# **Public Scoping Report**

For The

# Boardman to Hemingway Environmental Impact Statement

Prepared for:

#### **Bureau of Land Management**

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April 10, 2009

#### NOTE:

The Public Scoping Report includes the period from September 12, 2008 through February 20, 2009. It documents outreach efforts, summarizes the comments received and identifies issues raised and suggested alternatives.

The maps included with this Public Scoping Report depict Idaho Power Company's proposed and alternative routes presented at the beginning of the NEPA scoping period in 2008. These maps also depict routes suggested by the public and agencies in comments received during the NEPA scoping period. Along with the Public Scoping Report, the maps are part of the official record of scoping comments. Any routes developed through Idaho Power Company's Community Advisory Process, that are not depicted here, will be included in a future addendum to the Public Scoping Report.

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the public scoping process for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It documents outreach efforts, summarizes the comments received, and identifies issues raised and suggested alternatives. Comments will be addressed in the Draft EIS rather than in this summary. The document has been prepared for the public, decision-makers, and EIS team members to easily see the common themes in scoping comments and issues.

Idaho Power Company applied to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a Right-of-Way Grant and the Forest Service for an easement/special use permit to use public lands for portions of the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project on December 19, 2007, and amended it on March 25, 2008. BLM is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act and will coordinate the preparation of the environmental analysis. Cooperating agencies identified at this time include the US Forest Service (Willowa-Whitman National Forest), the State of Oregon Department of Energy; Umatilla, Malheur, Morrow, Baker, and Union Counties in Oregon; Payette County, Idaho; and the Idaho Office of Energy Resources

The Oregon Department of Energy, Energy Facility Siting Council must conduct a thorough review that meets the Council's siting standards and issue a site certificate. This siting process is described on the project Web site at http://www.boardmantohemingway.com/odoe-efsc\_process\_information.aspx. One of the steps in the Council's siting process is to provide information to the public and accept comments on the project.

Public scoping is part of the National Environmental Policy Act process conducted for BLM and US Forest Service decision-making. Because the Oregon Department of Energy decided to be a cooperating agency, and in consideration of the public's interest in streamlining the commenting processes, BLM and Oregon Department of Energy decided to have concurrent comment periods and share comments. This minimized the potential for someone to file their comments with the incorrect agency.

This scoping report is specific to the BLM's National Environmental Policy Act process as Oregon Department of Energy does not produce a summary of comments received, and comments on the Oregon Department of Energy process are used differently than National Environmental Policy Act scoping comments. This report is not an attempt to summarize Oregon Department of Energy comments, however, many of the comments Oregon Department of Energy received are relevant to the BLM's NEPA process and those comments are included in this summary. Often, people submitted the same comments to both Oregon Department of Energy and BLM.

As the process progresses, BLM and Oregon Department of Energy will post newsletters on the project Web site and mail them to the mailing list approximately every quarter. The newsletter will update participants on progress. The project Web site is updated whenever new information becomes available.

# **Brief Project Description**

Idaho Power Company proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a single circuit 500kV overhead electric transmission line and facilities beginning near Boardman, Oregon, and terminating near Melba, Idaho. The project is in development, and as of December 31, 2008, the proposed route roughly parallels Interstate 84 and is approximately 298 miles long (**Figure 1-1**). Authorization may require the amendment of US Forest Service or BLM land use plans. The support structures would generally be steel lattice structures, with some monopole where needed to minimize effects on land uses. Approximately 251 miles or 84 percent of the route is

privately owned; 38 miles or 13 percent is administered by the BLM; 6 miles or 2 percent is National Forest; and 3 miles or 1 percent is administered by the State of Oregon or other jurisdictions.

Idaho Power Company's purpose and need for the Project is to relieve existing congestion, capacity, and reliability constraints and allow for the delivery of up to 1500 megawatts (MW) of additional energy to target service areas principally in Idaho and Utah.

# **Overview**





Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project Public Scoping/Information Meetings, October 21-30, 2008

# 2.0 BLM SCOPING PROCESS

This section provides a description of the public scoping process, the techniques that were used to notify the public about their opportunity to be involved in scoping, and a brief summary of the public scoping meetings. The official scoping comment period occurred from September 12 through November 14, 2008. Several complaints were received about the length of the scoping period being too short and requesting a 6-week extension. People were informed that late comments (within reason) would be included in the scoping analysis. Letters received through February 20 are included in this report.

Four specific information requests from the public were filled with the requested information, such as scoping materials and an electromagnetic field brochure. 42 requests for maps were filled. A complete set of maps was sent to the community coordinators of Durkee, Idaho; Keating, Idaho; and one set of maps of Baker and Union County only to the community coordinator.

#### Methods of Commenting

The public was provided with several methods of commenting. At the scoping meetings (described below), attendees were provided with forms that they could write comments on and either leave at the meetings or mail in later. People were available at the meetings to help record comments attendees wanted to make orally.

Comments could be submitted electronically through the project Web site to both the BLM and Oregon Department of Energy. Some people chose to e-mail the BLM or Oregon Department of Energy project manager directly.

Hard copies of letters, comment forms, petitions, and form letters were mailed to the BLM or Oregon Department of Energy.

