

*Energy Gateway South Transmission Project
Environmental Impact Statement*

Scoping Report

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office

December 2011



The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

BLM/WY/PL-12/009+1430

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1-1
1.1 Project Background	1-1
2.0 Scoping Process	2-1
2.1 Agency Scoping	2-1
2.2 Consultation and Coordination	2-2
2.2.1 Cooperating Agencies	2-2
2.2.2 Government-to-Government Consultation.....	2-5
2.2.3 Formal Consultation	2-7
2.2.3.1 Biological Resources	2-7
2.2.3.2 Cultural Resources	2-7
2.3 Scoping Approach.....	2-8
2.3.1 Notification.....	2-8
2.3.2 Scoping Meetings	2-9
3.0 Comment Analysis	3-1
3.1 Collection of Comments	3-1
3.2 Comment Analysis	3-1
3.2.1 Processing Comments	3-2
3.3 How the Comments Will Be Addressed in the EIS.....	3-3
3.4 Comment Analysis Results	3-3
3.4.1 Purpose and Need for the Project	3-4
3.4.1.1 Representative Comments	3-4
3.4.2 Alternative Transmission Line Routes	3-5
3.4.2.1 Representative Comments	3-5
3.4.3 Effects Analysis	3-7
3.4.3.1 Air Quality	3-7
3.4.3.2 Noise.....	3-7
3.4.3.3 Water Resources	3-7
3.4.3.4 Vegetation.....	3-8
3.4.3.5 Fish and Wildlife	3-9
3.4.3.6 Wildfire Ecology and Management	3-10
3.4.3.7 Geology and Soils.....	3-10
3.4.3.8 Cultural Resources	3-11
3.4.3.9 Tribal Concerns	3-11
3.4.3.10 Visual Resources.....	3-12
3.4.3.11 Paleontological Resources	3-12
3.4.3.12 Land Use and Recreation Resources	3-13
3.4.3.13 Social and Economic Conditions	3-15
3.4.3.14 Health and Safety	3-16
3.4.3.15 Electronic Device Reception Interference.....	3-16
3.4.4 Project Description	3-17
3.4.5 Public Involvement	3-18
3.5 Issues Derived From Scoping Comments.....	3-19
4.0 Summary of Future Steps in the Planning Process	4-1
5.0 Literature Cited	5-1

Appendix A – Agency Correspondence, Invitation Letters.....	A-1
Appendix B – Media Publicity	B-1
Appendix C – Scoping Meeting Materials	C-1
Appendix D – Summary of Comments.....	D-1
Appendix E – BLM and USFS Interdisciplinary Team Checklists	E-1

List of Figures

Figure 1	Project Area	1-3
Figure 2	NEPA Planning Approach	4-3

List of Tables

Table 2-1	Newspaper Advertisements	2-9
Table 2-2	Scoping Meeting Summary	2-9

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIS	Aquatic invasive species
APP	Avian Protection Plan
ATV	All-terrain vehicle
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLG	Coalition of Local Governments (Colorado)
CO	Colorado
CRTG	Cultural Resources Task Group
CWA	Clean Water Act
DNM	Dinosaur National Monument
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMF	Electric and magnetic fields
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
GIS	Geographic information system
GJFO	Grand Junction Field Office
ID	Interdisciplinary (Agency Interdisciplinary Team)
kV	kilovolt
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
LSRCD	Little Snake River Conservation District
MW	Megawatts
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
NOI	Notice of Intent
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PCW	Power Company of Wyoming, LLC
Project Applicant	Energy Gateway South Transmission Project PacifiCorp, doing business as Rocky Mountain Power
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RV	Recreational vehicle
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office

T&E	Threatened and Endangered
TOTCO	The Overland Trail Cattle Company
UDWR	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
U.S.C.	United States Code
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
UT	Utah
VRM	Visual resource management

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wyoming State Office is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the potential environmental impacts resulting from and address possible land use plan amendments for granting a right-of-way for construction, operation, maintenance and termination of the Energy Gateway South Transmission Project (Project), a 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line across public and private lands in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. As required by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, the BLM, in coordination with cooperating agencies, conducted scoping early in the preparation of the EIS to encourage public participation and solicit public input on the scope and significance of the issues associated with the proposed action (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1501.7). Comments received during scoping help determine the issues to be addressed during preparation of the EIS.

This Scoping Report documents the scoping process and outreach efforts and provides a description of the scoping activities, a summary of the comments received during scoping, the issues derived from the comments, and a summary of the future steps in the planning process. The issues derived from the comments will be addressed in the EIS rather than in this summary.

This document has been prepared for the public, decision makers, and the EIS team members to explain the common themes in scoping comments and issues. While preparing the EIS, the individual comments will be considered in depth. The EIS will include a brief description of how each comment is addressed during development of the EIS.

1.1 Project Background

On October 11, 2010, PacifiCorp, doing business as Rocky Mountain Power (Applicant), submitted a revised Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands (Standard Form 299) for the Project, which revised the original application filed by PacifiCorp on November 28, 2007, and revised on December 17, 2008. As part of the October 2010 application revision, the Applicant updated the description of the Project and informed the BLM of preliminary alternative routes to evaluate for the transmission line.

The Applicant's interests in and objectives for the Project are tied to PacifiCorp's obligations as a regulated utility to provide increased capacity (as required to serve growing loads); provide safe, reliable electricity to its customers at a reasonable cost; address constraints within PacifiCorp's existing transmission system; and provide electricity to the wholesale market when excess electricity exists or when required for other system-balancing alternatives. Through planning studies and analysis, the Applicant determined its existing system, last upgraded about 25 years ago, is fully used and needs to be upgraded. In 2007, Rocky Mountain Power committed to expanding its transmission network to ensure sufficient capacity would be available to meet the needs of its existing and new customers. The Project is planned to meet the Applicant's customer load and growth needs for additional power transmission.

The Project would include a single-circuit 500kV, overhead, alternating-current transmission line beginning near Medicine Bow, Carbon County, Wyoming, at the planned Aeolus Substation and

would extend south and west to the planned Clover Substation near Mona, Juab County, Utah. The Project also would include two series compensation stations, about 200 acres in size and a distance of approximately 400 miles, at two separate points between the planned Aeolus and Clover substations to improve transport capacity and efficiency of the transmission line. When completed, this Project would transmit up to 1,500 megawatts (MW) of electricity generated from renewable and thermal sources at future facilities in Wyoming. Figure 1 is a map that represents the Project area; it was used during the scoping meetings and made available for public review on the project website.

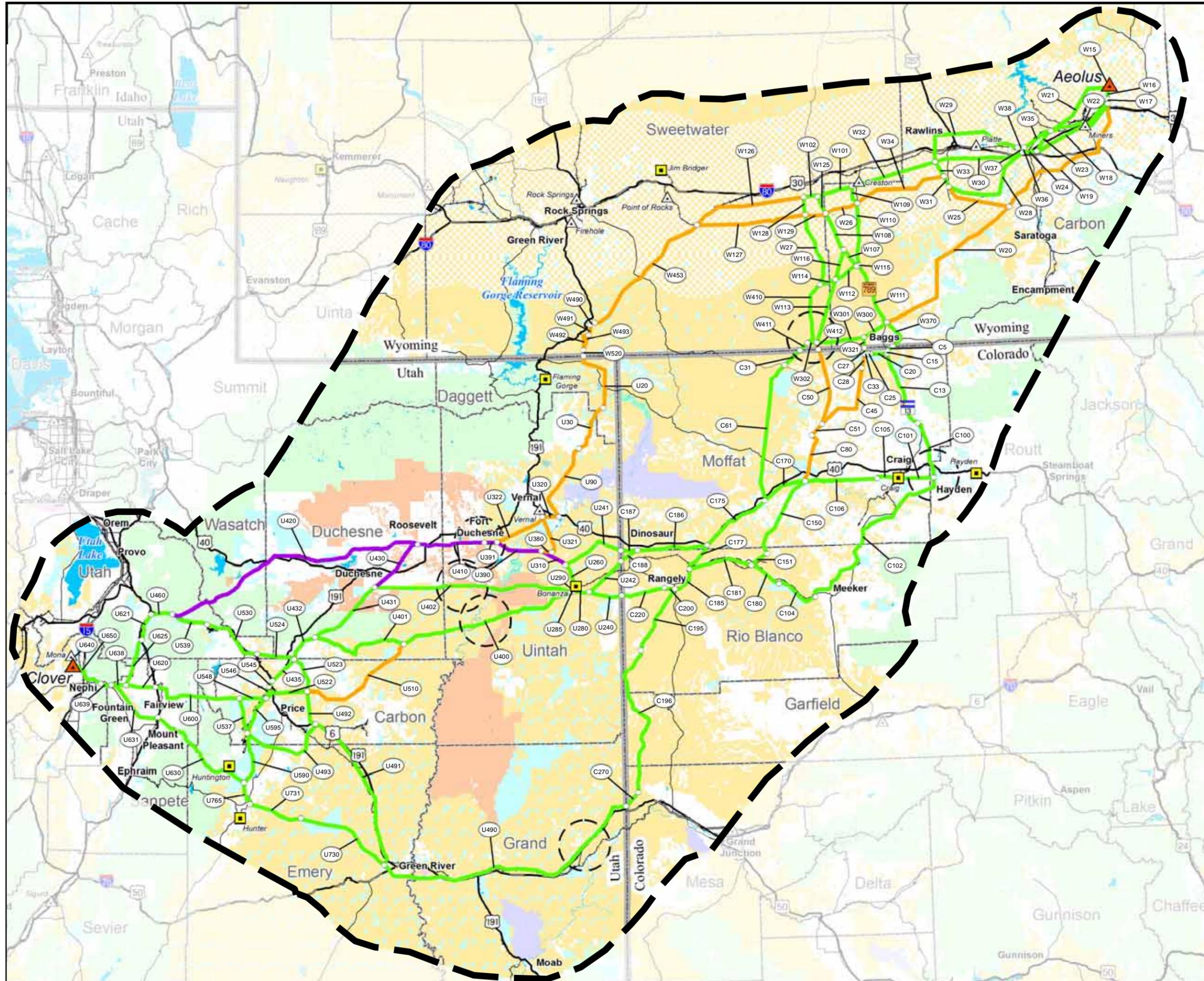
The transmission line would traverse federal (administered by the BLM and U.S. Forest Service [USFS]), state, tribal, and privately owned lands in portions of 17 counties. Preliminary alternative routes identified for public scoping would use portions of designated utility corridors on federal lands, parallel portions of existing overhead and underground utilities and roadways, or cross undisturbed land areas.

