedures to avoid cascading outages due to fire/smoke.
 - **Response** – An appropriate fire break would consist of some width greater than our planned access roads and completely free of vegetation. This means perpetual maintenance of that absence of vegetation as well. This is not feasible, nor is it likely to be permitted. Early warning systems can mean several things. If our line trips out due to a fire, dispatch will see that immediately. That does not give them the cause or the ability to respond

quickly enough to prevent additional lines being affected. It is unfeasible to install manned fire observation towers that would see fires at their onset. We similarly do not have a means of implementing an anti-cascading avoidance procedure for outages. We can intentionally take a line out of service, but cannot keep it from going out in the event of a fire or other natural cause.

- Designing transmission lines to withstand wind speeds of at least 101 miles per hour.
 - **Response** – We do NOT design all lines within Energy Gateway to 101 miles per hour. We design all lines to a minimum of 90 mph as per NESC 250C and per contracted wind studies. Many areas are designed to beyond 101 mph, but not all are.
- Designing transmission lines to withstand at least F0 class tornadoes.
 - **Response** – We do not specifically design for tornado loading. The wind speeds of an F0 tornado are encompassed in our lowest wind speed design. Essentially we are designing to this by designing to meet NESC requirements.
- Designing transmission lines to comply with applicable NESC and AESC extreme wind and ice loading conditions.
 - **Response** – We are required to design all lines to meet NESC extreme wind requirements. This requires 90 mph wind across much of the Energy Gateway project area. Higher wind speeds are used where applicable, again by following NESC and wind study requirements. ASCE (not AESC) is in large part the basis of the NESC wind load requirements.

BLM therefore concludes, based on this study, that the minimum separation distances proposed by the Proponents are reasonable and consistent with regional conditions.

To further ensure reliability requirements are met, the Proponents have proposed that a permanent service road to each transmission structure be retained (see Transmission Line and Substation Components in Appendix B, Section 1.5, for further detail) to control vegetation in the ROW for safe operation and for periodic inspections and maintenance.

1.3.6 Purpose of the Gateway West Proposed Action

This Project is designed to provide for the delivery of up to 1,500 MW to the service areas of the Proponents and possibly other markets. The Proponents state that from Windstar to Populus, Gateway West will deliver up to 1,500 MW of primarily wind energy for transmission to markets south and west of Populus, including the Wasatch Front. Idaho Power forecasts a peak-hour load growth of 69 MW per year over the next 10 years. PacifiCorp forecasts the megawatt-hour growth between 2010 and 2019 for Utah, Wyoming, and Oregon will be 6.8 million, 3.7 million, and 1.1 million megawatt-hours, respectively. These forecasts are based on the IRPs prepared by each company as required to fulfill the regulatory requirements and guidelines established by the public utilities commissions of the states served by the Proponents (PacifiCorp 2011; IPC 2011a). Each IRP addresses the obligations of each company pursuant to its OATT to plan for and expand its respective transmission systems in a non-discriminatory manner based on the needs of its native load customers, network customers, and all eligible customers that agree to expand their transmission systems. This includes entities that generate or plan to

generate electricity, including coal-fired, natural-gas-fired, and renewable energy sources (biogas, wind, and geothermal).

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) supplies wholesale power to six utilities (two towns and four rural cooperatives) in Southeast Idaho. Until recently, a portion of that power has come from PacifiCorp and a portion from BPA's hydroelectric facilities. PacifiCorp has given BPA a five-year notice that it will no longer supply power under the old agreement. Therefore, by 2017, BPA must come up with another source of power for its six small utility clients in Southeast Idaho. As a part of future planning, BPA has entered into an agreement with PacifiCorp and Idaho Power to help fund the permitting of B2H and to consider the possibility of asset swaps in the future.

BPA is considering six alternatives to provide that power:

- Power purchase with OATT Service
- B2H with OATT service
- B2H with transmission asset swaps
- Mountain States Transmission Intertie with tap to Goshen Substation
- Two BPA construction scenarios from Montana to Southeast Idaho

The second alternative depends upon the capacity of Gateway West through Idaho as well as on the completion of B2H. The other options do not depend upon the completion of Gateway West. BPA conducted a public comment period on these options that closed August 27, 2012. In October 2012, the BPA announced that it had selected the "BPA with transmission asset swaps" as its top priority for pursuit (BPA 2012a). BPA must still conduct a NEPA analysis on its options to supply power to its Southeast Idaho customers, which has not yet started (BPA 2012b).

Gateway West is independent of, and would be built regardless of, any particular new generation project. The transmission grid of which it would become a part can be thought of in terms of hub and spokes, with a backbone connecting to the hubs. Each substation is a hub and receives or sends electricity along the spokes. For this system to work, a backbone of high-capacity transmission lines is needed to connect the hubs and transport the electricity from where it is or can be generated (in this case, mostly Wyoming but also Idaho), to where it is needed (in this case, mostly Idaho and Utah, though other markets may also be served).

The Proponents have indicated that any combination of the Project segments would have independent utility. For example, Segments 1 through 4 connect the Windstar Substation in Glenrock with the Populus Substation in southwest Idaho. This portion of the Project would form the northern arm of Rocky Mountain Power's reliability triangle. Gateway South (linking Aeolus with the Clover Substation in Utah) and Gateway Central (Populus to Terminal, Utah) would form the other two arms of the triangle. These lines are needed to provide incremental capacity and improve reliability for this portion of the Proponent's system. Segment 5 would provide a second link between the Populus and Borah Substations; while Segments 6, 7, and 10 would provide southern and northern links between the Borah, Cedar Hill, and Midpoint Substations, improving reliability of the electric transmission system in southern Idaho. Segments 8 and 9 would provide two separate paths connecting the Midpoint and

Hemingway Substations. This link would improve the Proponents’ ability to move power both east and west into their service areas in Idaho and Oregon.

1.3.6.1 Substations

The Proponents propose to connect 12 substations, which are essential control points for the route. These are illustrated in Appendix A, Figure A-1, and in subsequent maps by segment. The purposes of the individual substations to support the need for the overall location of the Gateway West Project are displayed in Table 1.3-2. Nine of the substations are in service now and three are proposed as part of this Project.

Table 1.3-2. Substations That Would Be Connected by Gateway West

Substation	Description	Purpose
Windstar	Existing: interconnection and generation-driven	The purpose of this substation is to integrate future wind and thermal resources with the existing transmission system by looping two existing 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines into the substation. The Gateway West Transmission Line Project (Gateway West or Project) starts at this substation because of the recent large development of nearby energy sources needing transmission to points west, including 200 megawatt (MW) integrated at the Windstar 230-kV Substation, Glen Rock 1 & III – 138.5 MW, Rolling Hills – 99 MW, Three Buttes – 99 MW, and Casper Wind – 17 MW.
Dave Johnston Power Plant	Existing: interconnection and generation-driven	Work inside the existing 230-kV yard would consist of rebuilding bus switches to increase capacity to match the rebuilt 1W(c). No ground-disturbing activity or expansion of the fence line will be needed.
Heward	Existing: part of Gateway West: interconnection-driven	This substation is an expansion of the Difficulty Substation. Difficulty must be kept in service while Segment 1W(c) is reconstructed, requiring the additional bus construction to be conducted adjacent to the existing substation. Construction of Heward will allow PacifiCorp to control the operation of the new buses, essential for reliability of the reconstruction.
Aeolus	Proposed: part of Gateway West, generation-driven	This substation is intended to serve high wind areas identified in portions of Wyoming and will be the location for interconnecting new wind-driven sourced energy. The Aeolus 230-kV substation would be integrated into the Rocky Mountain Power transmission system by looping the Dave Johnston – Heward – Shirley Basin – Miners 230-kV line into Aeolus. Aeolus will be used to interconnect future wind generation projects.
Shirley Basin	Existing: interconnection-driven	This new substation will be constructed immediately adjacent to the Difficulty Substation. Difficulty must be kept in service while Segment 1W(c) is reconstructed, requiring the additional bus construction to be conducted adjacent to the existing substation. Construction of Heward will allow PacifiCorp to control the operation of the new buses, essential for reliability of the reconstruction.
Anticline	Proposed: part of Gateway West, generation-driven	The new transmission lines would interconnect to the existing transmission system in the vicinity of the Jim Bridger Power Plant by constructing a new substation nearby. The purpose of the proposed substation is to support the existing thermal generation hub as well as an expanded hub for new wind resources expected to be sited in the area.
Jim Bridger Power Plant 345-kV	Existing: interconnection and generation-driven	This substation would be expanded to connect the Jim Bridger Power Plant with a new transmission line. No new generation would be added at the Jim Bridger Power Plant as a result or as part of this Project.
Populus	Existing: interconnection and generation-driven	This substation would interconnect with the proposed Gateway West 500-kV transmission lines, the existing Jim Bridger West 345-kV system, and the 345-kV transmission lines running north-south. The north-south 345-kV transmission lines (not part of Gateway West) begins at the Populus Substation (near Downey, Idaho), runs south to the Wasatch Front1/, and transports new resources south to the Wasatch Front demand centers.