#### Scoping Announcements

Initiation of the EIS process and the public scoping meetings were announced through the *Federal Register*, press releases, paid advertisements in the media, the BLM project <u>wWeb</u> site (http://www.boardmantohemingway.com/blm.aspx), as described below.

#### Web Site

A Web site was created to provide a central location for public information from both BLM and other agencies. The Web site contains information on the project; NEPA process; Oregon Department of Energy siting process; contact information for BLM, Forest Service, Oregon Department of Energy, and Idaho Power; and provided methods of commenting during scoping. Between the middle of August 19 and February 20, 2009, there had been 6,775 visits to the site, from 3,226 different visitors.

#### Federal Register

The public scoping process began with the publication in the Federal Register of BLM's Notice of Intent (NOI) to (1) prepare an EIS to support BLM's consideration of the Proponents' application for a ROW grant to use public lands for portions of the Project; and (2) conduct public scoping meetings. The NOI was published on September 12, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 178, Pages 52944-52945). The NOI is presented in Appendix A, Exhibit A-1 and on the project Web site, (referenced above).

#### Media Releases and Public Service Announcements

Jointly with the Oregon Department of Energy, the BLM prepared a news release to introduce the project, announce the scoping period, and publicize the scoping meetings and their

respective locations. The news release was posted on the BLM Vale District Web site (see BLM News Releases contained in **Appendix A**, **Exhibit A-2**).

The Oregon Department of Energy and BLM prepared a display ad to publish in newspapers of record in Oregon to advertise the meetings. These display ads were published in Oregon newspapers of record, per Oregon Department of Energy's requirements and in an Idaho newspaper due to its proximity Ontario's.

Community calendar notices were submitted to the newspapers listed in **Table 1**. The Idaho Statesman (Boise, ID), Idaho Press-Tribune (Nampa, ID) and the Record Courier (Baker City, OR) provided notice that they would run the notice. Not all of the papers confirmed whether they would publish the notice.

Announcements regarding the public scoping meetings and scoping process were issued as a news release on October 22, 2008, to local and regional newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations in Idaho and Oregon. Legal notices and display ads were published in the newspapers of record. **Table 1** shows the newspapers that printed the legal notice and display ads (contained in **Appendix A, Exhibit A-3**) on the dates indicated.

Table 1           Legal Notices and Display Ads in Newspapers of Record			
Legal Notice Publication Date	Display Ad Publication Date	Publication	Publication Location
September 23, 2008	October 12, 2008	Argus Observer	Ontario, OR
October 1, 2008	October 15, 2008	Independent Enterprise	Payette, ID
October 1, 2008	October 15, 2008	Malheur Enterprise	Vale, OR
September 25, 2008	October 16, 2008	Record Courier	Baker City, OR
October 1, 2008	October 17, 2008	Baker City Herald	Baker City, OR
September 23, 2008	October 18, 2008	The Observer	La Grande, OR
September 21, 2008	October 19, 2008	East Oregonian	Pendleton, OR
September 26, 2008	October 22, 2008	Hermiston Herald	Hermiston, OR
September 23, 2008	No display ad	Idaho Statesman	Boise, ID
September 23, 2008	No display ad	Idaho Press-Tribune	Nampa, ID
September 24, 2008	No display ad	Owyhee County Avalanche	Homedale, ID

# Public Scoping Meetings

BLM and Oregon Department of Energy hosted six public meetings in October 2008 to provide information to the public and agencies and allow them to identify issues and concerns. Public scoping and the scoping meetings were advertised on the project Web site, and through the local media. As summarized in **Table 2**, over 300 people signed in to the various public meetings.

A scoping packet was provided to all who attended the public meetings and is also available on the project's Web site and in **Appendix A**.

Table 2Public Scoping Meeting Dates, Locations, andAttendance			
Meeting Date	Meeting Location	Number Signing In	
October 21, 2008	Marsing, ID	27	
October 22, 2008	Ontario, OR	85	
October 23, 2008	Baker City, OR	90	
October 28, 2008	Island City, OR	57	
October 29, 2008	Pendleton, OR	20	
October 30, 2008	Boardman, OR	27	
Total		306	

# **Scoping Notification Mailing List**

The mailing list for the BLM and Oregon Department of Energy joint scoping period notice was developed by combining lists from the BLM, Oregon Department of Energy, Forest Service, and Idaho Power. The list included contacts from:

- The BLM's preliminary cooperating agencies list, existing BLM National Environmental Policy Act notification lists and LR2000 system contact list.
- The Oregon Department of Energy's reviewing agency list, Energy Facility Siting Council's general mailing list and a list of property owners within <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> miles of the proposed corridor as listed in Idaho Power's Oregon Department of Energy Notice of Intent to Apply for a Site Certificate.
- Forest Service's NEPA mailing list.
- Idaho Power's list of elected officials, county staff, Baker Valley Stakeholder Workshop attendees and other interested parties.