The Applicant is proposing to use predominantly self-supporting, steel-lattice, single-circuit structures from 140 to 190 feet in height with average spans between structures of 1,000 to 1,500 feet (4 to 5 structures per mile) within a 250-foot wide right-of-way. Permanent and temporary access roads a minimum of 14 feet wide would be needed for the Project. Permanent access roads would be needed for construction and maintenance and temporary access routes would be needed for construction only. Temporary work space would be needed during construction for material storage, fly-yards (for helicopter-assisted construction, if needed), conductor-tensioning sites, and accommodating vehicles and equipment.

BLM and USFS lands are administered with direction from land use plans that establish the goals and objectives for the management of the resources that would be affected by the Proposed Action. The EIS may address amendments to the following approved and proposed management plans:

- Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (RMP), 2004
- Rawlins RMP, 2008
- Green River RMP, 1997
- Grand Junction RMP, 1987
- Little Snake RMP, 1989
- White River RMP, 1997
- House Range RMP, 1987
- Price RMP, 2008
- Ashley National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), 1986
- Manti-La Sal National Forest LRMP, 1986
- Uinta National Forest LRMP, 2003
- Medicine Bow National Forest Revised LRMP, 2003
- Wasatch-Cache National Forest LRMP, 2003
- Routt National Forest Revised LRMP, 1997
- White River National Forest Revised LRMP, 2002

PROJECT AREA



Project Features

- Project Area Boundary
- Planned Substation
- Alternative Routes**
 - Alternative Route Being Considered
 - Alternative Route Recommended for Elimination by Rocky Mountain Power
 - Alternative Route Recommended for Elimination by BLM
- Series Compensation Station Siting Area (2 total)
- Link Number
- Link Node

Utilities

- Existing Substation
- Existing Power Plant
- 500kV+/- DC Transmission Line
- 500kV Transmission Line
- 345kV Transmission Line
- 230 to 287kV Transmission Line
- 138 to 161kV Transmission Line
- 115kV Transmission Line

Transportation

- Interstate Highway
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- Railroad

Land Jurisdictions

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

Water

- Lake or Reservoir

Administrative Boundaries

- State Boundary
- County Boundary

SOURCES:
 BLM State Office Colorado, 2008, Land Jurisdiction;
 BLM State Office Utah, 2009, Land Jurisdiction;
 BLM State Office Wyoming, 2009, Land Jurisdiction;
 NAIP, 2009, Series Compensation Station Siting Area as digitized by EPG;
 POWERmap Platts, 2007, Transmission Lines and Substations as digitized by EPG;
 USDOT, 2008, National Transportation Atlas Database;
 ESRI, 2008, Water Features; ESRI, 2008, County Boundary;
 ESRI, 2008, State Boundary; AGRC, 2004, Cities

NOTES:
 • The alternative routes shown on this map are preliminary and may be revised and/or refined throughout the development of the project.
 • Substation symbols do not necessarily represent precise locations.
 • Series compensation station siting areas are preliminary and do not represent precise locations.



Prepared by:

ENERGY GATEWAY SOUTH TRANSMISSION PROJECT



Figure 1

2.0 SCOPING PROCESS

This section provides a description of the scoping process, the means by which the public and agencies were notified and given opportunities to comment on the Project, and a brief summary of the meetings that were held.

The scoping process is conducted early in the EIS process and is open to all interested agencies and the public. The intent is to solicit comments and identify the issues that help direct the approach and depth of the environmental studies and analysis needed to prepare the EIS and incorporate the views and concerns of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the public regarding the scope of issues to be analyzed in the EIS. Other objectives of scoping include:

- Identifying and inviting agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise relevant to the Project to participate in the preparation of the EIS as cooperating agencies;
- Identifying other interested parties and inviting them to participate in the EIS process;
- Identifying other environmental review and consultation requirements;
- Identifying the relevant and substantive issues that need to be addressed during the analyses and in the EIS;
- Determining the range of alternatives to be evaluated; and
- Developing the environmental analysis criteria and systematic planning process and allocating EIS assignments among agencies as appropriate.

The scoping comment period began April 1, 2011, with the publication of the BLM's Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS.

2.1 Agency Scoping

Following PacifiCorp's original application submittal for right-of-way across federal lands in November 2007 and after the lead agency determination had been made, the BLM held agency meetings with relevant BLM district and field offices and national forests in late February and March 2009. Follow-up working sessions were conducted with the Little Snake Field Office in June 2009; with the Fillmore Field Office and Millard and Juab counties in August 2009; with the Price Field Office in September 2009; with the Price Field Office, USFS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), the Governor of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordination Office in April 2010 (to discuss issues in Nine Mile Canyon); with Duchesne County in April 2010; and with the Rawlins Field office and cooperating agencies in Wyoming in July 2010. The objectives of the agency meetings were to discuss the Project description (including the Applicant's preliminary alternative routes) and the Applicant's purpose and need, BLM organization for preparation of the EIS, potential resource conflicts, potential issues, and data needs.

Following the agency meetings, the BLM developed an Agency Interdisciplinary (ID) Team. The Agency ID Team is an interagency group of key resource and geographic information system (GIS) specialists that have been tasked with participating in the NEPA process by providing information, giving direction on level of analysis, and reviewing documents related to the NEPA process and consultation. Regularly scheduled conference calls for the Agency ID Team are conducted twice each month, or more or less often as appropriate, to discuss the status of the

Project and EIS. The first Agency ID Team conference call was held on May 12, 2009, to discuss the Project, agency roles and responsibilities, and preparation of the EIS, including the EIS schedule. Subsequently, the BLM organized the plan and schedule for initiating and conducting the NEPA process that includes scoping; determining agency issues associated with the Project; identifying the federal, state, and local agencies to invite as cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EIS; and initiating coordination efforts with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), and potentially interested American Indian tribes.

The Applicant's original application included two stages. Stage 1 of the Project, a single-circuit, overhead transmission line from the Aeolus Substation near Medicine Bow, Wyoming, to the Clover Substation near Mona, Utah, was planned to meet the Applicant's customer load and growth needs for additional transmission capacity of 1,500 MW. The second stage of the Project, a single-circuit transmission line from the Aeolus Substation in Wyoming to the Crystal Substation located northwest of North Las Vegas, Nevada, would have provided an additional 1,500 MW of transmission capacity and was planned to accommodate anticipated transmission service requests from third parties requiring a partner to provide additional funding. In October 2009, in response to economic downturn, the Applicant requested that the BLM postpone the announcement of public scoping while the company re-evaluated the need for and geographic scope of the Project and conducted system planning studies. As a result of these evaluations, the Applicant indefinitely postponed Stage 2 of the Project; this was reflected in the Applicant's revised right-of-way application submitted to the BLM in October 2010, and reduced the geographic scope of the Project to that presented for scoping in 2011. The studies undertaken in 2008 to 2010, combined with resource inventory data collected in 2009 and input received at agency scoping meetings, served to develop the preliminary alternative routes presented during the 2011 scoping process.

2.2 Consultation and Coordination

2.2.1 Cooperating Agencies

As required by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, BLM, the lead federal agency as defined at 40 CFR 1501.5, identified and invited numerous agencies to participate as cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EIS. A cooperating agency is any federal, state, or local government agency or American Indian tribe that has either jurisdiction by law or special expertise regarding environmental impacts of a proposal or a reasonable alternative for a federal action affecting the quality of the human environment. The benefits of cooperating agency participation in the analyses for and preparation of the EIS include (1) disclosure of relevant information early in the analytical process; (2) application of available technical expertise and staff support; (3) avoidance of duplication of other federal, state, local, and tribal procedures; and (4) establishment of a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues.

In late May and June 2009, the BLM sent formal letters inviting 54 agencies and two tribes, the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation and the Moapa Band of the Paiute Indian Tribe, to participate as cooperating agencies (a sample letter invitation is included in Appendix A). The BLM received 32 positive responses from the agencies invited; 24 cooperating agencies are located in the Project area for the geographic scope of the Project reflected in the revised right-of-way application submitted in October 2010.

The following agencies were invited to participate as cooperating agencies:

- Federal Agencies
 - U.S. Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Rocky Mountain Region
 - Southwest Region
 - Western Region
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Upper Colorado Region
 - Lower Colorado Region
 - National Park Service
 - Pacific West Region
 - Intermountain Region
 - U.S. Department of Defense
 - Navy Region Southwest
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Western Regional Environmental Office
 - Northwestern Division
 - South Pacific Division
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - Forest Service – Intermountain Region
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Pacific Southwest Region
 - Mountain-Prairie Region
 - Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission
- Tribes
 - Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation
 - Moapa Band of the Paiute Indian Tribe
- State Agencies
 - Wyoming
 - State of Wyoming
 - Little Snake River Conservation District
 - Medicine Bow Conservation District
 - Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District
 - Sweetwater Conservation District
 - Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
 - Uinta County Conservation District
 - Colorado
 - State of Colorado
 - Utah
 - State of Utah Trust Lands Administration
 - Utah Governor's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office
 - Utah Department of Natural Resources
 - Nevada
 - State of Nevada
- Local Agencies
 - Wyoming
 - Carbon County
 - Sweetwater County

- Colorado
 - Garfield County
 - Mesa County
 - Moffat County
 - Routt County
 - Rio Blanco County
- Utah
 - Beaver County
 - Carbon County
 - Daggett County
 - Duchesne County
 - Emery County
 - Grand County
 - Iron County
 - Juab County
 - Millard County
 - Piute County
 - Sanpete County
 - Sevier County
 - Uintah County
 - Utah County
 - Wasatch County
 - Washington County
- Nevada
 - Clark County
 - Lincoln County
- Special Interest Groups
 - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

As of the date of this report, the agencies that responded positively to the BLM's invitation and have jurisdiction or special expertise in the reduced geographic area of the Project area include the following:

- Federal Agencies
 - U.S. Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Western Region
 - U.S. Department of Defense
 - Navy Region Southwest
 - U.S. Army Environmental Center
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - South Pacific Division
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - Forest Service – Intermountain Region
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Mountain Prairie Region
- State Agencies
 - Wyoming
 - State of Wyoming
 - Colorado
 - State of Colorado

- Utah
 - Utah Governor's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office
- Local Agencies
 - Utah
 - Carbon County
 - Duchesne County
 - Emery County
 - Juab County
 - Sanpete County
 - Uintah County
 - Colorado
 - Mesa County
 - Moffat County
 - Rio Blanco County
 - Wyoming
 - Carbon County
 - Sweetwater County
- Conservation Districts
 - Little Snake River Conservation District
 - Medicine Bow Conservation District
 - Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District
 - Sweetwater County Conservation District

Meetings of the Agency ID Team, including the cooperating agencies, will be conducted at key milestones of the NEPA process (e.g., review of scoping results, discussions of methodology for analyses, discussions of results of impact assessment, review of the Draft EIS).