Table 1.3-2. Substations That Would Be Connected by Gateway West (continued)

Substation	Description	Purpose
Borah	Existing: interconnection and load-driven	The substation expansion would allow the interconnection of new 500-kV transmission lines between Populus and Midpoint, as well as a new termination of a 345-kV line to Kinport.
Midpoint	Existing: interconnection and load-driven	The substation expansion would allow interconnection of new transmission lines from Cedar Hill and Hemingway and allow for the existing 345-kV transmission line between Borah and Midpoint Substations to be energized at 500 kV, thereby creating a continuous 500-kV system expansion and reliability tie with the Cedar Hill Substation.
Cedar Hill ^{2/}	Proposed: part of Gateway West, load-driven	The substation would serve two purposes: 1) a reliability tie between the proposed Gateway West north and south transmission lines, and 2) a 500-kV to 230-kV transformation station for serving the Magic Valley load. This would complement the existing service from Midpoint to the north of the Magic Valley. The Magic Valley Electrical Plan is under development, with this station being considered as a future source to the valley.
Hemingway	Existing: interconnection and load-driven	The substation expansion would serve as an interconnection point for the Gateway West, Summer Lake, Boardman, and Captain Jack transmission lines. The station itself currently serves the Treasure Valley load. The station is the southwestern 500-kV to 230-kV transformation point in the Treasure Valley 500-kV loop, as defined in the Treasure Valley Electrical Plan. The Hemingway Substation is the western terminus of the Gateway West Project because it is the major load point for the generation resources brought in from the east, primarily Wyoming.

1/ About 75 to 80 percent of all of the electricity used in the state of Utah is in the area known as the Wasatch Front. This area includes the entire electrical load served out of the Spanish Fork Substation in the south up to the electrical load served out of the Ben Lomond Substation in the north. This includes parts of Juab and Sanpete Counties, and all of Utah, Salt Lake, Summit, Tooele, Wasatch, Davis, Morgan, and Weber Counties.

1.3.6.2 Gateway West Transmission Line Segment Purposes

Table 1.3-3 summarizes the purpose for each of the segments of Gateway West. Each segment's Project description is presented in detail in Chapter 2.

Table 1.3-3. Gateway West Transmission Line Segments

Transmission Line Segment	Purpose
Segment 1W—Windstar to Aeolus, single-circuit 230-kV, and Dave Johnston to Aeolus, rebuilt 230-kV line	Transport existing and new resources to load centers farther west via interconnection at Aeolus Substation. This line also represents the Proponent's portion of a future 230-kilovolt (kV) network of lines that would be required to integrate other projects in areas of high wind potential.
Segment 2—Aeolus to Creston, ^{1/} single-circuit 500-kV line	Transport new resources to load centers farther west.
Segment 3—Creston to Anticline ^{1/} , single-circuit 500-kV line	Transport new resources to load demand centers farther west.
Segment 3A—Anticline to Jim Bridger 345-kV	Provide for bidirectional transfer of power and integration of the Gateway West project by providing an intermediate tie line with the existing EHV system at Jim Bridger Substation.
Segment 4—Anticline to Populus, single-circuit 500-kV line	Transport new resources to load demand centers farther west and interconnect with existing systems.

Table 1.3-3. Gateway West Transmission Line Segments (continued)

Transmission Line Segment	Purpose
Segment 5—Populus to Borah, single-circuit 500-kV line	Transport Wyoming energy resources from Populus to loads in southern Idaho and the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, this line would transport Pacific Northwest sourced energy to Populus to serve load in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. Provide physical separation to meet reliability criteria between a northern route (Populus – Borah – Midpoint – Hemingway) and a southern route (Populus – Cedar Hill – Hemingway). Physical separation is needed due to existing transmission line congestion (multiple lines in the same area) and wildland fires resulting in outages.
Segment 6—Borah to Midpoint, energize existing 345-kV line to 500 kV	Increase the capacity of the existing line to transport existing and new energy resources in the service areas of the two Proponents. Replace or reconfigure up to five spans at each end to accommodate new connections in substations to new 500-kV bays. No new transmission line construction.
Segment 7—Populus to Cedar Hill, single-circuit 500-kV line	Transport existing and new energy resources to load demand centers to the west. Additionally, this line would transport existing and new Pacific Northwest energy resources to serve load demand centers to the east. Provide physical separation to meet reliability criteria between a northern route (Populus – Borah – Midpoint – Hemingway) and a southern route (Populus – Cedar Hill – Hemingway). Physical separation is needed due to existing transmission line congestion (multiple lines in the same area) and wildland fires resulting in outages.
Segment 8—Midpoint to Hemingway, single-circuit 500-kV line	Transport existing and new energy resources to load demand centers throughout the system. Provide physical separation to meet reliability criteria between a northern route (Populus – Borah – Midpoint – Hemingway) and a southern route (Populus – Cedar Hill – Hemingway). Physical separation is needed due to existing transmission line congestion (multiple lines in the same area) and wildland fires resulting in outages.
Segment 9—Cedar Hill to Hemingway, single-circuit 500-kV line	Transport energy resources to serve load demand centers throughout the system. Provide physical separation to meet reliability criteria between a northern route (Populus – Borah – Midpoint – Hemingway) and a southern route (Populus – Cedar Hill – Hemingway). Physical separation is needed due to existing transmission line congestion (multiple lines in the same area) and wildland fires resulting in outages.
Segment 10—Midpoint to Cedar Hill, single-circuit 500-kV line	Provide a midway tie between the northern and southern routes, which is required for system reliability to move flows of the north system or the south system when transporting greater than 2,500 MW of power.

1/ Creston Substation has been deleted from the Project. The location of the Creston Substation is now used as the dividing point between Segments 2 and 3. See Section 3 of Appendix B for details.

1.4 AUTHORIZING LAWS AND REGULATIONS

1.4.1 Overview

Table 1.4-1 lists the major federal, state, and local permits, approvals, and consultations identified for the construction and operations of Gateway West. The Proponents would be responsible for obtaining all permits and approvals required to implement the proposed Project regardless of whether they appear in this table.

Table 1.4-1. Major Permits, Approvals, and Consultations for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project

Regulatory Agency	Required Permit, Approval, or Consultation	Agency Action
Federal		
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)	Has the opportunity to comment if the Project may affect cultural resources that are either listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Table 1.4-1. Major Permits, Approvals, and Consultations for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (continued)

Regulatory Agency	Required Permit, Approval, or Consultation	Agency Action
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service)	Temporary Use Permit	Consider issuance of a Temporary Use Permit for temporary activities in a construction right-of-way (ROW) on National Forest System (NFS) lands.
	Special Use Authorization	Consider issuance of a Special Use Authorization for use of NFS lands for construction and operation of electric transmission lines and associated facilities.
	Operation and Maintenance Plan	Consider approval of detailed Operations and Maintenance Plan.
	Notice to Proceed	Following issuance of the Special Use Authorization and approval of the Construction, Operations, and Maintenance Plan on NFS lands, consider issuance of a Notice to Proceed with Project development and mitigation activities.
U.S. Department of Defense, Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Omaha District, Walla Walla District	Section 10, Rivers and Harbors Act Permit	Consider issuance of a Section 10 permit for construction across the Snake River.
	Section 404, Clean Water Act Permit	Consider issuance of a Section 404 permit for the placement of dredge or fill material into all waters of the United States, including jurisdictional wetlands.
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	Antiquities and Cultural Resource Use Permit	Consider issuance of antiquities and cultural resources use permit to conduct surveys and to excavate or remove cultural resources on federal lands.
	Various Resource Management Plans	Consider amending the plans.
	ROW Grant	Consider issuing long-term ROW grant for operations and maintenance of those portions of the Project that would encroach on the National System of Public Lands, including easements across federally owned waterways.
	Short-Term ROW Grant	Consider issuance of a short-term ROW grant for temporary activities in the construction ROW, on lands leading into the ROW, and associated areas such as staging areas that are within the National System of Public Lands.
	Plan of Development (POD)	Consider approval of detailed POD.
	Notice to Proceed	Following issuance of a ROW grant and approval of a POD, consider issuance of a Notice to Proceed with Project development and mitigation activities.
	Public Law 103-64, Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Act, Sections 3(a)(2) and 4(a)(2)	Determine that any use authorization in the SRBOP furthers the purposes for which it was established, including “to provide for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats and the natural and environmental resources and values associated therewith, and of the scientific, cultural, and educational resources and values of the public lands in the conservation area.”