The joint BLM and Oregon Department of Energy joint notice was sent to 2,954 people, and the contact categories are shown in the **Table 3**. Letters with multiple people residing at the same address were only counted as one person in this tabulation. Since the mailing of the joint notice through February 20, 2009, 130 new contacts were added to the mailing list through the project Web site. In addition, all new contacts gathered from the public meetings sign-in sheets and scoping comments will be added to the mailing list.

Table 3           Joint Notification Mailing List Contact Categories and Number of Contacts		
Contact category	Number of Contacts	
Private	2,041	
State	220	
Nongovernmental organizations	311	
Federal	115	
Elected officials	106	
County	61	
City	49	
Tribal	50	
Port	1	
TOTAL	2,954	

# 3.0 COMMENT ANALYSIS

# **Comments Received**

The BLM received about 840 comment letters, forms, or e-mails on or before February 20, 2009. Four petitions were received, one with 212 signatures, one with 22 signatures and two with 7 signatures. Approximately 396 letters or e-mails sent to Oregon Department of Energy were analyzed for NEPA issues because they were not identified as a duplicate of a BLM letter.

Most letters, comment forms, and e-mails were from individuals, families, or groups. There were almost always multiple comments in each letter.

## **Comment Analysis**

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA define scoping (1508.7) as a way to determine the scope, significant issues to be analyzed, and not significant issues.

To facilitate identification of issues, all comments submitted were initially reviewed by a team of analysts from Tetra Tech and Envirolssues. The team was instructed to look for comments that could be defined as the following types of comments:

- Purpose and Need for the Project.
- Alternative Development Comments These are comments that indicate another alternative needs to be reviewed, or suggests another alternative.
- Alternative Description and Mitigation Measures These comments suggest modifications to already defined alternatives that reduce or avoid potential impacts.
- Effects Analysis These comments specify concerns over the effects on resources, suggest effects that need to be considered and disclosed, and identified activities that should be considered in the cumulative effects analysis.

#### **Processing Comments**

All comments received were saved electronically, either directly from the e-mailed comment or scanned from the hard copy. Letters to the BLM were kept separate from letters to Oregon Department of Energy. All the letters were numbered consecutively and their number typed on to the electronic version of the letter. Information about the letter writer was captured (name, address, e-mail, form of the comment, project stage, and association). The electronic files of the letters were then included in the database attached to the name of the writer.

Once a comment was identified that met the criteria listed above, the comment was given a code that corresponded with a category listed below. Some comments fit into more than one category. The coding structure was established before analysis began, so not all of the codes listed were used. Due to the way that scoping comments are managed during the EIS development, comments that indicated both a potential alternative or mitigation and a specific resource subject were coded for the alternative proposed. This method was used so that additional alternatives and mitigation could be easily identified.

The coded comments were then entered verbatim into the database. All the comments were then downloaded from the database and sorted by category code.

#### Codes

10 = Purpose and Need 11 = Company's Purpose and Need 20 = Proposed Action – flaws, more info needed. 30 = Alternative that should be considered. 40 = Mitigation measures suggested 50 = Data request or General question 100 = Social Issues 101 = demographics 102 = public services 103 = housing104 = education 105 = health and safety 106 = transportation 107 = Environmental Justice 200 = Economics 201 = Employment 202 = Income203 = Taxes/Taxpayers 204 = cost to land owners 300 = Noise 400 = Visual Quality 500 = Historical/Cultural Resources, Native American interests 600 = Air Quality 700 = Water 800 = Wildlife 801 = winter range 802 = sage or sharptailed grouse 803 = water fowl 804 = passerine birds 805 = bats 806 = amphibians and reptiles 807 = raptors808 = small mammals 809 = large mammals 900 = Recreation 1000 = Access/Road Construction 1100 = Vegetation/Weeds/Wetlands 1200 = Fish 1300 = Special Designations 1400 = Land Use 1401 = Eminent domain 1402 = irrigation 1403 = mining1500 = Greenhouse Gasses/Climate 1600 = Not used 1700 = Geology/Soils

1800 = cumulative effects

1900 = Comment Period

2000 = comment associated with maps, noted by a sticker on the comment.

Scoping continues throughout the EIS writing process. While the BLM requested that scoping comments be postmarked by November 14, 2008 to be of the most use, comments received by February 20, 2009 were included in this summary. Comments that come in after December 12 will be reviewed to determine if new issues were raised that need to be included in the EIS, but the specific comment was not used in this summary. All comments received were included electronically in the comment database, along with a copy of the comments after the analysis indicated how comments were coded.

Data requests were noted during comment analysis, but are not included as scoping comments in this report.

The EIS team will use these comments in development of the EIS, and the individual comments will be evaluated more in depth if needed to understand the concern. In most cases, they are not direct quotes from comments. Responses to comments are not included in this summary, they will be addressed in the Draft EIS.

#### **Comment Analysis Results**

Comments have been grouped, consolidated, and edited to highlight the specific concerns and make it easier to locate issues. The comments were summarized by grouping like comments into a statement that the EIS writers can address. Categorizing comments is a subjective process, so the same comment might be coded differently by different people. Some comments easily fell into more than one category. Regardless in which category a comment was originally included, the summary ensures that the comment is adequately represented in any or all of the relevant categories.