2.2.2 Government-to-Government Consultation

The United States Government has a unique legal relationship with American Indian tribal governments as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, Executive Orders, federal statutes, federal policy, and tribal requirements, which establish the interaction that must take place between federal and tribal governments. The most important basis for this relationship is the trust responsibility of the United States to protect tribal sovereignty, self-determination, reservation lands, tribal assets and resources, and treaty and other federally recognized and reserved rights. Federal agencies work with tribes, government to government, to address issues concerning tribal self-government, tribal trust resources, as well as tribal treaties and other rights. Government-to-government consultation is the process of seeking, discussing, and considering views on environmental and cultural resource management issues.

In the BLM's capacity to consult in a government-to-government manner, the BLM Wyoming State Office in April 2011 sent a letter and Project area map to 33 tribes (Appendix A) to solicit input regarding cultural resource concerns (which also is in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 [NHPA], as amended), as these 33 tribes, as well as Tribal cultural resource officers and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, if present, may have interest in significant cultural resources in the Project area. The tribes contacted include:

- Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Indian Reservation
- Eastern Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Indian Reservation
- Hopi Tribe of Arizona

- Jicarilla Apache Tribe
- Navajo Nation
- Northern Arapaho Tribe of the Wind River Indian Reservation
- Northwestern Band of Shoshone Nation (Utah and Idaho)
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
- Pueblo of Acoma
- Pueblo of Cochiti
- Pueblo of Isleta
- Pueblo of Jemez
- Pueblo of Laguna
- Pueblo of Nambe
- Pueblo of Picuris
- Pueblo of Pojoaque
- Pueblo of Sandia
- Pueblo of San Felipe
- Pueblo of San Ildefonso
- Pueblo of San Juan
- Pueblo of Santa Ana
- Pueblo of Santa Clara
- Pueblo of Santo Domingo
- Pueblo of Taos
- Pueblo of Tesuque
- Pueblo of Zia
- Pueblo of Zuni
- San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation of Idaho
- Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians of Utah
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe of the Southern Ute Reservation
- Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation
- Ute Mountain Tribe of the Ute Mountain Reservation

Four tribes responded to the BLM's letter requesting consultation on the Project: the Hopi Tribe, the Pueblo of Laguna, the Ute Mountain Ute, and the Northern Shoshone. The Hopi Tribe asked to be kept updated on the EIS process and requested review of the Class I Cultural Resource Inventory report and the Draft EIS so they may determine if cultural resources significant to the tribe could be affected by the Project. The Pueblo of Laguna responded with a determination that the Project would not affect cultural resources significant to the tribe but asked to be notified and allowed to review documentation of any new archaeological sites or artifacts discovered during Project construction for relevance or significance to the tribe. The Ute Mountain Ute and Northern Shoshone tribes requested follow-up consultation meetings with the BLM. BLM will send a second letter to the tribes that did not respond to the BLM's April 2011 letter requesting consultation and will follow up with phone calls, if necessary, to ensure the tribes are advised of the Project and the request for consultation. BLM will meet with all tribes requesting consultation.

All tribes have been added to the project mailing list and will receive regular updates via project newsletters and public notices documenting the availability of EIS-related documents for review. Further, as part of BLM's responsibilities under Section 106 of the NHPA, all tribes will be invited to participate as consulting parties in preparation of a Programmatic Agreement for management of cultural resources (see Section 2.2.3.2). Additionally, information regarding the

Section 106 of NHPA process and tribal consultation will be included on the project public website and incorporated into the project newsletters.

2.2.3 Formal Consultation

The BLM and cooperating agencies are required to prepare EISs in coordination with any studies or analyses required by the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] Sec 661 et seq. [16 U.S.C. 661]), Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sec 1531 et seq. [16 U.S.C. 1531]), and the NHPA (16 U.S.C. Sec 470 et seq. [16 U.S.C. 470]).

2.2.3.1 Biological Resources

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, formal consultation is required when the action agency (or agencies) determines the proposed action may affect a listed species or designated critical habitat. The results of the consultation process determine whether the proposed action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. The process begins with the BLM's written request and submittal of a biological assessment and concludes with the issuance of a biological opinion from the FWS, which may include an incidental take statement or a letter of concurrence from FWS (if FWS agrees that the proposed action would have no effect or would not adversely affect a threatened or endangered species or its critical habitat). In July 2009, the BLM initiated consultation by requesting lists of any federally listed, sensitive, endangered, and/or threatened species that may occur in the Project area (a copy of the letter and list of recipients are included in Appendix A).

To ensure coordination among the agencies (lead agency, cooperating agencies, and FWS), a Biological Resources Task Group was formed and meets via conference calls once each month (or more or less often as appropriate during the EIS process) to discuss the status of the studies and issues associated with biological resources.

2.2.3.2 Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the NHPA requires the BLM and cooperating federal agencies to consider the effects of the agency's undertaking on properties listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places (which can include a diversity of archaeological, historical, and traditional cultural resources). Regulations for Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800) implement Section 106 and define a process for federal agencies to use in consulting SHPOs and other interested parties as they assess the effects of their undertakings. Pursuant to those regulations, the BLM initiated Section 106 consultation with the Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah SHPOs in spring 2010. Also, as described in Section 2.2.2 – Government-to-Government Consultation, the BLM sent a formal letter to 33 tribes to solicit input from each regarding cultural resource concerns about this Project. A copy of the letter and list of recipients is included in Appendix A.

The BLM-formed Cultural Resources Task Group (CRTG)—including representatives of the lead and cooperating agencies and other involved federal and state agencies—coordinate compliance with Section 106 and other laws, regulations, ordinances, and codes protecting cultural resources. The CRTG meets via conference call once each month, or as appropriate, to

discuss the status of the studies and issues associated with cultural resources. The CRTG reviewed the study plan prepared by BLM in order to outline the approach to be used to conduct cultural resources studies and analysis, and the members are coordinating in the preparation of a Programmatic Agreement for management of cultural resources.

2.3 Scoping Approach

Although the BLM encourages commenting on the Project throughout the preparation of the EIS, the range of issues summarized in this report is based on the comments received during the agency and public scoping process. The activities listed below helped identify the issues and concerns related to the Project that will be addressed in the studies and analyses and in the EIS.

- Agency, interagency, and cooperating agency meetings were held to discuss the Project and solicit comments.
- Announcements to inform the public of the Project, EIS preparation, and the public scoping meetings included the *Federal Register* NOI (legal notice), media release distributed to radio, television, and newspaper outlets in Wyoming, northwestern Colorado, and Utah; and newspaper advertisements and legal notices.
- A newsletter was distributed to parties on the Project mailing list, which included federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, special-interest groups, and individuals on mailing lists maintained by the BLM field offices and national forests located in the Project area. The newsletter introduced the Project, solicited input for the environmental analysis, and announced upcoming public scoping meetings.
- The BLM established a Project website. The website contains a brief description of the Project, the need for the Project, and an EIS timeline. The website can be found at http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/gateway_south.html. A link was provided for the public to submit comments via email at GatewaySouth_WYMail@blm.gov.
- Twelve public open-house meetings were held in May and early June 2011 to introduce the Project, explain the purpose of and need for the Project, describe the Project, explain the planning and permitting process, and solicit comments useful for the environmental analysis.

2.3.1 Notification

A NOI was published in the *Federal Register* by the BLM on April 1, 2011, announcing (1) the preparation of an EIS for the proposed Project and (2) the opportunity for public input through scoping. The publication of the NOI on April 1, 2011, initiated the formal scoping period, which ended on June 30, 2011, a period of 90 days.

The first in a series of newsletters was mailed by the BLM in March 2011 to approximately 16,000 individuals, agencies, and interested organizations on the Project mailing list. In addition, the Applicant prepared a list of the landowners within a 2-mile-wide corridor along the alternative routes (1 mile on either side of the reference centerline and approximately 7,245 landowners) and sent a letter introducing the Project and encouraging them to participate in the

federal scoping process. See Table 2-1 for a list of local newspapers that published the Project advertisements. A copy of the NOI, newsletter, advertisement, and legal notice are provided in Appendix B. In addition, an announcement and newsletter were posted on the BLM Project website, and the BLM submitted a media release regarding the project and upcoming public meetings to radio stations and newspapers in the Project area (see Appendix B).