Table 1.4-1. Major Permits, Approvals, and Consultations for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (continued)

Regulatory Agency	Required Permit, Approval, or Consultation	Agency Action
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs Fort Hall Indian Reservation	ROW Grant	Consider issuing a ROW grant if Alternative 5C is chosen across the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation	ROW Grant	Consider issuing a ROW grant (valid for 25 years) for lands withdrawn for the purposes of the Seedskaelee Project.
U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration	Encroachment Permit	Consider issuance of permit for transmission line crossing of federally funded highways (typically delegated to the state department of transportation).
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Regions 8 and 10	Section 401, Clean Water Act (CWA) Water Quality Certification	In conjunction with states, consider issuance of water use and crossing permits.
	Section 402, CWA, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Idaho	Review and issue NPDES permit for discharge of Stormwater in Idaho. In Wyoming, NPDES permitting is delegated to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (see below).
	Section 404, CWA	Review CWA, Section 404 applications for dredge-and-fill applications for the USACE with 404(c) veto power for permits issued by the USACE.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Regions 1, 6, and 8	Section 7 Consultation, Biological Opinion (Endangered Species Act)	Consider lead agency finding of impact on federally listed or proposed species. Provide Biological Opinion if the Project is likely to adversely affect federally listed or candidate species or their habitats.
	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act	Provide comments to prevent loss of and damage to wildlife resources.
	Migratory Bird Treaty Act	Provide comments for the protection of migratory birds.
	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	Provide comments for the protection of eagles.
USFWS (Refuge Division)	Compatibility Determination	Provide concurrence for BLM to issue a ROW grant covering USFWS fee lands within National Wildlife Refuges (no fee lands presently crossed by proposed or alternative routes as of July 2011).
Wyoming		
All state agencies	Compliance with Executive Order (EO) 2011-5	Requires that all agencies demonstrate that activity proposed for permitting be compliant with the requirements of the EO in sage-grouse core areas.
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) and the Wyoming Industrial Siting Council	Industrial Siting Permit Wyoming Industrial Information and Siting Act under Chapters 1 and 2, Rules and Regulations of the Industrial Siting Council	Considers approval of construction and siting of projects with construction cost of \$176 million or more or 160 kV or greater.

Table 1.4-1. Major Permits, Approvals, and Consultations for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (continued)

Regulatory Agency	Required Permit, Approval, or Consultation	Agency Action
WDEQ Air Quality Division	Construction Permit	Consider measures to control fugitive dust emissions during construction.
WDEQ Water Quality Division	Section 401, CWA, Water Quality Certification	Consider certification of a 404 permit issued by the USACE as consistent with state law and Section 401.
	Section 402, CWA, NPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Wyoming	Review and issue NPDES permit for discharge of stormwater.
Wyoming Game and Fish Department	Potential Project Impacts to Fish and Wildlife Species and Their Habitat	Coordinate with BLM, Forest Service, and USFWS on wildlife issues/impacts associated with the Project.
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office	Section 106 Consultation, NHPA	Consult with the BLM, the Proponents, other land management agencies, and others regarding activities potentially affecting cultural resources.
Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments	Easement Across State Lands	Consider issuance of a ROW across state lands.
Wyoming Public Service Commission,	Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity	Consider issuance of a certificate to allow construction of a public utility, including transmission lines
Wyoming Department of Transportation	Encroachment Permit	Consider issuance of permit to cross or bore under state highways or be within a state highway ROW.
Various (may also require federal and county approvals)	Explosives Permit	Consider issuance of a license to store and use explosives.
Idaho		
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality	Fugitive Dust Control Plan	Consider measures to control fugitive dust emissions at each construction site.
	Section 401, CWA, Water Quality Certification	Consider certification of a 404 permit issued by the USACE as consistent with state law and Section 401.
Idaho Department of Transportation	Encroachment Permit	Consider issuance of permit to cross or bore under state highways or be within a state highway ROW.
Idaho Public Utilities Commission	Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity	Consider issuance of a certificate to allow construction of a public utility, including transmission lines
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office	Section 106 Consultation, NHPA	Consult with the BLM, the Proponents, other land management agencies, and others regarding activities potentially affecting cultural resources.
Idaho Department of Lands	Lease on Endowment Trust Lands	Consider issuance of ROWs across state lands.
Idaho Department of Fish and Game	Potential Project Impacts to Fish and Wildlife Species and Their Habitat	Coordinate with BLM, Forest Service, and USFWS on wildlife issues/impacts associated with the Project.

Table 1.4-1. Major Permits, Approvals, and Consultations for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (continued)

Regulatory Agency	Required Permit, Approval, or Consultation	Agency Action
Idaho Department of Water Resources	Stream Channel Alteration Permit and Wetland Removal Fill Permit (IC Title 42 Chapter 38)	Consider alteration of any stream channel or wetland.
Various (may also require federal and local approvals)	Explosives Permit	Consider issuance of a license to store and use explosives.
Local and County (Idaho and Wyoming)		
County Commissioners	Conditional Use Permits	Consider issuance of conditional use permits for construction of transmission line and substations (varies by county).
Planning Department	Temporary Use Permit, Grading Permit	Consider issuance of Temporary Use Permit for material and contractor yards and a grading permit for noxious weed control coordination.
Public Works Department	Encroachment Permit	Consider issuance of an encroachment permit for new access roads where they intersect with existing county roads.
	Road Crossing Permit, Road Maintenance Agreement	Consider issuance of road crossing permit and road maintenance agreement for overhead transmission line.
City of Kuna, Idaho	Variance and special use permits	Consider issuance of a variety of exceptions to existing land use plans, zones, etc.

1.4.2 Major Federal Consultations

Before the BLM can decide to grant the ROW or the Forest Service can decide to authorize a Special Use, consultation with several Indian Tribes and federal and state agencies is required, including concurrence from the USFWS in the form of a concurrence letter or Biological Opinion (BO), concurrence from the Wyoming and Idaho State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) concerning the treatment of historic properties, and concurrence from the Forest Service as part of the above consultations where NFS lands are involved.

1.4.2.1 Government-to-Government Consultation

The BLM and Forest Service are responsible for compliance with a host of laws, EOs and Memoranda, treaties, departmental policies, and other mandates regarding their legal relationships with and responsibilities to Native Americans. The government-to-government relationship that the United States has with federally recognized Indian Tribes started with the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution where Tribes were recognized as sovereign nations, and has continued in federal laws and policies including but not limited to National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)⁸, NEPA, Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and EOs 12875, 12898, 13007, 13084, and 13175. Compliance with this body of law requires consultation with Tribes on the effects of proposed actions. Specific guidance includes, but is not limited to, formal government-to-government consultation, treatment

⁸ 16 U.S.C. § 470, as amended by Public Law (P.L.) 91-243, P.L.93-54, P.L.94-422, P.L.94-458, P.L.96-199, P.L.96-244, P.L.96-515, P.L.98-483, P.L.99-514, P.L.100-127, and P.L.102-575.

of discoveries of burials and Native American objects, and treatment of traditional cultural properties (TCPs) and sacred sites and landscapes.

A list of Tribes that have been contacted to date and invited to government-to-government consultation is found in Chapter 5. Tribes have also been invited to participate as concurring parties in a PA under development for this Project under Section 106 of the NHPA (see Appendix N).

1.4.2.2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Consultation with the USFWS is required to comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) under Section 7 of the ESA, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2) [1988]), for species listed as threatened or endangered. As lead federal agency, the BLM must analyze the effects of the proposed Project on the species and on their designated critical habitat if present. A Biological Assessment (BA) was prepared that identifies the nature and extent of impacts and addresses avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts. The BA (located in Appendix M) has been submitted to the USFWS with a request for concurrence with the impact assessment.