Below is a summary of comments received by category. Some statements serve to summarize dozens of comments, while others summarize one comment.

#### Purpose and Need

Comments in this category questioned the need for and benefit of the transmission line.

- Oregon, individual counties, and residents will not receive power or service from the project.
- The detrimental impacts would not justify the need for the project.
- Belief that the project is proposed only because federal money is available.
- The necessity of this power line to Morrow County must be addressed.
- Statement that additional transmission capacity is needed for renewable energy such as wind and a desire that the project will be used to transport energy from renewable sources.
- Suspicion that more transmission lines will be placed in the right of way than stated.
- What will be needed in the future?
- The need for the project identified by Idaho Power should be reviewed considering the recent economical down turn.
- Need to explain the obligatory regulatory requirements.
- Are the customers going to bare the expense of construction?
- Evaluate whether there really is a need for all of the projects/corridors being proposed.

- Describe the current structure of the industry and parties involved in transmission and power and mega-projects vs. small projects. What other areas, close to cities and close to existing grids, would provide suitable sites?
- Treasure Valley Energy Plan (TVEP) needs revision, along with input from western Treasure Valley and Oregon.
- Idaho Power violates its own Treasure Valley Energy Plan page 49 "committee consensus" to a. avoid diagonal lines routes, b. keep lines our of view sheds (Malheur Butte, Trenkel Hill Overlook, etc) c. use transmission Right of Ways d. use transportation corridors when it comes to Malheur County.
- Idaho power should be able to establish its own wind farm or other means of power close to home
- Why does the Sand Hollow Substation need to be integrated into the overall scheme that includes the disruption of farmland in Malheur County?

#### **Proposed Action**

This category contains comments about the specifications of the proposed action.

- Analyze future connected actions such as the impacts of phase 2-4 of the Union County wind turbine project and subsequent additional power line connections and sub-stations.
- What Forest Plan and Resource Management Plan amendments will be needed?
- The project should follow the utility corridors established by BLM.
- What will the setbacks (distance) from the powerline be for a structure to be built?
- Do all the landowners crossed need to agree?
- When will the proposed Sand Hollow Substation (Idaho) be reviewed?
- Where will the towers be located?
- Western Energy Coordinating Council Phase 1, who are the other industries submitting planning and technical studies for this 500 kilovolt line besides Idaho Power?
- Will Idaho Power negotiate with each land owner or do a blanket agreement?
- Will Idaho Power be able to put in more than one line of towers once the 2 1/2 mile corridor is approved?
- Provide the law or regulation, if it exists, that requires this separation.
- The utility is asking for too broad of an easement.
- How much of the power in this line will come from coal? From hydro? From giant
  industrial facilities ripping up public land? Please fully reveal what types of energy
  generation this line will be linked to. How might better home insulation, more diversified
  local small scale wind projects etc. eliminate the need for this new line that continues the
  centralization of energy production?
- Will this line be related to nuclear power plants? INEEL? If so, how might nuclear energy here endanger human health and the environment?
- The South Canal has had a few washouts over the years of operation. The tower location under the South Canal is a major concern.

#### Alternative That Should Be Considered

- BLM should work with Idaho Power and local citizens to develop other options for line placement.
- Locate away from highways, houses, and animals.
- Compare centralized vs. de-centralized energy models, such as home-based solar, siting wind on private lands.
- Place the route on Federally-owned land to avoid most of the exclusive farm use lands.
- Put the transmission lines through Idaho rural land and communities since it is for their need.
- An alternate route would be on state and federal lands.
- An alternative for a buried transmission line is needed.
- Use existing utility or power transmission line routes.
- Consider paralleling an existing road or expanding the existing infrastructure.
- Additional routes that do not cross prime agricultural farmland should be considered.
- Route through the desert

Specific Locations for Route Alternatives

- South and west of Adrian (Oregon) and turn North to Bully Creek and along Cottonwood Mountain on into Forest Service land.
- Wooded area through Grant County (Oregon) coming into sand hollow from the west.
- In Idaho, going north between Marsing and Lake Lowell directly to Sand Hollow, plus going north from Sand Hollow to the Payette River and then west to Oregon. This route is about 17 miles shorter than the proposed route.
- Alignment to capture renewable resources along the route, such as potential wind energy corridors or too far away from renewable energy production areas will result in a loss of the ability to capture these resources for the benefit of Endowment Beneficiaries as well as all residents of Idaho.
- Utility corridor that runs west and south of Adrian (Oregon) all the way to Burns and North to the Columbia River. The land involved is almost all public land and is managed the BLM.
- If an alternative route is selected though the Keating Valley (Oregon), it should be continued northward along the Powder River on BLM land.
- Use the Interstate 84 corridor (Idaho and Oregon).
- Consider going over to the eastside of the Malheur Butte (Oregon) or desert land of Idaho which is closer to Sand Hollow, Idaho exit.
- Follow an alternate route to the south of the Naval Weapons System Training Facility (Oregon).
- Follow the map from January 2008 from Boardman to Heppner to Farewell Bend (Oregon) to Boise, Idaho.
- Consider moving the line to the south of the Franklin property (Oregon) and adjacent private properties to take advantage of public lands and to avoid private parcels.