Newspaper/Publication	Advertisement Publication Dates
Mt. Pleasant Pyramid, Sanpete County, Utah	May 19 and 26, 2011
The Moab Times-Independent, Moab, Utah	May 19 and 26, 2011
The Times-News, Nephi, Utah	May 11 and 18, 2011
Sun Advocate, Price, Utah	May 17 and 24, 2011
Sanpete Messenger, Sanpete County, Utah	May 11, 18, and 25, 2011
Uintah Basin Standard, Roosevelt, Utah	May 10 and 17, 2011
Vernal Express, Vernal, Utah	May 11 and 18, 2011
Craig Daily Press, Craig, Colorado	May 4 and 11, 2011
Grand Junction Free Press, Grand Junction, Colorado	May 6 and 13, 2011
The Daily Sentinel, Grand Junction, Colorado	May 4 and 11, 2011
Rio Blanco Herald Times, Rio Blanco County, Colorado	May 5 and 12, 2011
The Citizen Telegram, Rifle, Colorado	May 5 and 12, 2011
Emery County Progress, Emery County, Utah	May 17 and 24, 2011
Laramie Boomerang, Laramie, Wyoming	April 26 and May 3, 2011
Rawlins Daily Times, Rawlins, Wyoming	April 26 and May 3, 2011
The Rocket-Miner, Rock Springs, Wyoming	April 27 and May 4, 2011
Saratoga Sun, Carbon County, Wyoming	April 27 and May 4, 2011
Snake River Press, Baggs, Wyoming	April 15 and 29, 2011

2.3.2 Scoping Meetings

The BLM hosted 12 scoping meetings in May and early June 2011 with an attendance totaling 231 people (Table 2-2). The meetings were an opportunity for the BLM to inform those in attendance about the Project and the EIS process and to solicit input on the scope of the Project and potential issues. An open-house format was used for the meetings. Information was presented on the purpose of and need for the Project, a description of the Project, and the planning and permitting process. Representatives of the BLM, USFS, the Applicant, and the BLM's third-party environmental consultant, Environmental Planning Group, Inc. (EPG) were present and available to explain the displays and answer questions. Comment forms and a Project area map were distributed to the meeting attendees to facilitate soliciting comments on the Project.

Date	Location	Attendance	Number of Submittals
May 10, 2011	Baggs, Wyoming	6	4
May 11, 2011	Rock Springs, Wyoming	11	0
May 12, 2011	Rawlins, Wyoming	25	7
May 17, 2011	Craig, Colorado	36	4

TABLE 2-2 SCOPING MEETING SUMMARY			
Date	Location	Attendance	Number of Submittals
May 18, 2011	Rangely, Colorado	14	2
May 19, 2011	Grand Junction, Colorado	10	2
May 24, 2011	Roosevelt, Utah	29	9
May 25, 2011	Fort Duchesne, Utah	8	0
May 26, 2011	Nephi, Utah	38	9
May 31, 2011	Price, Utah	24	6
June 1, 2011	Mount Pleasant, Utah	20	8
June 2, 2011	Green River, Utah	10	4
Totals	12	231	55

Copies of the scoping meeting materials are provided in Appendix C, including meeting sign-in sheets and an example comment form.

3.0 COMMENT ANALYSIS

This section provides an explanation of how comments were collected, how comments were analyzed, and how comments will be addressed in the EIS, as well as a summary of the comments and a list of the issues derived from the comments. Comments, and the issues derived from the comments, are not addressed in this report; they will be addressed in the EIS.

3.1 Collection of Comments

Written comments—integral in helping determine the scope of issues to address in the analyses and in the EIS—were accepted at the scoping meetings, via electronic mail (email), and via U.S. mail at the BLM Wyoming State Office. The BLM requested comments be received or postmarked by the end of the 90-day scoping period, June 30, but comments received after the close of scoping were accepted. Additional comments received will be reviewed to determine if they include issues needing to be addressed in the EIS.

The BLM received 168 submittals resulting in 522 comments, including:

- letters from federal, state, and local agencies, special-interest groups, corporations, and individuals;
- comment forms; and
- email messages.

A copy of the letters, comment forms, and emails received are provided in Appendix D. After all comments were received, reviewed, and documented, individual comments were entered into a database to assist with the analytical review. The database was established to help track comments throughout the life of the Project's NEPA process. Issues identified by the Agency ID Team during scoping, via interdisciplinary team checklist, are included in Appendix E.

3.2 Comment Analysis

To identify the issues that need to be addressed in the EIS, the comments received from the public and agencies were reviewed by analysts from EPG. The BLM NEPA Handbook describes two types of comments that can be received during the NEPA process: substantive and non-substantive (BLM 2008). Comments considered to be non-substantive can be in favor of or against proposed actions, or only agree or disagree with BLM policy or resource decisions without reasoning that meet criteria for substantive comments. In addition, a comment that does not pertain to the Project area, is vague, or has open-ended questions is considered non-substantive. Substantive comments are those that present new information relevant to analysis, present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the scoping period, or could cause changes or revisions to one or more of the alternatives (BLM 2008).

Substantive comments were defined as any one of the following categories:

- Project purpose and need – these comments conveyed recommendations for or information on the agencies’ and Applicant’s statements of purpose and need for the Project.
- Transmission line routes – these comments conveyed remarks or information on preliminary routes for the transmission line or suggested adjustments to routes.
- Effects analysis – these comments conveyed information about the Project’s potential effects on natural resources, human resources (including effects on existing social and economic conditions in the Project area), and cultural resources that people feel should be disclosed in the EIS. Topic categories include the following:
 - Air quality
 - Noise
 - Water resources
 - Geology and soils
 - Paleontological resources
 - Vegetation, including special status species and noxious weeds and invasive species
 - Fish and wildlife, including special status species
 - Wildland fire management
 - Cultural resources
 - Visual resources
 - Land use and recreation resources
 - Social and economic conditions
 - Public health and safety
 - Electronic device reception interference

Additional comment categories were identified during the comment analysis:

- Project description
 - Design features for minimizing environmental impacts
- Public involvement

3.2.1 Processing Comments

All comments received were saved electronically, either directly from a submittal sent electronically, or scanned from a paper copy into an Adobe portable document format (.pdf) document. When entered into the database, each comment submittal received a number, unique to the entire submittal, and the comment(s) contained in the submittal were entered by date, comment type (comment form, letter, email, other), and category. When available, information about the submittal was captured, including name, agency or organization affiliation, address, and what stage of the Project the comment was received (in this case each was identified as a scoping comment). The electronic files of each of the submittals were included in the comment database attached to the record of the submittal.

Each submittal was reviewed to identify substantive comments relevant to the EIS. Each comment was copied into a comment field, analyzed, and assigned one of the categories in

Section 3.2. Once all comments were analyzed for each submittal and assigned a category, the comments were sorted by category. All similar comments in each category were reviewed and summarized to facilitate identification of issues to be addressed in the EIS. Each comment is linked to the original submittal and author, and an electronic copy of the submittal is attached to the record in the database for ease of reference (if needed). Any requests for data or for the submitter to be added to the Project mailing list were noted during comment analysis, but are not included as scoping comments in this report.

3.3 How the Comments Will Be Addressed in the EIS

The EIS team will use the comments in developing the EIS. Individual comments may be reviewed in more depth if needed to understand the concern. As described previously, the comments fall into broad categories as they relate to the EIS: purpose and need for Project, Project description, transmission line routes, effects analysis, and public involvement.

Comments regarding the Project and alternatives will be considered by the BLM and cooperating agencies in refining the Project description and alternatives that will be analyzed in detail in the EIS. NEPA requires a rigorous analysis of alternatives prior to selecting a preferred course of action or informing the agencies' decision. Some alternatives suggested through scoping that may not be environmentally or economically viable or otherwise feasible, or do not meet the purpose and need for the Project, will not be studied in detail. Others that may be considered viable, including an alternative of taking no action, will be analyzed in the EIS. Chapter 2 of the EIS will present a summary of this evaluation process and will describe alternatives, including ones considered but not carried forward.

NEPA requires analysis of the impacts of a project on the environment. These impacts include effects on both natural resources and human resources. Discussion with affected agencies and the public, such as those resulting from this scoping effort, help define and evaluate the effects of the different alternatives on the human environment. Comments related to environmental impacts will be considered by the BLM in developing the scope of EIS technical studies and will include comments regarding data-gathering methods and sources as well as impact assessment methodologies. Chapter 3 of the EIS (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences) will describe how these issues were incorporated and addressed in the studies.

Per CEQ regulations and supplemental authorities providing procedural or substantive responsibilities relevant to the NEPA process, some suggestions relating to facilities not included in the Proposed Action or issues raised that are not relevant to a reasoned choice between alternatives may be considered to be outside of the scope of the EIS process.

3.4 Comment Analysis Results

Comments received during scoping are summarized in the following subsections along with some representative quotations.

3.4.1 Purpose and Need for the Project

Comments recommended that the EIS include sufficient technical data to support the Applicant's purpose of and need for the Project (including future transmission needs). An additional need identified was for development of—and federal agencies' responsibility to enable—a clean or environmentally responsible energy economy and infrastructure.

3.4.1.1 Representative Comments

- “The EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] recommends that the EIS provide clear and concise documentation that illustrates a deficiency in power delivery infrastructure in the region and define the transmission constraints.”
- “The purpose and need statement should reflect the public's interest in a cleaner energy economy, and potential alternative means of achieving that goal. The purpose and need statement should not create a simplistic, yet narrow, “Yes” or “No” choice. The purpose and need should set the stage for incorporating environmental concerns at every stage and phase of the project.”
- “We ask that utilities evaluate whether new transmission projects are actually needed at all or if improved energy efficiencies could reduce the need for new infrastructure. When new transmission facilities are necessary, solutions should be explored which optimize existing transmission lines instead of creating new corridors.”
- “The purpose and need should recognize policies and laws fostering development of a forward-looking environmentally responsible modern grid taking climate change concerns into account. Analysis should address how the proposal could affect the ability to implement policies, orders, and laws that mandate or encourage the development of renewable energy sources and associated transmission. For example, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 requires the Department of the Interior to seek to approve at least 10,000 MW of non-hydropower renewable energy on public lands by 2015. The Administration has established a Federal policy goal of producing 10 percent of the nation's electricity from renewable resources by 2010 and 25 percent by 2025. While Gateway South is intended to address concerns including redundancy, projected demand increases, and reliability, information to date is all but silent about the sources of power to be carried on the line.”
- “Transmission infrastructure is likely to be located in these corridors for fifty years or longer. Planning and environmental review today for a single project needs to consider the possibility that future transmission infrastructure needs are likely to be met in the same alignment as the present project. Factors such as population growth expanding electricity demand, and the mitigation of climate change impacts will drive future needs. Transmission, due to the difficulty of locating new resources, needs to take this into account.”
- “Beyond generic statements that Gateway South may include some undefined renewable energy component, the DEIS [Draft Environmental Impact Statement] needs to rigorously analyze whether this project will facilitate access to clean domestic energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the extent to which a combination of

upgrades to existing lines and new projects with lesser impacts could meet the purpose and need.”