If the USFWS concludes that there could be an adverse effect on one or more listed species, but that the action would not jeopardize the existence or recovery of the species, then the USFWS would provide a BO regarding the action, accompanied by required terms and conditions to minimize the adverse impact, and by an Incidental Take Permit. Mitigation measures identified in the BO would be incorporated into the terms and conditions of a ROW grant or a Special Use Authorization.

The BLM will continue to consult with the USFWS regarding the Project's compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as well as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

1.4.2.3 Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Federal agencies are required by Section 106 of the NHPA to consider the effects on historic properties (listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places [NRHP]⁹). The BLM, as the lead federal agency, must provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on adverse effects on properties listed on or eligible for the NRHP. The ACHP formally requested to participate in the development of a PA for the Project. A PA has been developed for the Project (Appendix N) through a collaborative process with the invited participation of all interested parties. It specifies phased survey and reporting and provides the framework and direction for a project-wide Historic Properties Treatment Plan (HPTP; the Proponents' unreviewed draft is Appendix C-1) and for site-specific segment HPTP development.

1.4.2.4 State Historic Preservation Officers

The BLM will consult with each state's SHPO regarding adverse effects from the Project and to request concurrence on the BLM's determination of eligibility for the NRHP of historic properties that may be adversely affected by the Project. If historic properties would be subjected to adverse effects that cannot be avoided, the BLM will consult with each state's SHPO and the ACHP to determine eligibility and effect.

⁹ Authorized by the NHPA of 1966 (P.L. 102-575).

1.5 RELATIONSHIP TO POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

Land use plans, in various forms, are written by agencies to guide the management of resources and uses within their jurisdiction. The BLM has RMPs or MFPs in place for all lands affected by this Project. The Forest Service has Forest Plans in place for the NFs that may be affected. Table 1.5-1 lists the various federal land use plans that provide direction and management standards for activities within their jurisdiction, their year of publication, and the status of their revision. Some of the plans are currently under revision, but because no decision has been made, the current plan (and not the proposed or draft plan) is the applicable land use plan to determine whether the Project complies with the land use plan. The BLM will make no decision that would preclude the authorized officer from selecting any of the RMP alternatives under consideration in a plan revision before final plan decisions are made. The BLM will reconsider its determination of conformance with a plan if new plans are approved prior to the publication of the Final EIS.

Table 1.5-1. BLM and Forest Service Land Use Plan Status along Gateway West Proposed Route

Segment/Alternative	Administrative Unit	Applicable Plan Name	Plan Year
Wyoming			
1W(a), 1W(c)	Casper BLM Field Office	Casper RMP	2007
1W(a), 1W(c)	Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests	Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Forest Plan	2003
1W(a), 1W(c), 2, 2A, 2B, 3	Rawlins BLM Field Office	Rawlins RMP	2009
3, 4, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E,	Rock Springs BLM Field Office	Green River RMP	1997
4, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 4F	Kemmerer BLM Field Office	Kemmerer RMP	2010
Idaho			
4, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 4F, 5, 5A, 5B, 5C, 7, 7A, 7B, 7K	Pocatello Field Office	Pocatello RMP	2012
4	Caribou-Targhee National Forest	Revised Forest Plan for the Caribou National Forest	2003
6, 8, 8A, 10	Shoshone Field Office	Monument RMP	1986
8	Shoshone Field Office	Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP	1980
7K	Sawtooth National Forest	Sawtooth National Forest Revised Forest Plan	2003 ^{1/}
5	Burley Field Office	Monument RMP	1985
5, 6, 7, 9, 10	Burley Field Office	Cassia RMP	1985
9, 9A, 9B, 9C, 10	Burley Field Office	Twin Falls MFP	1982
8A, 9, 9B	Jarbridge Field Office	Jarbridge RMP	1987
8	Four Rivers Field Office	Jarbridge RMP	1987
8, 8B, 8C	Four Rivers Field Office	Kuna MFP	1983
8, 8B, 8D, 9, 9D, 9E	Four Rivers Field Office	Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area RMP	2008
9, 9E	Bruneau Field Office	Bruneau MFP	1983
8, 8B, 9, 9D, 9E	Owyhee Field Office	Owyhee RMP	1999

1/ As amended in 2012

BLM – Bureau of Land Management; MFP – Management Framework Plan; RMP – Resource Management Plan

1.5.1 Plan Amendments

In some cases, the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives do not conform with the management objectives provided in the applicable plan. In these cases, the BLM and the Forest Service can deny the Project, require modifications to the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives so that they are in conformance, or amend the applicable plan. Where possible, the proposed Project has already been modified to conform with the plans. Portions of the Proposed Route and the Route Alternatives still do not conform with one or more of the plans. As part of the ROD, the BLM and the Forest Service will decide whether to implement an amendment for a corresponding route or alternative if the decision is to grant a ROW. Tables 2.2-1 through 2.2-3 identify whether an amendment would be needed for the Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and each Route Alternative and what sections of Chapter 3 would be affected if a plan amendment were required. Chapter 3 resource sections discuss plan amendment consequences. Chapter 4 discusses the cumulative effects of plan amendments. Appendix F contains the specific plan amendment language and Appendix G contains the rationale and analyses for consideration of amending VRM classifications. Documentation on the need to amend plans is located in the administrative record.

1.5.2 West-Wide Energy Corridors

In addition to the BLM land use plans, and in response to Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the BLM has participated in a programmatic EIS (PEIS) for the designation of energy corridors on federal land in the 11 western states (DOE/EIS-0386 [DOE and BLM 2008]), commonly known as West-wide Energy corridors or WWE corridors, in which the DOE and the BLM were the lead federal agencies, and the Forest Service and other agencies were cooperators.

A Final PEIS was published on November 28, 2008 (DOE and BLM 2008). A ROD on the PEIS signed January 14, 2009, designates energy corridors and provides guidance, best management practices, and mitigation measures to be used where linear facilities are proposed crossing BLM-managed lands. The Forest Service issued a separate ROD on January 14, 2009, designating energy corridors and providing guidance, best management practices, and mitigation measures to be used where linear facilities are proposed across NFS lands.

Where the PEIS identifies corridors that are new corridors for the managing agencies, these RODs also amended relevant land management plans to include the new corridor. Designation of corridors does not require their use nor does such designation exempt the federal agencies from conducting an environmental review on each project. While the PEIS amended the relevant land management plans to add a corridor, it did not necessarily amend underlying land allocations, including visual resource management designations, to allow for overhead transmission lines.

The Final ROD is available online at <http://corridoreis.anl.gov/index.cfm>. The Gateway West EIS takes into consideration the corridors and tiers to the Final PEIS. Further discussion regarding the use of the WWE corridors for the Project is found in Section 2.4.13. The Final RODs contain Interagency Operating Procedures (IOPs), which were developed under the Section 368 Corridor program. These IOPs establish minimum requirements that would be incorporated as appropriate into projects such as Gateway West. Appendix H describes the consideration given to Final ROD IOPs for Gateway West.

On July 7, 2009, a consortium of environmental groups (Plaintiffs) filed a Complaint in the *Wilderness Society, et al. v. United States Department of the Interior, et al.*, challenging various aspects of decisions associated with the energy corridor designations. In July 2012, the federal agencies reached a settlement agreement with the Plaintiffs. The United States District Court for the Northern District of California dismissed the case on July 11, 2012.

Under the settlement agreement, the federal agencies agreed to review and update training for corridor planning, designation, and use, and invite Plaintiff representatives to participate in that training; review and update agency guidance; develop a corridor study plan by July 11, 2013, and complete that study by July 11, 2014; and create an interagency Memorandum of Understanding that will outline procedures to periodically review designated corridors to assess the need for corridor revisions, deletions, or additions.

In the Complaint, the Plaintiffs identified 45 Corridors of Concern in 11 states. Updated agency guidance will address siting projects in the Corridors of Concern. Gateway West uses one Corridor of Concern. Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) use Corridor No. 78-255, located in Natrona and Carbon Counties, Wyoming. Approximately one-third (25 miles) of the total lengths (75 miles) of these two lines are located on federal lands.