- From the Hemingway Substation (Idaho) run the transmission line north along the existing 230 kilovolt transmission line right of way.
- Go 250 feet onto Navy's land (Oregon).
- Hemingway to Boardman via the existing PP&L corridor established in the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan to Buchanan in the Burns District, then north to Boardman through the Malheur National Forest and private grazing land (Oregon).
- Hemingway to Sand Hollow to Farewell Bend to Boardman (Idaho and Oregon), bypassing Malheur County entirely and keeping the line completely in Idaho to Farewell Bend.
- Alternate route placed inside the south edge of the Bombing Range, along Hwy. 82 on the eastern edge of the Umatilla Army Depot (Oregon).
- Alignment from Durkee, Oregon to the existing powerline alignment in NE Baker Valley. From Durkee to near the Keating Valley in the east end of Virtue Flat, stay on BLM as much as possible.
- Follow the PacifiCorp route.
- If the final placement of the power lien right-of-way is close to the existing utility corridors that cross the SW corner of parcel 15S45E00900 (Oregon), then the Company would have no objection to the placement of additional power lines.
- In the vicinity of and parallel to the existing utility rights-of-way that already exist on Map 21 in the red corridor, or easterly there from.
- Run along the old lines or the railroad track or the north side of I-84 where old Idaho Power lines are already in existence (Idaho and Oregon).
- Move to the south into the bombing range (Oregon).
- Place the transmission line in the state easement next to Highway 207 (Oregon).
- Allow the line to go close to the wind farm between Baker and North Powder (Oregon).
- Move all the towers to the Idaho side of the river.
- More southerly route, closer to the City of Ukiah (Oregon), where several wind project developments are pending.
- Route going west of Vale, Oregon, on BLM-managed and to the north to connect to Baker County (Oregon).
- Alternate project route being proposed by the Malheur County Court and Planning Department (Oregon). It avoids exclusive farm use lands to the most feasible extent.
- Alternative corridor outside of Baker County (Oregon).
- Route along the east side of the Powder River (Oregon) within a 1 mile corridor of the scenic river in grazing land.
- Bureau of Reclamation (Oregon) ground could be incorporated into a right of way.
- Move the line north of the freeway.
- Route from Marsing (Idaho) grade to run west past Owyhee Dam (Idaho) through the existing authorized corridor and then either) a) North across public lands over Vines Hill (Oregon) and then tie back to I-84 north of Farewell Bend (Oregon), or b) west from Owyhee Dam (Idaho) west through the existing corridor, then north from near Buchanan,

Oregon. Instead of Sand Hollow, maybe a substation site can yet be found in Malheur County, Oregon (Succor Creek or Moores Hollow) or Baker County, Oregon (Huntington area).

- Through the range land east of Magpie Peak (Oregon), along the Salt Creek drainage (Oregon), and then through the uninhabited range land up toward the Keating Cutoff. The line can then travel toward Pleasant Valley (Oregon).
- Must be moved approximately 1 mile west of the westerly corridor border line shown on the Idaho Power map labeled Appendix G-3 (August 2008) from a point north of the town of Adrian, Oregon to a point a few miles north of the proposed Hemingway substation (Idaho). I have attached the Appendix G map with a dashed line delineating the location that would be acceptable (see letter).
- Alternate route to the south of the Naval Weapon Systems Training Facility (Oregon).
- The line should be placed on the land on the southern section (corner of Hogg and Burman Roads) of the area noted or nearer the existing transmission line as it finds it way through this section of Owyhee County, Idaho.
- Cross the Snake River near other Idaho Power facilities on the Snake River and then down the Idaho side through the Midvale, Idaho area.
- Starting at the proposed route's first crossing of the State Line coming from Hemingway, continue paralleling the existing 500 kV line west until after it crosses the Owyhee River (Oregon), then head northwest to cross Highway 20 at Vines Hill, then continue northwest along the foot of Cottonwood Mountain to cross Highway 26 at Brogan Hill, then turn northeast to connect to the 1-84 corridor in Baker County, (Oregon).
- Union County (N Powder) just NE of the Powder River scenic river corridor and continuing SE just NE of Powder River, Thief Valley, and along the Keating Valley (Oregon).
- Union County to Hwy 86- The further west the powerline is sited along this corridor the better (Oregon).
- West from Hemingway along an existing utilities corridor on public lands turning north, leave the corridor towards Vines Hill cross the Malheur River at the narrows just east of Little Valley, Oregon. Then, continue north staying west of the farm ground in the Willow Creek, Jamison, and Brogan areas.
- Place the Sand Hollow Substation on west side of Snake River (Idaho). Or, cross and recross Snake in same location.
- Cross the river at the dam sites.
- Choose a natural route loosely following the Powder River (Oregon) drainage from Keating to North Powder instead of the hilly terrain of the current alternative route.
- Alternative Route needed- south from Sand Hollow to Midvale (not in Oregon pioneer).
- Two other zoning areas in Morrow County could be traversed depending on the final route chosen Space Age Industrial (preferred route) and General Industrial (preferred and alternative route) (Oregon).
- Take them east of Keating Valley, and then up one draw or another eventually coming to the area around Thief Valley Reservoir where the lines would soon enter Union County (Oregon).