3.4.2 Alternative Transmission Line Routes

Several comments included observations about specific alternative routes presented during agency and public scoping as well alternative routes recommended by the BLM or Applicant for elimination from detailed analysis. Many comments recommended locating transmission lines in less populated areas and, when possible, on either BLM- or USFS-administered lands or in existing utility corridors. Multiple Pine Hollow Estates subdivision (Wasatch County) property owners supported (via letter) the Applicant’s recommendation to eliminate the alternative route paralleling the existing 345kV transmission line running west of Roosevelt, Utah.

3.4.2.1 Representative Comments

- “Uintah County would like to recommend the alternate route corridor that is shown on the enclosed map highlighted in red as our preferred route at this time.”
- “The green routes through Baggs, Wyoming and west of Baggs, Wyoming could pass through Dinosaur, Colorado and tie in near the beginning of the purple line. Pursuing any of the alternatives to the south of this would seem to involve more overall disturbance and potential for greater environmental impact. For this reason I am concerned about the recommendation of Rocky Mountain Power to eliminate the route along Highway 40 in Utah from consideration.”
- “We support the route described as the “Dad Route” primarily, and if necessary the ‘Underground Utility Corridor’, both of which are located just west of HWY 789, to move the transmission line south into Colorado. We believe these routes can be built in a manner that could minimize impacts to wildlife, as well as to the public. Additionally, these routes would allow for construction along a route in Colorado that would be to the west of some of their most significant sage grouse habitat.”
- “[The] main thing I’d like to see is coming into Moffat County, C31 and C61, tie in between C170 and C175. I don’t think C13 should be a route for the power line.”
- “Sweetwater County’s first preferred route runs parallel and adjacent to Wyoming State Highway 789. Where this route encounters the Town of Baggs, sage grouse core areas, or other important features, this route should be redirected around these features and then back to the route adjacent to Wyoming State Highway 789. With the appropriate rerouting, this is Sweetwater County’s first choice since it provides the least impact to important Sweetwater County topographic features and view sheds within the Adobe Town region which include: Adobe Town, Willow Creek Rim, Haystacks, Powder Mountain, and others.”
- “Although it was the consensus of the Sweetwater County Board of Commissioners that a modified corridor along the Wyoming State Highway 789 was Sweetwater County’s preferred alternative for a power line corridor, the Old Dad’s Road was Sweetwater County’s second choice for a power line corridor. Sweetwater County joins Moffat and Carbon County in supporting Old Dad’s Road and Seven Mile Ridge as the preferred

corridor. Sweetwater County supports the Old Dad's and Seven Mile Ridge corridor as the preferred alternative because as neighboring counties we have long worked together as partners and, as the Resolution [Joint Resolution Regarding Preferred Power Line corridor between the Boards of County Commissioners of Moffat County, Colorado; Carbon County, Wyoming; and Sweetwater County, Wyoming] states, '...all three Boards of County Commissioners acknowledge the need to cooperate in identifying a preferred power line corridor that is contiguous across state boundaries, as well as balances the need of each county's citizenry, environment, and economy'."

- "The City of Rawlins is concerned about the numerous high power electricity transmission lines which are currently proposed that will border the City of Rawlins on both the North and South...Any proposed power line to the north will limit our expansion to the north where we anticipate growth...the City of Rawlins voices its opposition to the Rocky Mountain Power Energy Gateway South Transmission Project transmission line route alternative "W29" located north of the City of Rawlins, WY as for the City of Rawlins to be bordered in both north and south directions will impact our future development."
- "The LSRCDC [Little Snake River Conservation District] supports the proposed use of the existing transmission corridor west of Baggs near the Carbon/Sweetwater County boundary."
- "I support Rocky Mountain Power's recommendation to eliminate the alternative route that includes U-420 and U-410. This route could impact a large portion of Roosevelt City, which would impact primarily residential development. There is existing power line, owned by Deseret Generation, that has impacted this area already."
- "The proposed route on the Anthro [Anthro Mountain, located near Price, Utah] is a better choice because of the easier terrain and straight line route which would result in easier installation of the line and power line losses."
- "We are representing our private land. We support Rocky Mountain Power's recommendation to eliminate the alternative route that includes U-420 and U-410. This route could impact the 54.5 acres that we own."
- "The second alternative EGS Project route segment across the Ranch [The Overland Trail Ranch, owned by The Overland Trail Cattle Company (TOTCO)] is a route that crosses I-80 east of Fort Steele, then roughly parallels the North Platte River to a point near the old Bolten Ranch Headquarters, and then turns west following the Bolten Rim across the Ranch to the Sage Creek Road, at which point it exits the Ranch to turn north along the Atlantic Rim (Links W28, W31, and W33). There are also routes across the Ranch that BLM has recommended for elimination (Links W25 and W20). These routes will substantially disrupt and interfere with and cause damage to the [Sierra Madre/Chokecherry] Wind Project and impair the use of properties within the Wind Project. These routes cross through areas already planned for wind development as well as haul road and transmission corridors and such entry and activities would substantially interfere with PCW's [Power Company of Wyoming, LLC] use of the lands committed to it. In addition, PCW in cooperation with TOTCO has implemented a greater sage-grouse conservation plan on the Ranch. Selecting any one of these alternatives is likely to negatively impact the conservation plan and its success in providing a net conservation

benefit to an important candidate species. PCW strongly opposes these routes and requests that they be removed from further consideration and detailed analysis.”

3.4.3 Effects Analysis

3.4.3.1 Air Quality

The EPA expressed concern about potential impacts of construction activities on air quality and provided recommendations for the types of analysis to be included in the EIS.

Representative Comment

- “The EPA recommends that the EIS evaluate and disclose potential air quality effects of transmission line construction and operation alternatives, including the Project’s potential affect on the following: (1) criteria pollutants under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, including ozone; (2) applicable Prevention of Significant Deterioration increments; (3) visibility impairment and air quality related values in the protection of any affected Class I Areas; (4) any significant concentrations of hazardous air pollutants; and (5) protection of public health.”

3.4.3.2 Noise

Citizen comments addressed concern about the potential for noise from the transmission line.

Representative Comments

- “Concerned with the noise that would result in disruption of the silence in the winter time where we go via snowmobile.”
- “I would hate to hear the humming of the transmission line from my home, barn, or recreation sites.”

3.4.3.3 Water Resources

Citizens expressed concern for the potential for geotechnical exploration and construction activities to affect the quality or quantity of sources of residential drinking water and irrigation water. Information about the Sanpete County Water Conservancy District Narrows project also was provided.

Federal and local agencies’ comments provided general information about riparian areas, impaired waterways, and coordination requirements related to reservoirs and called for the analysis and minimization of potential impacts of project activities on wetlands, riparian areas, and associated ecosystems, ground and surface water quality, and overall watershed health.

Representative Comments

- “We are concerned about any drilling or other disturbance that may disrupt the source of the water to the springs that serve as water source.”
- “Emery County has concerns with Route U630, where it crossed Forest Service land west of Huntington. Watershed health is a critical issue of management of those public lands. Impacts to watershed need to be evaluated eliminated or mitigated satisfactorily.”
- “Rocky Mountain power needs to be aware of a Sanpete [County] Water Conservancy District project, designated the Narrows [Dam and Reservoir] project, planned for Sections 24 & 25, T. 13 S., R. 5E., SLB&M, which probably will cause some rerouting of the transmission line at the top of Fairview canyon.”
- “NRCS [Natural Resources Conservation Service]/UDWR and others have been working on a restoration project along the San Pitch River since about 2005, it is now approx. 98 percent completed, lot trees, wells, large rocks and stream shaping, along with fence on both side of the river approx 1 mile of stream and 2 miles of fencing to protect the river and prevent flooding like in 1983.”
- “Much of the project area is located adjacent to riparian areas on the Ashley National Forest.”
- “Route 111 and 370 are not acceptable to (too) many issues and impacts including CWA [Clean Water Act] Section 303d impaired streams.”
- “Watershed health is a critical issue of management of those public lands. Impacts to watershed need to be evaluated eliminated or mitigated satisfactorily.”
- “On its website, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (“UDWR”) refers to the Strawberry River below the Dam as the “Wild Strawberry”. This is because there are no roads within the river valley. In fact, the Strawberry River is one of only fifteen rivers in the state to be designated by the Utah Legislature and UDWR as a ‘Blue Ribbon Fishery’.”

3.4.3.4 Vegetation

Comments included concerns that construction activities could contribute to the spread of invasive species or noxious weeds. Recommendations for vegetation management planning, as well as information and observations on special status plant species, also were provided.

Representative Comments

- “Please analyze how to avoid or minimize the colonization or spread of harmful invasive plants (esp. cheatgrass) and noxious weeds.”
- “Link U420 - I support the elimination of this route recommended by Rocky Mountain Power. However, if this route were selected, I am concerned about transport of weeds by construction and maintenance equipment.”

- “T&E [threatened and endangered] Cactus are found within the corridor for this route (East/West Route that traverses the Book Cliffs.)”
- “The route segment between Rangely, CO [Colorado] and Bonanza, UT [Utah] runs through habitat occupied by White River beardtongue (candidate) and Graham beardtongue (proposed Threatened). We recommend avoiding impacts to these plant species.”

3.4.3.5 Fish and Wildlife

Potential impacts on wildlife and their habitats were a common concern expressed during the scoping period. Citizens expressed concern for displacement of big game from critical habitats or disturbance during critical periods (such as fawning), as well as potential impacts on various wildlife species, including raptors, greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, white-tailed prairie dogs, black-footed ferret, wild horses, burrowing owls, and other wildlife species.