Segment 1W(c) is the reconstruction of an existing 230-kV line. Segment 1W(a) is a new 230-kV line, offset from the existing line, approximately 1,500 feet to the west. When crossing federal lands, both segments are located in the WWE corridor. Siting criteria and rationale for this segment are found in the Revised Siting Study (December 31, 2009) and Section 2.4.2 of this Final EIS. The resource sections in Chapter 3 of this Final EIS present the effects analysis. The portion of Section 3.17.2.3 for Segment 1W specifically addresses the use of the WWE corridor.

1.6 RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENT ACQUISITION PROCESS FOR NON-FEDERAL OWNERS

The Proponents would negotiate details regarding needed land acquisition across privately owned lands, either in fee or as an easement, for the transmission line and associated facilities (substations, etc.) with each landowner. In exchange for the right to operate the transmission line and facilities, the Proponents would compensate the landowner for the use of the land. The negotiations between the Proponents and the individual landowner could include compensation for loss of use during construction, loss of nonrenewable or other resources, and the restoration of unavoidable damage to property during construction. BLM does not have the legal authority to enforce stipulations on private lands but has the obligation to recommend stipulations to reduce impacts as part of the NEPA process. Private landowners may negotiate stipulations as part of their agreements.

If a fee ownership or an easement cannot be negotiated with the landowner, the Proponents may acquire the rights needed under eminent domain laws prevailing in the affected states. State statutes have been enacted that define the acquisition process on private and non-federal public lands for utilities.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS

1.7.1 Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of this analysis varies by resource. In Chapter 3, each resource section begins by defining the geographic area of analysis relevant to that resource. In addition to larger geographic areas specifically defined for individual resource analyses, two areas are defined here and used consistently throughout this EIS.

Siting Study Area – This is the area shown on Figure 1.1-1. The study area was used during initial siting to allow the selection of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives, and was initially defined as being 10 miles on either side of the centerlines of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives considered in the initial siting process. The siting study area is also large enough to include all facilities, including roads, substations, structures, and any areas needed for construction. As mapped, the siting study area includes 29.4 million acres, distributed by ownership as shown in Table 1.7-1. As the Project study proceeded, the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives were refined and Analysis Areas more narrowly defined. See Chapter 3 for details.

Table 1.7-1. Land Ownership Distribution in the Gateway West Siting Study Area

Landowner/Land Manager	Percent of Study Area
BLM	42.1
Bureau of Reclamation	1.1
Department of Defense	0.4
Indian Reservation	0.6
National Forest	6.1
National Grasslands	0.1
National Park Service	0.6
National Wildlife Refuge	0.2
Other Federal Land	0.7
Other Non-Federal Land	0.3
Private Land	42.1
State of Idaho	1.7
State of Utah	0.1
State of Wyoming	3.3
Water	0.6

Right-of-Way – The ROW refers to the area, generally centered on the proposed transmission line centerline, requested by the Proponents of BLM and of other landowners and managers for the construction, operations, and maintenance of the transmission line. The width depends on the voltage; a 250-foot ROW for the 500-kV single-circuit sections of the Project and a 125-foot ROW for the 230-kV single-circuit sections of the Project. Agreed ROW width on non-federal lands may vary based on local agency permits or landowner negotiations. Additional lands would be required for associated facilities such as substations and access roads. Access roads may be within the ROW, but also may occur outside of the ROW. Estimated acres of land required for construction and operations including ROW and associated facilities by landowner are summarized in Table 1.7-2 and detailed in Chapter 2 and Appendix B.

Table 1.7-2. Land Ownership Distribution in the Gateway West Proposed Action ROW

Land Owner/ Land Manager	Construction		Operations	
	Acres ^{1/, 2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Acres ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}
Bureau of Land Management	17,070	46.4	14,107	47.0
Bureau of Reclamation	275	0.8	216	0.7
Military Reservations/ Corps of Engineers	7	0.02	2	0.01
National Forest	454	1.2	369	1.2
Other State Lands	11	0.03	11	0.04
Private	16,643	45.2	13,408	44.7
State	2,303	6.3	1,868	6.2
State Fish and Game	0	0.0	0	0.0
Water	20	0.05	18	0.06
Total	36,783	100.0	29,999	100.0

1/ Construction right-of-way (ROW) acres are greater than operations ROW acres due to additional areas needed for staging areas, fly yards, and wiring pulling/splicing sites; however, not all of the ROW would actually be disturbed.

2/ Numbers are rounded to the nearest acre/percent; therefore, columns may not sum exactly.

Right-of-Way for Geotechnical Assessment – The Proponents conducted geotechnical surveys on federal lands under a short-term ROW granted by the BLM. These surveys were needed to collect geotechnical soil property information for the design of tower foundations and support structures. An Environmental Assessment was completed in June 2010 to analyze the application for the ROW. The Environmental Assessment is incorporated by reference into this EIS (BLM 2010a). A Special Use Authorization was completed by the Forest Service for the Caribou-Targhee NF in 2010 and for the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs in 2012.

1.7.2 Temporal Scope

The analysis will address the effects of the Proposed Action, No Action Alternative, or Route Alternatives, including construction (short-term), operations and maintenance (long-term), and decommissioning and abandonment (long-term). Construction would occur between 2015 and 2021, depending on permitting. Therefore, short-term effects occur within that 5-year time frame. Typically, transmission lines of this size are designed for a working life of 50 years although, in practice, the useful life is often much longer. Therefore, 50 years is considered long term.

1.7.3 Actions Not Connected

Connected actions (those that are closely related and therefore should be discussed in the same impact statement) are defined by CEQ (40 CFR Part 1508.25) as actions that are automatically triggered that may require an EIS, cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously, or are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification. For this Project, interdependent actions considered as part of the overall Project include construction and operations for all 10 segments, the associated substation expansions or constructions, the fiber optic communication system and its regeneration stations, access roads, and all temporary staging areas and fly yards used during construction. Potentially related energy considerations and development actions discussed below were reviewed to determine if they were connected to the Proposed Action. There are no actions currently proposed that are connected actions.

1.7.3.1 Generation

Given the CEQ's definition, electrical generating sources that might use the Gateway West Project to transmit their power are not connected actions. Therefore, electrical generating sources are not analyzed in the direct and indirect effects analysis, but are included in the consideration of cumulative impacts. The requests for generation interconnection, whether they be fossil or renewable, to which the Proponents must respond under FERC regulations, are made to multiple carriers, including other utilities. If they are unable to respond to an interconnection request due to a denial of a ROW grant from BLM, other carriers may respond. Therefore, the new generation requests do not qualify as connected actions under the "automatically trigger" criterion.

The Gateway West Project can proceed without any one generation project. Multiple generators have made interconnection requests. The overall demand, rather than any one project, provides part of the impetus for the Project. Therefore, no particular generation project is necessarily tied to Gateway West.

Independent producers are building new wind farms and have proposed many more. Some of these projects would be constructed, sending power into the grid before the Gateway Project is permitted. Therefore, their wind farms are not driving the Project and are not "connected actions" under the "part of a larger action" criterion.

There are other proposals to carry new generation to various markets, including markets farther south in Nevada, California, and Arizona. If Gateway West is not built, the generation would likely still be built and other projects could reasonably be expected to carry the additional electricity to market. Therefore, the generation projects do not induce or automatically trigger the Project.

1.7.3.2 Load Growth (Demand)

Load growth, whether industrial, commercial, or residential, puts a strain on the existing grid to supply additional electricity. While the existing grid can, and does, supply the demand, as the load on each of the transmission lines grows, the opportunity for spreading that load on remaining transmission lines, should one fail, drops until the loss of a single transmission line can cause a cascading blackout scenario reminiscent of the Northeast disaster of August 14, 2003. While Gateway West would alleviate the strain on the grid, it is not "automatically triggered" by load growth. There are other transmission lines that use other routes from other generation sources that could also help to supply and support the load, such that the Project is not required simply because of load growth.

Another connected action question is whether Gateway West "automatically triggers" load growth. Because the public utilities commissions of Idaho and Wyoming must allow the utilities to pass on the capital costs of system improvements, including but not limited to Gateway West, those commissions prohibit "speculative" construction and only permit capital improvements that show a clear demand ahead of construction. While this does include predictive models that estimate future growth, they are subject to review and approval by the commissions. Therefore, a project like Gateway West is in response to, rather than in anticipation of, load growth.