- The portion of the TVEP loop which is shown to pass behind and east of Boise be built to Sand Hollow, with the B2H line then going north through Idaho east of Payette, behind Weiser and over to Oregon. Hemingway Substation would still be built but would connect to Sand Hollow Substation from the east rather then the west.
- Follow the existing utility corridor identified in the SEORMP to Grassy Mountain, then turn north toward Cottonwood Mountain and proceed north to Huntington Junction, at which point the line could go north through Baker County and bypass entirely the town of Durkee or could turn east to Interstate 84 and then follow the currently proposed route.
- It appears more efficient and cost effective to continue the route straight along the river south instead of going into Canyon County to reach Sand Hollow.
- The loop on the west side of the valley near Adrian, Nyssa, and Ontario, Oregon, should follow the PPG 500 kV line coming out of the Hemingway Substation to Grassy Mountain (10 miles west of Adrian), then turn and go north to Huntington Junction. The transmission line could then go east behind the hills at Weiser and veer south to connect with the re-located Sand Hollow Substation north of Payette.
- Consider Mormon Basin for an alternative route through Baker County for the Boardman Hemingway project.
- Alternative utility corridors that our County government officials and citizen's group (SIP) have submitted.
- New transmission line coming from Boardman could go straight south as proposed by the BLM and tie into existing easements, give Idaho Power the infrastructure for the new treasure valley grid, and eliminate most interference with prime farmland.
- New proposal to move the 500kV line west of Vale, then loop up to Wesier and behind Payette to a substation and then over to Emmett.
- In the vicinity of SE Idaho please consider instead following the freeway to Salt Lake and then heading north along existing routes.
- Instead, route the transmission lines outside of the city of Parma's area of impact so future residential and commercial growth and development can occur.
- If the present west corridor line could be moved 2,000 feet or less to the west this would be out of the way of the district and patrons concerns. The corridor would line up with the west side of the South Canal at the tunnel outlet number five, four miles south of Adrian, Oregon. If the line could stay on the west side of the South Canal it would run 5 miles south and cross the BPL corridor. Following the south side southeast BPL corridor would eliminate any concerns from the District and in turn eliminate concerns from patrons.

#### Substation Alternatives

- The substation at Sand Hollow should be moved to North of Payette, Idaho.
- A loop similar to that proposed in the TVEP could be constructed which would put substations in different locations on the perimeter of the loop rather than at Sand Hollow.

#### Mitigation Measures Suggested

- Avoid or minimize impacts on conservation sites. The Conservancy in Oregon can provide the GIS and summaries.
- Paint the towers a medium tan to be nearly invisible, except for the need to make them visible for aviation.

- Use non-reflective material or exterior finish on the towers, lines and all of the facilities to minimize this detraction.
- Mitigate alteration of the Oregon National Historic Trail.
- Prevent damage to the Oregon Trail to the west of the visitor center by placing the towers from the trail and the lines far above it.
- Strategy for prevention, early detection of invasion, and control procedures for each noxious weed and invasive species.
- Adequate oversight and inspection of equipment for cleanliness (noxious weeds) be factored into the cost of implementation.
- Minimize impacts on rare plants.
- Old growth forest must be protected.
- Restore native vegetation.
- Native saplings should be used, if practicable, at a minimum ratio of 1:1.
- Avoid fragmentation of large contiguous blocks of wildlife habitats.
- Avoid, minimize, and mitigate negative effects to fish and wildlife resources and recreation.
- Construct outside of the big game wintering period (generally December 1- April 15).
- Restoration and mitigation to ensure that crucial losses of habitat or fish and wildlife populations do not result.
- Baseline information about fish and wildlife resources and recreation for any project is often needed to understand and reduce project impacts.
- Construction and maintenance should be restricted not to occur near sage grouse and other shrub-steppe obligate species. breeding habitats between 2 hours before to 2 hours after sunrise from 1 March to 15 June.
- ODFW considers the area within 2 miles of a lek to be Category 1 habitat and recommends avoidance of this area.
- ODFW recommends no power line development within 2 miles of sage grouse leks and within 1/2 mile of critical broad rearing habitats such as seeps, springs, and wet meadows. Keeping the line west or near I-84 and west of the eastern edge of Baker Valley would facilitate this.
- Avoid wetlands.
- Properly manage for both sage grouse mating and nesting.
- Manage for fire control.
- Monitoring and evaluation of fish and wildlife resources and habitats is vital.
- Protect jackrabbits and sagebrush lizards.
- Detailed plans for addressing dust control including dust suppression methods, inspection schedules, and documentation and accountability processes.
- Construction techniques such as 95% base compaction prior to placement of gravel, culverts for water drainage, steep slope construction measures to prevent erosion, and appropriate dust control methods (such as placement of a no chlorine based dust

abatement chemical treatment), are important dust suppression and sediment reduction techniques.