Representative Comments

- “Please analyze how to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on sage grouse, kit fox, burrowing owls, deer winter range, and other wildlife species.”
- “I own lot # 13088 and # 13087, 13088 - There is wetlands and birds on property: deer, fox, skunks, pheasants, quail, frogs, eagle, and hawks.”
- “We oppose these route segments that would pass through an extremely important mule deer migration corridor and mule deer winter range. It also comes close to raptor nesting concentration areas.”
- “The route skirts the Sand Wash Herd Management Area. Wild horse interests have expressed concerns over this route.”
- “We prefer that the transmission line follow a route other than Link W29. We are concerned about the fish in the North Platte River. “
- “The Maybell parcel’s Stewardship Trust designation was based on the protection for critical winter habitat and spring calving areas for mule deer and elk.”
- “Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a priority to the Wyoming Game and Fish [Department], and in many cases, the intentional or unintentional spread of organisms from one body of water to another would be considered a violation of Commission Regulations.”
- “The routes north of Maybell run through breeding, brood-rearing, and wintering habitats for the greater sage grouse. Transmission towers provide hunting perches for raptors that can prey upon sage grouse. Because of this predation risk, sage grouse generally avoid trees and tall structures. In order to minimize impacts to sage grouse, we recommend against selecting these routes. The western-most route coming south from Wyoming into Colorado would also have impacts to the greater sage grouse. However,

they likely would be less severe than the routes discussed in comment #1 above [routes north of Maybell]. We recommend using the route following Highway 13 down to Craig, which should have the least adverse impact to sage grouse.”

- “Black-footed ferrets have been reintroduced into the prairie dog colony in Coyote Basin on the Utah-Colorado border. Transmission towers provide hunting perches for raptors that prey upon prairie dogs. It is not fully understood how much of a risk the presence of transmission towers might pose to resident black-footed ferrets, but they may reduce the value of the habitat for ferrets. For this reason, we find this route segment unfavorable.”

3.4.3.6 Wildfire Ecology and Management

The potential for increased risk of wildland fire in the vicinity of power lines was a concern for citizens.

Representative Comment

- “Our parcel is located along the centerline of routes U625 and U621. There is also another power line already to the south of our place. So this would be two lines in close proximity to our land. In the last 8-9 years there have been two major forest fires in this area so there may be a fire concern.”

3.4.3.7 Geology and Soils

Concerns regarding unstable soil and landslides in areas potentially crossed by preliminary routes for the transmission line were expressed.

Representative Comments

- “There are five sizeable slides on our property. These are all located in draws to the east of Highway 13, two in Section 14, and three in Section 22. Though the major damage was done in the spring of 1983, there is still instability in these slides as evidenced by disruption of vegetation and ground cracking. There is also one other area on our property that we know of, where no sliding has taken place, but cracking is present.”
- “Western route that parallels the Colorado/Utah border – the area contains slumping soils, which could be an issue for construction activities.”
- “Segment C196 overlaps portions of the Texas-Missouri-Evacuation Creek area which is designated as an avoidance area for major new rights-of-way in the RMP [resource management plan] and Segment C196 overlaps areas mapped as landslide areas which are also classified as avoidance areas for land use authorizations (including ROWs [rights-of-way]) in the RMP.”
- “C102 (follows Highway 13) overlaps areas mapped as landslide areas which are also classified as avoidance areas for land use authorizations (including ROWs) in the RMP.”

3.4.3.8 Cultural Resources

Many comments provided information and expressed concern about potential impacts on cultural resources, including the Old Spanish National Historic Trail, remnants of a historic railroad, and the Tie Town and Fort Steele historical sites (Wyoming).

Representative Comments

- “National Trails Intermountain Region review shows some alternative routes will cross and possibly adversely affect the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.”
- “The historical site of former Tie Town (Carbon) is located at Section 24 T21N R85W.”
- “The north route (Link W29) will be passing over the Fort Steele Historical Site at Section 23 T21N R85W.”
- “The route made up of Links C196/C195 generally follows the path of the historical railroad from Mack, Colorado to Dragon, in Utah (through Baxter Pass). Generally, I support this project. I just oppose the selection of the particular links.”
- “Routes from Medicine Bow and Rawlins should follow pipeline and highway to do much less damage to historic and prehistoric cultural resources. Several other routes have specific concerns, such as the Overland and Cherokee Trails.”
- “In an area so rich in archaeological sites, it will be important to require a complete and thorough survey of the project area. The locations of significant rock art sites seldom follow any predictable pattern, and adverse effects on these sites cannot be addressed through excavation.”

3.4.3.9 Tribal Concerns

Comments received included requests for the BLM to involve affected tribes in preparation of the EIS, including the identification of sites considered sacred by the tribes, and concerns regarding the protection of such sites and resources significant to the tribes.

Representative Comments

- “Encourage extensive and effective outreach to affected tribes, regarding EO [Executive Order] 13007 and ‘sacred site’ identification.”
- “Plan to avoid lands within the categories listed that are either statutorily protected from development such as transmission and those that should otherwise be avoided, including sacred sites.”

3.4.3.10 Visual Resources

Citizens expressed concerns regarding impacts on visual resources from personal property (e.g., cabins and residences), recreation areas, and areas with special designations, such as Dinosaur National Monument (DNM). Comments from various agencies included requests that options for minimizing visual impacts be analyzed in the EIS and provided information about Scenic Byway designations, visual resource management (VRM) classifications, and visual quality objectives for BLM- and USFS-administered lands, respectively.

Representative Comments

- “We do not have any desire to have unsightly power lines and their holding towers obstructing or being any part of this scenery, we own a home on located on [Rocky Mountain Power parcel] Map #63 #04739.”
- “The project would be visible from most views from the home.”
- “All land within the checkerboard should be reclassified as VRM Class IV. In addition, consistent with VRM Class IV, no visual mitigation should be required for transmission lines located within the checkerboard [referring to “checkerboard” area of public and private lands in Wyoming].”
- “Highway 139 is a designated Scenic Byway.”
- “I strongly support the proposed BLM recommended for elimination of the route from the Utah border to Jensen. The route selected MUST consider the affect of the towers on the scenic view shed of DNM and any other designated areas it may be viewed from.”
- “Steps should also be undertaken to locate the transmission lines sufficiently distant from our [Carbon County, Wyoming] roads and highways, wherever possible, to minimize the visual impact for our citizens and visitors.”
- “The area surrounding Mt. Garfield is highly visible from almost all viewpoints in the Grand Valley. The GJFO [BLM Grand Junction Field Office] would ask for certain design features that would help reduce visual impacts from the line traversing the Book Cliffs and making its way down into the Grand Valley, should this route be chosen.”

3.4.3.11 Paleontological Resources

Comments were received expressing concern about the potential impacts of construction activities on paleontological resources and requesting that appropriate measures be taken to identify and preserve such resources.

Representative Comments

- “Much of the proposed or implied road and tower-pad construction will take place on bedrock likely to contain significant paleontological resources. Paleontological field surveys, monitoring, or other specific mitigations would be needed.”

- “Surface disturbance in several formations requires pre-[construction] work [investigation] and during [construction] work [a] BLM-permitted paleontologist on site [monitoring construction activities]. Green River formation needs paleo[ntological resource monitoring] during [construction], but not pre-[construction investigation] work.”

3.4.3.12 Land Use and Recreation Resources

Comments were received expressing concern for potential impacts on undeveloped areas, some for lands slated for future development, and potential conflicts of the transmission line and associated facilities with existing land uses or land management objectives, such as agricultural, recreational, or conservation areas.

Representative Comments

- “I request that you avoid my property because a 250-foot right-of-way would take up my entire hay field.”
- “There are approximately 100 lots in this subdivision and all of us are fairly new property owners and will see the value of our properties go down considerably if a transmission line runs through them.”
- “We as landowners are OPPOSED to the alternate route running along Argyle Canyon Road. Argyle Canyon is a beautiful recreational area for hunters, ATV [all-terrain vehicle] riders, rock art explorers and hundreds of cabin owners.”
- “Huge power lines crossing our land would ruin our enjoyment of our private property and that of all the other cabin and land owners along this proposed route.”
- “Concentrate development in most degraded/altered landscapes.”
- “This route could impact a large portion of Roosevelt City, which would impact primarily residential development. This area has high potential for future development.”
- “This alternative, U510, U400, U401, and U431 would place new intrusions in an area that is today mostly wild and an important connector. The route crosses several core areas from the Heart of the West Wildlands Network. Several roadless areas are candidate wilderness areas. This potential segment is not a good choice.”
- “The unique characteristics of the Strawberry River Valley, combined with its close proximity to the Wasatch Front make this part of the Strawberry River a favorite destination for sportsmen, hikers, bird watchers, and picnickers.”
- “Anadarko [Petroleum Corporation] requests that BLM also take into consideration the potential for conflict with operations in existing oil and gas fields as well as development of prospective fields during the construction and operation of the transmission line. BLM should address the following oil field activities that would occur within or adjacent to the right-of-way:

- Health and safety of oil and gas field personnel performing well pumping and monitoring activities;
 - Interference with or restrictions with the completion of workover and/or recompletion operations on existing wells and maintaining safe distances from transmission line facilities;
 - Limits or restriction on drilling and/or completion of new oil and gas wells on or adjacent to the transmission line right-of-way; and
 - Potential impacts to cathodic protection of underground utilities from electromagnetic interference.”
- “We suggest that you coordinate with the Bureau of Reclamation - Provo Area Office (Reclamation), concerning the location of the proposed alignment near Starvation Reservoir in Duchesne County and Soldier Creek Dam on Strawberry Reservoir in Wasatch County. The proposed alignment looks as though it could be located on federal lands reserved strictly for reservoir operations on the north side of Starvation Reservoir and on the south side of Strawberry Reservoir, below the Soldier Creek Dam. Both reservoirs are Reclamation-owned facilities, and agreements would need to be entered into in order to construct a transmission line within those properties.”
 - “In its scoping notice, BLM identified several resource issues, none of which included impacts to livestock grazing or rangeland management. The impacts of energy corridors on livestock grazing operations may be potentially significant. Most of the land area affected is subject to 10-year livestock grazing permits that enjoy the same legal status as a right-of-way permit. BLM must evaluate the proposed project’s potentially significant impact on livestock grazing operations. As required by NEPA and the FLPMA, BLM needs to consider the full spectrum of the affected environment, including impacts to livestock grazing and the range resource. 40 C.F.R. §§1508.13, 1508.14; 43 U.S.C. §1702(c). This analysis should include increased off and on-road traffic, increased number of speeding vehicles, construction of new roads and modifications to existing roads, destroyed cattle guards, increased number of vehicles in the area causing death or impairments of livestock, cut fences, opened gates, damaged range improvements, decreased AUMs [animal unit months] and pastures for grazing, decreased palatability of vegetation and forage from road dust and development activities, unsuccessful reclamation of disturbed areas, introduction and spread of noxious weeds, and other detrimental social and economic impacts on livestock operators and livestock management operations.”
 - “After reviewing the map it appears the transmission lines would be very close to several employee houses and even goes through our feed lots. Such a line would adversely affect future use and value of this river property not only from a livestock operation and recreational use but also housing issues.”
 - “TOTCO owns and operates the Overland Trail Ranch (the Ranch), which encompasses about 320,000 acres in Carbon County, Wyoming. The Ranch lies roughly between State Highway 130 (the Saratoga Highway) and State Highway 71 (Sage Creek Road) and south from Interstate Highway 80 for more than 20 miles. The Ranch is a working cow/calf and yearling operation, and it holds a number of BLM grazing leases for allotments south of Rawlins, Wyoming. Much of the Ranch is within the “checkerboard” arrangement of public and private land. The highest and best use of the Ranch is for development of wind energy generation facilities, such as the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project, a use to which TOTCO has committed lands under

development by TOTCO's affiliate PCW. This highest and best use can be developed, yet allow TOTCO to maintain its agricultural operations. In addition, TOTCO has committed certain lands to its affiliate TransWest Express LLC for siting of transmission lines and facilities related to the development of the TransWest Express Transmission Project. Conceptually, but subject to the caveats and concerns expressed herein, TOTCO supports the development of environmentally responsible electric transmission projects."

3.4.3.13 Social and Economic Conditions

Potential impacts on personal property values and private businesses were a concern among citizens submitting comments. The potential for impacts on levels of tourism and associated economic effects was expressed as a concern. Comments also were received that stated the construction and maintenance of the Project could impact regional economic development through increased employment and enlargement of the property tax base.

One agency comment included a request for consideration of environmental justice concerns in the EIS.

Representative Comments

- "This would ruin the value of my property which I would like to subdivide in the near future. To go south through less populated area seems to be a wiser route looks even to be shorter route in over all distance."
- "The social impacts of the alternatives running east of Baggs are too great."
- "The Economic Development Board of Directors [Carbon County] supports the Project (as it may) expand regional economic development through increased employment and enlargement of the property tax base by paying property taxes in every county the transmission line crosses."
- "The adverse effects that could result from the development activities of the Project will affect our membership, members themselves, and other citizens, who hunt, fish, recreate and do business in and around the proposed Project."
- "Individuals tasked with identifying and addressing environmental justice should be familiar with environmental justice issues, public participation mechanisms and outreach strategies and tribal concerns and issues."
- "There are approximately 100 lots in this subdivision and all of us are fairly new property owners and will see the value of our properties go down considerably if a transmission line runs through them, not to mention the possible health effects of a 500kV power line."

3.4.3.14 Health and Safety

Concern about possible health effects on residents, livestock, and domestic animals caused by electric and magnetic fields (EMF) was raised, as well as concern for increased risk of diseases and other health issues.

Representative Comments

- “We are extremely concerned about the health issues these lines impose.”
- “Should this alternative route crossing our new properties be selected it will subject our properties – known as Moondance Ranches – too many kinds of electrical and medical related hazards.”
- “I am also not very comfortable living under this size of a tower or power lines with that type of voltage. What kind of health and safety risks are there living near or under something of that magnitude?”
- “My concern is regarding the high winds. The wind blows approx. 10 plus miles an hour 9 months out of the year. We also have variations of ice and snow. The extreme weather conditions will present a possible of high volts. The lots you need to use for your power line represent 250 plus acres, some of which is the only place to build is right in the center of the purpose route where your poles would be placed. Therefore, the homes will have to be built right under the power lines. This will cause high electrical and magnetic fields which my research indicates are critical to cancer risk.”
- “I am very concerned about effects of EMF on health and environment. I don't believe that the research is not conclusive. We already live near an existing power line.”
- “We have concerns that this route will be running through the ranch's hay meadows and pastures, possibly causing harm to animals.”

3.4.3.15 Electronic Device Reception Interference

Transmission line operation interfering with cellular phone, Internet, radio, and television reception is a concern expressed by landowners and citizens, especially those living in the more remote areas of the Project area (e.g., Argyle Canyon cabin sites).

Representative Comment

- “Next concern is cell phone and TV service (existing service) disruption from the corona effect, as per DirecTV representatives that if the power line is within line of site (sic) it will disrupt DirecTV. We also have heard that cell phone service would be affected.”

3.4.4 Project Description

Several comments were received that offered specific recommendations for developing design features related to Project facilities or placement and suggested measures to be incorporated into construction and operation plans to minimize potential impacts.

Representative Comments

- “Not only can large-scale projects directly affect wildlife and their habitats, but so to can the workforces employed to construct and maintain these facilities. As such, we recommend the following to account for potential impacts associated with large work forces and/or ‘man camps.’
 - ‘Man camps’ should be fenced to exclude livestock and wildlife.
 - To deter construction workers from “squatting” on public and private lands, the proponents should provide and maintain RV [recreational vehicle] parking space and associated facilities.
 - An Environmental Awareness Training Program informing employees about trespass laws, current laws regarding use of public land, and Game and Fish regulations should be implemented.
 - We recommend mandatory reprimand or dismissal for employees convicted of poaching or harassing wildlife while employed by the company, its contractors, or subcontractors.
 - Guns should be prohibited on any job site, and guns at construction camps should be signed-in and kept in gun lockers.
 - Dogs (excluding service dogs) should be strictly prohibited on any job site and adequately secured at man camps or other associated facilities.
 - Depending upon location, housing of crews at construction sites may be incompatible with wildlife. We also recommend bussing crews to the work site, to reduce overall vehicular traffic.”
- “Reclamation remains a difficult issue largely due to alkaline soils, climate, altitude and lack of moisture. CLG [Coalition of Local Governments, Colorado] supports the continued evolution of reclamation practices, including the efforts spearheaded by the State of Wyoming. Rights-of-way are especially problematic given visibility issues from changed vegetation. CLG supports a monitoring plan to ensure compliance with Operator terms and conditions, especially reclamation. The terms and conditions are meaningless if they cannot be met or are never confirmed. Experience with construction throughout Wyoming also shows that monitoring is the best way to learn what will succeed and what will not. The Gateway South project must also properly mitigate for these operational impacts to livestock grazing. This could be accomplished by the inclusion of a detailed mitigation plan developed in consultation with CLG, and affected livestock grazing permittees, that will address their concerns and recommendations. BLM and the operator also need to consult and coordinate with livestock grazing permittees to reduce the effects of construction on grazing operations to a minimum.”
- “An Avian Protection Plan (APP), developed before construction begins in consultation with USFWS [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service] and state wildlife agencies, should be designed for the entire line to reduce the mortality and injury risks to birds from the new power line. The APP should be made available to the public on the project website and

be available for comment during the DEIS period. The APP should, as a minimum, follow guidelines available through the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), including also the most current technological and operational innovations to reduce avian risks. The APP should describe how the transmission tower design will reduce electrocution risks, prevent nesting, and prevent collisions with electrical wires and tower support wires. The Gateway South APP should be continually evaluated and refined as monitoring data and new innovations become available. An APP for this line could refer to the EO and the wildlife section of the Colorado Oil and Gas rules, which provide for minimizing impacts on grouse through restricting seasonal activities, including construction and maintenance.”

- “Finally, ensuring reclamation of disturbed habitat with native species will require a plan informed by the best available science as well as a rigorous inspection program to achieve goals and objectives in the short-, medium- and long-term. Reclamation success correlates closely with adequate funding and effective inspection and enforcement efforts to rectify any initial failures. Reclamation is challenging over much of the proposed route, which is characterized by arid conditions, thin soils, and short growing seasons. In the sagebrush-steppe community, the biggest threat is the invasion of the highly aggressive cheatgrass coupled with the slow regeneration of sagebrush. We strongly encourage coordination of proponents and consultation with other agencies having expertise in reclamation to employ the practices that have proven to have the best success in preventing quality habitat loss, having lesser impacts to existing vegetation using certain treatments where appropriate and to use the recommended seed mixtures and techniques to revegetate the area.”
- “Impacted federally managed habitat for target species should be mitigated by the acquisition and/or permanent protection of currently non-federal lands that provide better than equivalent benefits to wildlife. Such lands should be protected in perpetuity and will require endowments to ensure continued habitat conservation. Finally, land acquisition is inadequate to meet a ‘no net loss’ or ‘net conservation benefit’ goal and must be supplemented with habitat restoration, other appropriate management activities, adequate funding, and monitoring. We add, with emphasis, that the concept and implementation of HEA [habitat equivalency analysis] does not result in ‘no net loss’ if the replacement or compensatory habitats of equal or better quality to those disturbed by a given project are already supporting the species of concern and/or providing the ecosystem service being lost to development. Assurance of perpetual protection of said habitat is a positive action but, in reality, a net loss of habitat has occurred in the habitat supposedly being mitigated by protecting habitat already functioning in a healthy manner.”
- “Finally, if protected land cannot be avoided, we must ensure that the losses of conservation values on these protected lands is adequately compensated for and balanced by new conservation investments which protect resources of comparable acreage and benefit.”

3.4.5 Public Involvement

Comments were received that included specific recommendations for public involvement in preparation of the EIS.