There is some concern that the mere presence of a competent grid that can manage current and future loads would incur further or greater growth than would occur without

the grid in place. A large industrial facility, for example, if sited in the service area of either utility, could bring its own load growth and also bring direct and indirect employment that might increase local populations and therefore further increase load growth. In the absence of reassurances from the utilities that electrical supplies in the volumes needed by the industry would be available, the industry would locate elsewhere. While that is true for the grid as a whole, no individual project is responsible for the presence or absence of growth, because there are multiple paths along which such load demand could be satisfied. Gateway West, in and of itself, is not required to meet such growth nor would it, by itself, trigger such growth.

Load growth is a cumulative term assigned to a variety of smaller events, including population increases and new commercial and industrial projects that provide jobs to that population. None of those events is directly linked to Gateway West, and Gateway West would proceed independent of any one of those events. They do not qualify as a “larger action” because they are not, individually or collectively, part of any federal action, and are not an organized “action” in any permitting venue.

1.7.3.3 Other Electric Transmission Lines in the Region

Rocky Mountain Power’s Web page¹⁰ includes the Project as part of its larger system planning for an “Energy Gateway” for its service area. Idaho Power’s Web page¹¹ includes the Project as part of its larger vision for improved grid efficiency, which includes other transmission lines. The WECC¹² and the NTTG¹³ Web sites all show the Gateway West Project as one of several new projects needed to complete an efficient Northwest electrical service grid.

The other lines are either planned to be in service before Gateway West, planned well after the in-service dates of Gateway West, or serve different components of the service area. The construction of one of these components of the grid does not automatically trigger another because each can and will be built and operated independently. Each responds to a set of generation requests and demand growth projections for different parts of the overall service area. Some parts of the projected new grid have not yet been formally proposed and therefore would not be considered “connected” actions in any case.

While other proposed new transmission lines must be considered as part of the cumulative impacts analysis for Gateway West, they are not “connected” actions as they fail all three tests for connectivity:

1. No new transmission line would “automatically trigger” the construction of the Gateway West and the Project would not “automatically trigger” the construction of other transmission lines. Each of these lines serves a particular purpose in strengthening the overall grid. Though the grid will be more robust when several additional transmission lines are built, each is designed to function as a single addition to the grid, and must calculate how the grid would carry its increased load if for some reason the new transmission line fails. The grid only allows the

¹⁰ <http://www.rockymountainpower.net/ed/tp/eg.html>

¹¹ <http://www.idahopower.com/AboutUs/PlanningForFuture/ProjectNews/GatewayWest/default.cfm>

¹² <http://www.wecc.biz/Planning/TransmissionExpansion/Transmission/Pages/default.aspx>

¹³ <http://www.nttg.biz/site/>

construction of a new line if the old grid can still carry its additional load. Therefore, new transmission lines do not “automatically trigger” one another.

2. Gateway West has sufficient justification to be built in the absence of the other proposed transmission lines. It does not require the construction of another transmission line to be put into service. Therefore, it can and would proceed without other actions taken previously or simultaneously, failing the second test for connected action.
3. The electrical grid that supplies energy to North America, including Canada, is a complex and interconnected system. Any new transmission line proposed will be part of the interconnected whole. Therefore, Gateway West, along with any other new or existing transmission line, is part of an electric system. However, the mere existence of an interconnected electric grid is not an “action” in and of itself. Instead, it is an existing system with requirements for new participants, which Gateway West must meet to interconnect. Further, the justification for the Project is expressed in terms of a required response to new generation and an equally required response to increased load demand, rather than in terms of meeting the needs of “the grid.” Therefore, it fails the third test because it is not part of a larger action or dependent on the larger action for its justification.

1.8 SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The agencies initiated public scoping with publication of a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register on May 16, 2008 (73 Federal Register 28425). The Notice of Intent was followed by a series of nine public meetings in 2008:

- Tuesday, June 3, 2008, in Twin Falls, Idaho;
- Tuesday, June 3, 2008, in Murphy, Idaho;
- Wednesday, June 4, 2008, in Pocatello, Idaho;
- Wednesday, June 4, 2008, in Boise, Idaho;
- Thursday, June 5, 2008, in Montpelier, Idaho;
- Monday, June 9, 2008, in Casper, Wyoming;
- Tuesday, June 10, 2008, in Rawlins, Wyoming;
- Wednesday, June 11, 2008, in Rock Springs, Wyoming; and
- Thursday, June 12, 2008, in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

Information about the Project was provided at the public meetings and via a BLM-hosted Internet Web site. Public comments were taken at the public meetings (oral and written), through the Web site, via e-mail, and regular postal service.

The public scoping period closed after 45 days on July 3, 2008. Due to the Independence Day holiday on July 4, any comments received by July 11, 2008, were included in the scoping comment analysis. Once all the comments were collected, they were read and substantive comments were sorted by subject. Comments were grouped and issues were identified that could be used to develop alternatives (including suggestions for alternate routes, mitigation measures or design criteria) and identify resource effects and sources of information.

After the formal public scoping period and during an internal review by the BLM and cooperating agencies, non-federal cooperating agencies requested an extended period of time to develop additional alternatives. The BLM responded by incorporating all comments received by September 4, 2009, into a revised scoping report. More information on details of the scoping comment analysis process and outcome can be found in the Gateway West Transmission Line Project Scoping Summary Report (Tetra Tech 2009).

In addition, the Proponents have conducted multiple meetings to which landowners within a 2-mile-wide corridor were invited in 2008 and 2009. The comments received from these meetings or provided in writing thereafter were documented and submitted to BLM and were incorporated, if received by September 4, 2009, in the revised scoping report. The Scoping Report is posted on the BLM project Web site (http://www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/cfodocs/gateway_west).

1.9 THE DRAFT EIS

The BLM published a Notice of Availability for the Draft EIS in the Federal Register on July 29, 2011. The Notice of Availability announced the release of the BLM's Draft EIS and the BLM's intent to conduct public meetings and collect public comments on the document during the 90-day comment period. The BLM sent 8,600 mailers to a combination of BLM, Forest Service, and Project Proponent mailing list contacts.

The BLM prepared and distributed three press releases regarding the Draft EIS comment period, public open house meetings and to encourage public participation on July 29, 2011, to announce the release of the Draft EIS and the start of the 90-day comment period. The second release was distributed on August 17, 2011, announcing the public open house dates and encouraging further public comment on the Project. The third release was distributed on September 23, 2011, announcing the four Wyoming public open house meetings and encouraging further public comment.

Paid notices were published in newspapers of record and the BLM Project Web site was updated to announce the release of the Draft EIS. Included in the updates were electronic versions of the Project newsletter and an updated version of the Project interactive map. An electronic version of the document was made available to the public for viewing and download. Public comments were also accepted electronically through the Web site.

The BLM hosted 17 public meetings in September and October 2011 to provide information on the document and encourage public comments on the Draft EIS. Dates and locations of these meetings follow in Table 1.9-1.

There were 368 individual letters submitted to the BLM during the Draft EIS comment period, and included in those letters were 2,453 individual comments. These letters and comments were reviewed by a team of analysts and logged into a database that was used to track and sort comments for response in the Final EIS. The individual letters were also made publicly available through the BLM project website. Appendix L of the Final EIS contains the Draft EIS period comments and responses to them. Section 1.1.1, above, details the changes between the publication of the Draft and Final EIS documents.

Table 1.9-1. Dates and Locations of Draft EIS Public Meetings

Meeting Date	Meeting Location
September 12, 2011	Boise, Idaho
September 12, 2011	Kuna, Idaho
September 13, 2011	Mountain Home, Idaho
September 14, 2011	Melba, Idaho
September 15, 2011	Murphy, Idaho
September 19, 2011	Twin Falls, Idaho
September 20, 2011	Jackpot, Nevada
September 21, 2011	Burley, Idaho
September 22, 2011	Almo, Idaho
September 26, 2011	American Falls, Idaho
September 27, 2011	Pocatello, Idaho
September 28, 2011	Fort Hall, Idaho
September 29, 2011	Montpelier, Idaho
October 3, 2011	Kemmerer, Wyoming
October 4, 2011	Rock Springs, Wyoming
October 5, 2011	Rawlins, Wyoming
October 6, 2011	Douglas, Wyoming

Chapter 5 of the EIS, Consultation and Coordination, describes the outreach, scoping, and comment period from the publication of the Draft EIS and provides details regarding the protest and comment periods that will follow the publication of this Final EIS.