- Mitigation should include spring development and surface water enhancement and eliminate grazing in those areas.
- Protected soil after it is disturbed to prevent runoff and additional erosion.
- Protect the source water protection areas.
- Mitigation measures that will be implemented to avoid further degradation of impaired waters
- Best management practices should be used to ensure water quality is maintained, disturbance caused by crossings of any perennial and fish bearing waters is minimized, and disturbed instream habitats are restored.
- Maintain a minimum of 24 inches vertical clearance when crossing MCI facilities and 60 inches horizontal clearance when parallel to MCI facilities.
- Mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Monitoring the effects of corridor projects is also necessary to determine long-term
  effects and, accordingly, to adaptively manage the design, operation, and mitigation
  measures of the project.
- Include an effective feedback element, including implementation and effectiveness monitoring.
- Psychological studies should be conducted of all effected residents to include at least a two mile corridor well in advance of any siting decisions.
- Under all alternatives, prohibition of corridors and development in biologically, culturally, or other "sensitive" areas and important habitats must be mandatory.
- ODFW strongly recommends that surveys be undertaken to identify the existence of grasshopper sparrow, loggerhead shrike, long-billed curlew, sage sparrow, western burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, ferruginous hawk, and sage brush lizard along the entire length of the transmission line route and to avoid permanent impacts to their habitats. If they are identified construction should be scheduled to avoid nesting season.
- Locate the line a minimum of two miles from sage grouse leks and 1/2 mile from critical sage grouse brood rearing habitats such as seeps, springs, and wet meadows.
- ODFW recommends that new road construction be minimized. When new roads are necessary, they should be obtained post-construction. ODFW further recommends closure or gating of all the maintenance roads to the public to prevent harassment of wintering wildlife.
- Prepare a weed control plan in coordination with the resource agencies. ODFW further recommends that implementation of the plan be a condition of the site certificate. The weed control plan should include surveying and mapping of invasive and noxious weeds, pre-construction treatment of the weeds, construction and operation equipment sanitization and post-construction of the weeds.
- Once transmission line alignment has been determined surveys the length of the project centerline and within 100 yards to ascertain habitat type and category for impact areas so that an adequate mitigation plan can be proposed.

- Streams with sensitive, threatened, or endangered fish should be identified and actions determined to prevent dewatering as a result of construction activities. Streams that require crossings where none exist should be identified. Methods for stream and riparian crossings should be proposed that prevent harm to fish, wildlife, and their habitat. Mitigation for habitat lost as a result of construction and operation be proposed in keeping with ODFW's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Policy.
- Surveys should be completed for the host of federal and state threatened, endangered, and sensitive (TES) wildlife species. In particular white tailed jackrabbits, sage sparrows, grasshopper sparrows, sagebrush lizards, long-billed curlews, etc.
- Transmission line corridor should be surveyed pre-construction to avoid active raptor nests, particularly golden eagle, ferruginous hawks, and Swainson's hawks. Raptor nests surveys should be conducted with in 2 mile radius of each outer edge of the power line corridor as well as within the 2 mile corridor.
- The squirrel colony footprint and associated required habitat for squirrel survival should be classified as Category 1 habitat under ODFW's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Policy.
- Whenever possible, construction water should be taken from municipal sources, groundwater, or ponds with no inlet from or outlet to streams where fish occur. If taken from surface water sources, intakes should be equipped with fish screens that meet current ODFW fish screening criteria.
- Within Baker and Union counties, spring sage grouse should be conducted within a 2 mile area from the outer boundaries of both sides of the corridor as well as within the 2 mile corridor for a total 6 mile wide search area in areas of suitable habitat. Give examples of survey.
- Require that project proponents set aside significant sums for purchase of private lands with important biological values, as well as for purchase of public lands grazing permits and permanent permit retirement for the specific region where the corridor or liked new development is located. This EIS should amend Land Use Plans to authorize such retirement.

#### **Comment Period**

Comments in this category related to the comment process and time.

- There was not enough notice for the public meetings.
- There was not enough time after the meetings before the comment period closed.
- Prisoners are not informed and allowed involvement in this process. The prisoner's legal rights should be observed.
- The question time at the meeting was very short,
- The link on the comment form didn't work.

#### **Social Issues**

- Address these quality of life and business issues, including traditional lives of area residents, which is rural, quiet, and mostly agricultural.
- Please also examine the national security threats posed by large-often foreign-owned or financed corporations/consortiums/entities controlling power distribution and production on remote public lands. This makes it much easier for process to be manipulated, consumers, gouged, and America's energy supply be much less secure.

#### Public Services

- The alternative through Medical Springs would go through the fire station on Halo Road.
- Will the small tower which provides internet service still work?
- Fire danger is greatly increased from weeds, OHV use, and raptor electrocutions.

#### Housing

- Along the scenic Snake River route along State Hwy 201 (Oregon) large estate homes are being built.
- The transmission line will discourage new rural home construction.
- The towers will reduce the potential for housing development.