Representative Comments

- “Our key recommendations for the DEIS urge that BLM and Rocky Mountain Power should continue to improve and expand opportunities for stakeholder involvement, which will be critical for minimizing impacts and building stakeholder support in the often contentious process of siting transmission lines. Disclose and make publicly accessible additional information on resources and values that could be impacted along the routes as it becomes available. Make all GIS data developed as part of the EIS process available for download on the BLM project website. Make all underlying information, reports and studies referenced in the DEIS available for viewing and download on the BLM project website.”
- “We recommend for the development of the DEIS that the BLM and Rocky Mountain Power:
 - Improve and expand opportunities for stakeholder involvement
 - Promptly disclose and disseminate additional information to the public on resources and values that could be impacted along the routes as it becomes available;
 - Prepare Construction, Operations and Maintenance Plans and make them available to the public;
 - Make all GIS data developed as part of the EIS process available for reasonably simple download on the BLM project website;
 - Make all underlying information, reports, and studies referenced in the DEIS available for viewing and download on the BLM project website; and include a map depicting all existing, designated and proposed energy transmission corridors, supplemented by a description of the nature of the corridor, and the date and status of designation.”

3.5 Issues Derived From Scoping Comments

Issues and concerns identified during agency and public scoping are summarized in this section in the form of questions and will be answered in the EIS.

- **Purpose and Need for the Project**
 - What technical data from the Applicant need to be included in the EIS to support the Applicant’s purpose and need for the Project?
 - What are the Applicant’s needs for future transmission?
 - What are the federal agencies’ responsibilities to enable an environmentally responsible economy and infrastructure?
- **Alternative Transmission Line Routes**
 - What energy corridors and other designated and/or existing utility corridors are available for Project siting?
 - Can the transmission line be located in less populated areas and, to the extent possible, on lands administered by the BLM and USFS?
- **Air Quality**
 - What are the effects on air quality from Project construction?
 - What is an adequate analysis of impacts on air quality for this Project?

- **Noise**
 - What are the disturbances of transmission line noise on private property owners or public land users?

- **Water Resources**
 - What are the impacts of the Project on surface water and groundwater quality and quantity and overall watershed health?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on residential water supplies?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on irrigation systems?
 - What coordination is needed with other agencies having jurisdiction over water bodies or water resources?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on wetlands, riparian areas, and associated ecosystems?

- **Vegetation**
 - What is the potential for spread of noxious weeds and invasive species due to Project construction and maintenance activities?

- **Wildlife**
 - What are the impacts of the Project on wildlife species including, but not limited to:
 - Big game (critical habitats)
 - Colombian sharp-tailed grouse and greater sage grouse
 - Burrowing owls
 - Kit fox
 - Raptors
 - Game birds
 - Migratory birds
 - Black-footed ferrets
 - White-tailed prairie dogs
 - Wild horses
 - Special status plant species
 - What are the timing limitations relevant to the Project for a variety of wildlife species and habitats (e.g., critical seasonal ranges, crucial habitats, migration corridors, etc.)?
 - Will an APP be developed for the Project?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on riparian areas and wetlands and sensitive plant populations and potential habitats?

- **Wildfire Ecology and Management**
 - What is the potential for wildfires due to the presence of a transmission line?

- **Geology and Soils**
 - What are the impacts of the Project from disturbing the soil and the impacts of the project on erosion on steep slopes?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on unstable soils and areas prone to landslides within classified avoidance and other areas?

- **Cultural Resources**
 - What are the impacts of the Project on archaeological and historic sites, cultural resources dependent upon visual settings (e.g., national historic trails), and traditional cultural properties?

- What are the potential impacts of the Project on the historic setting or sensitive cultural areas?
- **Tribal Concerns**
 - What involvement in the preparation of the EIS should there be by affected tribes?
 - What protection of traditionally and culturally significant sites is required?
- **Visual Resources**
 - What are the impacts of the Project on BLM-administered lands where visual resource management classifications have not been assigned or background data are not available?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on sensitive viewing areas?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on views from private property?
- **Paleontological Resources**
 - What are the impacts of Project construction activities on paleontological resources?
 - What are the appropriate measures to identify and protect paleontological sites?
- **Land Use and Recreation Resources**
 - What conflicts does the Project pose with existing land uses or land management objectives (agricultural, recreational, conservation)?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on existing land uses and future lands uses (planned development)?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on undeveloped areas?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on lands with wilderness characteristics?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on recreational uses and areas?
 - Are there low-flying military aircraft operating in the Project area that will need to be addressed in the EIS?
- **Social and Economic Conditions**
 - What are the indirect and qualitative impacts of the Project on local tourism in affected areas?
 - What is the availability of employment for the local workforce during construction of the Project?
 - Could the Project result in disparate impacts on low-income and/or disadvantaged populations?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on private property values?
 - What are the impacts of the Project on businesses and existing and future economic development?
- **Health and Safety**
 - What are the potential health effects on humans and animals from EMF?
- **Electronic Device Reception Interference**
 - Would the transmission line cause interference with cellular phone, Internet, radio and/or television reception?
- **Project Description**
 - What design features related to Project facilities or placement can be developed and incorporated into the Project description to minimize potential impacts of construction, operation, and maintenance?

■ **Public Involvement**

- How can the public have access to underlying information, reports, and studies used in preparation of the EIS?
- How can the public and agencies with relevant expertise in the development of construction and operation plans be involved?

4.0 SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Considering all the public and agency comments, the BLM and cooperating agencies will refine the alternatives to be studied in detail in the EIS. Once the alternatives have been refined, the studies and level of detail to be addressed (reflecting the issues identified during scoping) will be determined. Data and information will be compiled from existing sources. Then, impacts that could result from implementing any of the alternatives will be analyzed and measures to reduce those impacts will be identified, where warranted. The findings will be documented in a Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS will be made available for public and agency review, which is anticipated to be in the second quarter of 2013. The availability of the Draft EIS will be announced in the *Federal Register* and advertised in local and regional media. Public comments will be accepted during the public review and comment period, which is a minimum of 45 days, during which public meetings or hearings will be held to receive comments on the adequacy of the Draft EIS. The BLM, in coordination with the cooperating agencies, will review the comments and prepare responses to each of the substantive comments. The Draft EIS may or may not be modified based on public comments. In any event, all comments and responses will be incorporated into the Final EIS.

The Final EIS will be made available to the public and agencies for a period of 30 days (estimated to occur within the fall 2013 to summer 2014 timeframe). If amendments to BLM RMPs or USFS LRMPs are necessary to grant the right-of-way for the selected alternative, a concurrent 30-day protest period and 60-day Governor's Consistency Review also will apply. The availability of the Final EIS will be announced in the *Federal Register* and advertised in local and regional media. Following the 30-day period (or 60-day period, if plan amendment[s] is necessary), the BLM will issue a Record of Decision and will decide whether to deny the proposed right-of-way grant or grant the right-of-way with modifications. Modifications (likely occurring in winter 2014-15) may include modifying the proposed use or changing the route or location of the proposed facilities (43 CFR 2805.10(a)(1)).

The NEPA planning approach, and approximate timelines for the process, is displayed in Figure 2, NEPA Planning Approach.

The BLM will continue to consider public comments throughout the EIS process. Newsletters will be sent to those on the mailing list to announce the availability of the Draft EIS and the Final EIS. Information about the progress of the EIS will be available on the Project website (http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/gateway_south.html), which is periodically updated.

NEPA Planning Approach

Energy Gateway South Transmission Project EIS

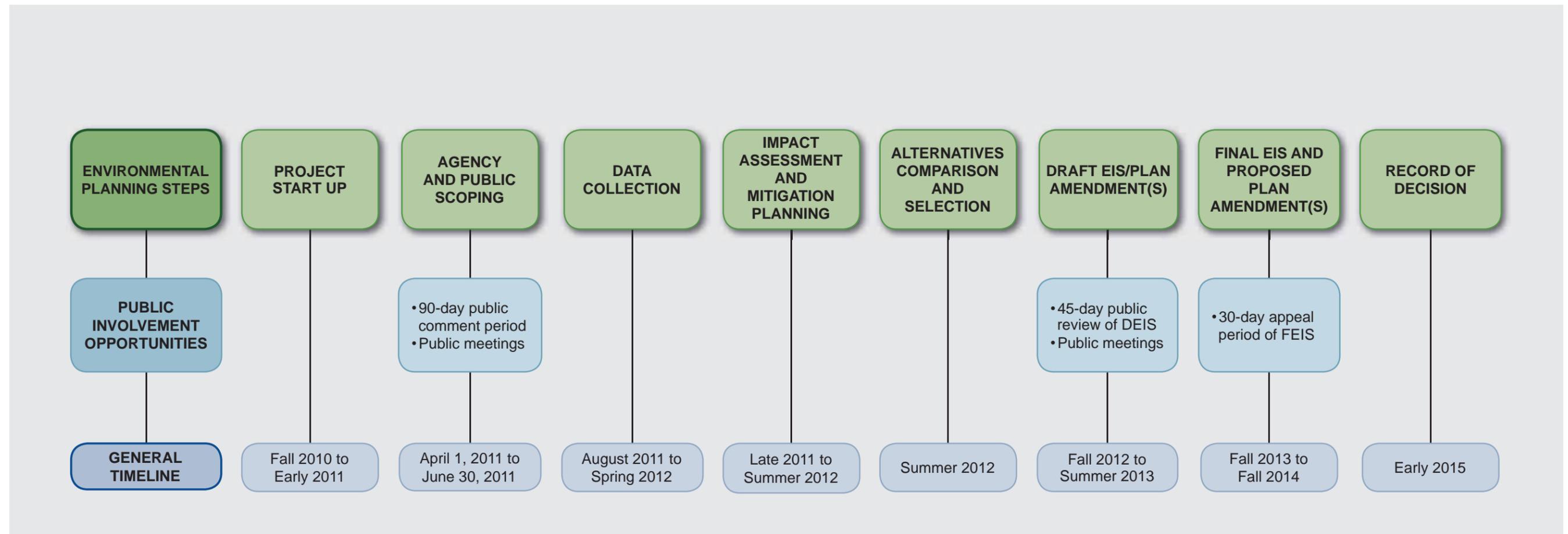


Figure 2

5.0 LITERATURE CITED

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 2008. National Environmental Policy Act Handbook H-1709-1. January 2008.