1.10 ISSUES TO BE ANALYZED

Development of this EIS, including the alternatives considered and the analysis, is driven by issues. Issues were determined through internal and public scoping, direction in agency handbooks, and requirements of federal and state laws and regulations. The following describes the issues that were determined from public scoping and where in the EIS these issues are addressed depending on how they were categorized.

1.10.1 Purpose and Need for the Project

Concerns about the purpose and need for the Project were related to why it is needed, who would benefit, and questions about the use of other, renewable energy sources. These issues are addressed in this chapter, except where otherwise noted.

- Why is this line needed?
- Who would benefit from this transmission line?
- Could the need for this transmission line be avoided with conservation, improved efficiency, using renewable resources, or other management actions?
- Could the transmission line be designed so that sources of renewable energy may be incorporated?
- How fiscally sound are the Project and the Proponents?
- Is it physically feasible to construct and operate the Project on some of the rugged areas proposed?
- Why is redundancy needed in some parts of the line and not others?
- Would the transmission line benefit local utility customers?

1.10.2 Alternative Development Issues

Many suggestions have been made and considered regarding the location of the Proposed Route, or methods and timing of construction. These issues are addressed in Chapter 2 as part of the alternative development process and description of the alternatives (including design features and environmental protection measures).

Requests were made to analyze or dictate the type of electricity generation that would or should be carried on the transmission line. Section 1.7.3 provides an explanation of why generation is not considered a connected action and therefore is not included in the direct and indirect effects analysis. Some known, proposed generation sources that occur within the cumulative effects analysis area were considered in the cumulative effects analysis where applicable.

Route Alternatives were identified that could reduce the impacts suggested for each issue. The feasibility of each Route Alternative was then considered, such as physical ability to construct the Project in that location and other resource impacts. Alternatives that were determined to not be feasible and/or would not meet the Purpose and Need for the Project are described in Section 2.4.12 of this EIS. Alternative development issues and the alternatives that were considered in detail in the EIS are described in Table 1.10-1.

Table 1.10-1. Alternative Development Issues and Alternatives Considered in Detail

Alternative Development Issue	Alternatives Considered in Detail
Can the transmission line follow the West-Wide Energy (WWE) corridor as much as possible?	2A, 8A, and 9B
Can the transmission line follow existing transmission lines more closely?	2A, 5C, and 9B
Can the visual impacts on historical trails be reduced by moving the line away from the historic trails?	4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, and 7C
Can the transmission line be routed to avoid Cokeville Meadows NWR?	4C
Can the transmission line be routed to avoid impacts on active coal mines?	4D and 4E
Can the transmission line be routed to avoid visual impacts on Fossil Butte National Monument?	4C, 4D, and 4E
Can the impacts on BLM VRM I and II and Forest Service VQOs/Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIO) Preservation, Retention, Partial Retention, and Modification Class lands be reduced or avoided?	5A, 5B, 7A, and 7A, 7B, 7K
Is there a more direct (shorter) route?	4A, 5C,
Can the amount of high-quality forested habitat affected on BLM lands be reduced?	5A, 5B, 7A, and 7B
Can more sage grouse leks, lek buffers, or core/key sage grouse habitat be avoided?	4F, 7C, and 7F
Can an alternative be developed that avoids areas where ROWs are not excluded by the Cassia RMP?	7D
Can the hang gliding launch area be avoided?	7E and 7F
Can the BLM motorized vehicle closure (winter range, mule deer, sage-grouse) be avoided to reduce the need for exceptions in order to access the line?	7G
Can the transmission line be moved away from active farms, residential developments, and planned infrastructure projects?	5C, 5E, 7K, 8B, 8C, 9A, 9B, 9C, 9D, 9E
Can routes be located more on public lands than private lands?	5C, 7E, 7F, 7K, 9D, 9E

1.10.3 Effects and Analysis Content Issues

Some of the issues raised in scoping dealt with the effects of the Project and what should be included in the analysis. These issues, summarized below, are detailed in Chapter 3 sections on affected environment, direct and indirect effects, in Chapter 4 on cumulative effects analysis for each resource, and in Chapter 5 on consultation.

Visual Resources

- Would an inventory of all potentially affected viewsheds be carried out?
- Could the transmission line be located where it is not visible from residences?
- Do the visual effects conform to Visual Resource Management or Visual/Scenic Quality Objectives established in land use plans?
- How would visual effects conform to goals in RMPs and Forest Plans?
- Would increased public access degrade visually sensitive areas?
- How would sensitive viewing areas be affected?
- Would the effects on visuals interfere with the public's enjoyment of the site?
- Would public views be obstructed?
- What would visual impacts of construction be on natural formations such as mountains?
- How would impacts on visual resources affect income from tourism?
- What would be the effects on light pollution at night?
- What would be the impact on designated areas of scenic importance, such as Scenic Byways?
- How would visual effects be mitigated?

Cultural Resources

- What values do the area's Native American communities ascribe to places of historic and traditional significance?
- Would all impacted Native American tribes be consulted?
- What would be the impact on Native American Tribes and would their treaty rights and privileges be addressed?
- Would a complete inventory of potentially impacted cultural sites be carried out?
- Would the design of structures such as towers and substations minimize their visual impact to the setting of historic properties?
- What are the impacts on eligible prehistoric resources?
- What are the impacts on eligible historic resources?
- What would be the visual and recreational impacts on historic trails?
- Would TCPs be affected?
- Where the setting is an important aspect of the integrity of a property, would the setting be affected?

Socioeconomics

- Is there sufficient housing available for temporary and permanent workers?
- Would the temporary workforce have detrimental effects on existing services in local municipalities?
- What would be the effects on population numbers?
- What would be the effects on economic conditions?
- Would education or schools be affected?
- Would public services such as police or fire protection be impacted?
- How would the Project affect tax income to local governments?
- How would development of the Project impact municipal infrastructure and other planned development?
- How would the presence of the transmission line affect the quality of life of and enjoyment of the land by local residents?
- What would be the economic impacts to individuals?
- How would this Project affect tourism and recreation?
- Would construction or operations of the Project disrupt delivery of any public utilities such as electricity or sewer?
- What municipalities and other population concentrations would be impacted?
- Under what circumstances would private land be condemned, and what would the effects of this be?

Environmental Justice

- What would be the effects on minority populations or communities?
- What would be the effects on low income populations or communities?
- What would be the effects on Tribes?

Vegetation Communities

- How much vegetation would be cleared, and how much would be kept clear or otherwise maintained during operations?
- How quickly would the various vegetation communities that are cleared for construction but allowed to regrow during operations recover from disturbance?
- How much disturbance would occur in sagebrush communities and what would be the effects?
- How much disturbance would occur in native grasslands and what would be the effects?
- Would old-growth forest stands be affected, and what measures would be taken to protect this vegetation type?
- What would be the effects of construction, operations, and maintenance on fire occurrence, frequency, and severity; especially as they relate to important shrub-steppe and forest habitats?

Special Status Plants

- What would be the effects to endangered and threatened species, both individuals and populations?
- What would be the effects from changes in habitat for TES plants?
- What effect would the potential spread of noxious weeds have on special status plants?
- Would hydrology be altered in occupied habitat for TES species associated with wetlands and what effect would the alteration have on those species?

Invasive Plant Species

- Would noxious weeds be introduced or spread into the ROW and adjacent areas?
- How would the presence of the Project impact efforts to control existing noxious weeds?
- Would a noxious weed prevention and abatement plan be developed in conjunction with the appropriate agencies?

Wetlands

- What would be the effects on permanent and seasonal wetlands?
- Would riparian areas be affected?
- Can equipment staging and/or refueling areas be kept away from wetlands and riparian areas?

General Wildlife and Fish

- What would the effects of Project construction and operations be on general, non-special-status wildlife, including birds, reptiles and amphibians, and large and small mammals?
- When routing the Project, would key wildlife habitats be avoided?
- What would the effects be on migratory bird species?
- Would there be a loss or fragmentation of wildlife habitat, especially for sagebrush-obligate and forest-dependent species?
- What wildlife mortality would occur during construction?
- Would there be a potential for disruption of breeding and reproductive activities of raptors?
- What would be the effects on big game migration?
- What would be the effects on big game and crucial big game winter range—habitat removal and disturbance during seasonal occupancy?
- What would be the effects on big game parturition areas from habitat removal and disturbance during seasonal occupancy?
- What would be the potential for avian collision during operations and what measures would be taken to minimize this risk?
- Would noise created during transmission line operations affect wildlife?

- What best management practices would be used during construction and operations to protect fish resources?
- How would disturbed instream habitats be protected and restored?
- What would be the potential for electrocution of large birds during operations?
- What would be the impacts on wildlife or wildlife habitat within an NWR, State Park, State Wildlife Management Area, or Special Management Area on federal lands specifically managed for one or more species of wildlife?

Special Status Wildlife and Fish Species

- What would be the effects of Project activities on species federally listed as threatened, endangered, candidate, or proposed?
- How would Project construction and operations affect predation on sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse, and how would these risks be minimized?
- How would the Project affect sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse habitat?
- Would the Project comply with sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse Conservation Plans?
- What agencies and conservation groups would be consulted?
- What would be the impacts on nesting and wintering eagles and their habitat?
- What would be the effects on species listed as sensitive by the BLM? Specifically, what would be the impacts to greater sage-grouse breeding and brood rearing areas and where would these impacts occur?
- What would be the effects on species listed as sensitive by the Forest Service?

Minerals

- What effects would the Project have on coal, trona, and phosphate mining areas and leases?
- What effects would the Project have on oil and natural gas wells and leases?

Paleontological Resources

- Would a full inventory of potentially affected paleontological resources be carried out?
- Would fossils be damaged during construction?
- Would fossils be removed or destroyed by increased access to protected areas?

Geologic Hazards

- Would a full inventory of potentially affected geological resources be carried out?
- What would be the potential for earthquakes to damage the transmission line and associated structures?
- What effect would subsidence from underground mining have on the transmission line, and what would be the hazard to workers or infrastructure?
- What effect would landslides have on the transmission line?

- What effect would construction blasting in shallow bedrock have on unstable landforms (landslide-prone areas) or on adjacent man-made structures not related to the transmission line?

Soils

- What would be the effect on soil erosion, and the potential for increased soil erosion from Project construction, operations, and decommissioning?
- What would be the effect on Project soils from compaction by vehicle and equipment traffic?
- What effect would topsoil disturbance have on soil productivity after construction and reclamation?

Water Resources

- What would be the impacts to water quality from roads and other causes of erosion?
- Would state water quality standards be met?
- Which pollutants could enter waterbodies and what would be the impacts from them?
- What would be the impacts on drinking water, wells, and springs?
- Would municipal water service to individual properties be affected?
- What would be the handling procedures for hazardous materials near waterbodies and wells?
- Would water be drawn from surface waterbodies, and what would the effects of that be?
- What storm water permits would be required, and would their stipulations be met?
- Would there be any impacts on water rights?
- What would be the impacts from sedimentation and temperature increases in sediment and temperature-impaired water bodies?
- Would there be a risk of floods?
- Would groundwater be affected?

Land Use and Recreation

- How would the project affect concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO)?
- How would the project affect current agricultural systems, including pivot irrigation and advanced positioning systems used in farm equipment?
- What residential areas, planned development, and specially designated uses would be affected?
- How would the Project affect specially designated areas including NWRs, National Parks, National Monuments, Special Management Areas, and recreation sites, and roadless areas?
- How would the transmission line affect timber and fire management activities?

- What would be the effect on Indian Reservations?
- To what extent would the Project be co-located with existing developments?
- Would hunting or fishing be affected?
- Would there be any losses of recreational opportunities?
- Would the Project adhere to local land use plans and policies?
- Would the Project impact any military activities?
- How would construction of this transmission line influence the installation of more developments and projects in the same area in the future?
- Would construction buffers around buildings be maintained?
- What permits and plan amendments would be required for this project?
- What would be the plan for re-entries and maintenance activities on private land which would continue for decades into the future?

Agriculture

- How much agricultural land would be impacted, and what would the effects be?
- What would be the effects on livestock grazing of construction and operations of the transmission line?
- Would there be a loss of prime farmland?
- What would be the impacts to agricultural production including equipment operation and aerial spraying?
- Would there be a disruption to dairy operations and other types of CAFOs?
- How would the transmission line interfere with crop dusting?
- Would the transmission line cause electronic interference with agricultural equipment?

Transportation

- Would a full map and inventory of all new temporary and permanent access roads for the Project be developed?
- How would vehicles taking materials and personnel to and from the Project site affect traffic patterns?
- How would roads, highways, railroads, and airports be affected?
- Would there be an increase in off-highway vehicle use, and what would be the environmental impacts of this?
- Would construction and operations of the Project cut off access to any previously-accessible areas?
- How would roads affect livestock and grazing operations?
- What would be the environmental effects of new temporary and permanent roads constructed for this Project?

Air Quality

- Would the proposed Project be inconsistent with the applicable air quality plans?

- What would be the effects on human health of any increase in airborne pollutants caused by the Project?
- Would the proposed Project generate emissions of air pollutants that would exceed established thresholds, or cause adverse impacts on air quality?
- Would the proposed Project cause or contribute to any violation of any state or federal ambient air quality standards?
- Would the proposed Project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?
- What would be the methods used to control dust?
- What would be the steps taken to minimize air quality impacts?
- How much greenhouse gas emissions would be associated with this project, and what would be the effect of the Project on climate change?

Electrical Environment

- Would voltage on the conductors of the transmission lines build up, for example in large vehicles or pivot irrigation systems, and produce nuisance shocks, or lead to fuel ignition?
- Would electric and magnetic fields (EMF) associated with transmission lines cause health effects?
- Would the audible noise during operations be loud enough to be annoying or interfere with normal communication?
- Would stray voltage be a concern in the context of animal care where unwanted voltage on feeders, watering stations, or equipment such as milking machines, can lead to reduced food or water intake.
- Would services such as Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers, satellite dish receivers, cell phones, AM/FM (amplitude modulation/frequency modulation) radio, two-way radio communication, television, and internet be disrupted?

Public Safety

- Would the Project cause environmental contamination or expose workers or the public to contamination?
- What would be the effects of electric and magnetic fields?
- Would the transmission line withstand wind and ice storms?
- Would the transmission line cause fires or create a fire hazard?
- Would workers or the public be safe from electrocution?
- What would be the effects of the transmission line on human health?
- What would the Proponents do to prevent the dangers of downed lines and tower failure?
- How would the Proponents protect against potential vandalism or acts of terrorism to Project structures?
- Would electrical safety procedures be followed?

Noise

- Would people be exposed to noise levels in excess of standards established by existing regulations, ordinances, and standards?
- Would there be a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity above levels existing prior to Project construction and operation?
- Would people be exposed to ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?

1.11 ORGANIZATION OF THIS EIS

This document is organized into several chapters. Chapter 2 presents the Proposed Action and a range of reasonable alternatives to that action, including Route Alternatives, as well as agency preferred alternatives. Chapter 3 presents the affected environment and environmental consequences, by resource and by segment, of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives. Chapter 4 describes cumulative effects of the Project in combination with past, present, and other reasonably foreseeable projects overlapping in geography and time. Chapter 5 provides a record of consultation and coordination conducted during the NEPA process, including a summary of the public scoping process, and a list of preparers. Chapter 6 contains a glossary and index for this document. Chapter 7 contains the references for other chapters of the EIS. Appendix A contains maps of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives, including substations. The Proponents' POD is presented in Appendix B. Appendix C contains various mitigation plans proposed by the Proponents. Appendix D contains oversized or lengthy tables referenced in the EIS sections, and Appendix E contains oversized figures referenced in the EIS sections. Appendix F provides proposed amendments to BLM RMPs and MFPs, and NFS Forest Plans for the Project. Appendix G provides the visual resource analysis that supports the proposed amendments in Appendix F. Appendix H describes consistency of the Gateway West Project with IOPs found in the Final RODs on the *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Land in the 11 Western States* (BLM 2009a; Forest Service 2009a). Appendix I contains a table listing wildlife season stipulations on federal and state lands, and Appendix J provides the framework for the analysis of sage-grouse impacts due to interstate transmission lines and the Habitat Equivalency Analysis. Appendix K presents an evaluation of the economic impacts that the Project may have on agricultural producers in Cassia and Power Counties (Idaho). Responses to comments on the Draft EIS are provided in Appendix L, and Appendix M contains the biological assessment on TES plant and wildlife species. Appendix N contains a copy of the "Programmatic Agreement Regarding Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act." Appendix O contains maps illustrating the alternative routes eliminated from detailed study.