#### Health and Safety

- In assessing effects on human and animal health, consider dust, smoke, electric and magnetic fields (potential to cause leukemia, Alzheimer's, breast cancer, neurodegenerative diseases such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, clinical depression, miscarriages, seizures, migraines, aneurysms, and nausea), electrocution, stray voltage (including effects on dairy animals), aerial spraying, and noise effects on mental health.
- Interfere with the heliport.
- Interfere with two way radios used by the fire department.
- Interferes with the operation of biodfeedback equipment.
- Effects on people when the transmission line crosses dwellings or in proximity to I-84.
- Control burns in the area and their effect on the power lines.
- Fire is a primary concern and the transmission line corridor would not be easily accessible for the prevention or fighting of fire at any time during the year.
- Arcing of electricity would prevent necessary field burning.
- Response plan for fire and health in these remote areas?
- There is a safety concern for all farm workers.
- How will fire fighting departments be expected to perform around these facilities when there are down power lines?
- It will increase the chances of a burglary, terrorist attacks, sabotage, and something bad to happen.
- The power lines will destroy my ham radio capability from our cabin.
- Lightning exposure/over voltage/switching/ground flash.
- Flash floods could cause the towers to wash out, become unstable, fall over and affect surroundings areas with potential fire danger, access issues, and other safety concerns.
- Affects the animals we eat.
- What is probability of catastrophic failure of poles or line causing it to contact self or ground?
- Having a 500 kV powerline anywhere in the vicinity of the Clinic would prevent the use or storage of homeopathy remedies.

• Dangerous power surges.

#### Transportation

- Airports will be affected (Baker City, La Grande, Oregon, Parma, Idaho and others).
- Project will be dangerous to local airplane traffic.
- Aircraft routes would be significantly reduced for recreation, commercial routes (take off/landing) or crop management.

#### **Environmental Justice**

- Address the potential for disproportionate adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.
- Include information on how environmental justice communities were included, what they said, and how it was used in the decision.

#### Economics

- Baker City. Oregon, Haines, Oregon, Anthony Lake, Oregon and other local areas as tourist attractions, thereby, significantly harming a valuable source of income for many people in Baker County, Oregon.
- Devastating economic impact on our farming communities, and subsequently on the economy of Malheur County.
- How is Idaho Power going to pay for this project without raising rates substantially?
- How will the counties benefit financially?
- Impact would it have on our cities economy?
- Is there consideration given by Idaho Power to each county and area affected by these transmission lines to compensate the tax base?
- Loss of income to local farmers, dairyman, and cattle ranchers and to those whom they employ.
- Millions of dollars are paid to farm workers that may not work under or near the power lines.
- Much of the income and future of these areas are tied to outdoor recreation.
- Suppliers of agriculture and ranching will be affected resulting in a net loss of tax revenues and employment.
- The installation of the Idaho Power project in the Keating Valley (Oregon) will be detrimental to the 10 kilovolt wind turbine on the VC Bar Ranch.
- The project will affect recreation, tourism, and agriculture.
- The project would enhance the economic viability of the region.
- We need compensation for loss of property values.
- What are my rights and/or compensation?
- Who is responsible for debt incurred?
- Who will benefit from the profits?

- Will affect business owners, people working in food processing plants and packing sheds, and the farmers.
- Will the extra franchise fees collected be enough or will the shortfall be made another way through more taxation in Oregon?

#### Taxes/Taxpayers

- Any economic gain is estimated at being as little as \$250,000, in tax revenue.
- Project would result in lower property values and less of a tax base for our schools, libraries, rural fire districts, road districts, etc.
- New roads would need to be built, maintained, and kept clear of snow, which would increase the costs considerably for both Baker and Union counties (Oregon).
- Counties and state will lose revenue when agriculture production drops and land is devalued.
- No economic advantage for Baker County (Oregon) other than property taxes.
- Property taxes should be addressed. Information from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission states, "...the landowner (will) typically still own(s) the land and (will) pay(s) taxes on the right-of-way...".

#### Cost To Land Owners

- The cost to landowners should consider negative impact on property values, aesthetic and economic losses, impacts on irrigation, crop rotations, maneuvering of equipment and livestock, loss of production, loss of prime farmland potential crop loss due to disruption in farming schedules.
- Areas specifically affected include Keating Valley, Medical Springs, state endowment lands, Malheur County, Eagle Cap Mountains (Oregon).
- Who pays for injuries on private land caused by unauthorized access?
- Landowners may not be fully compensated for crop loss due to disruptions in the farming schedules during construction.
- Check member of private properties harmed by this route and what total cost of compensation.
- Cost of reconfiguration of pivot irrigation systems and mainline.
- Irrigation using wheel lines and hand lines will become extremely hazardous because of the electromagnetic field.
- We'll have to continue to pay taxes on lands that we can't use.
- The land will become obsolete since it is zoned farm use only but cannot be used to farm since irrigation would no longer be feasible.
- Towers will increase operating costs.
- We are considered a low income area and can not afford to lost any more of our income sources.
- Who is responsible for the cost of fighting fire, property loss, equipment loss, and human loss?
- Towers would limit future uses of the lands.

- Idaho Power will only be required to pay 25% of what the land is worth.
- There is strong geothermal activity in the Sunnyslope area that presents several economic development potential, such as hydroponic farming or as an energy resource. If the powerline is installed it will render this presently untapped resource, which has great potential, useless.

#### Noise

- High Voltage electric lines create loud crackling static like noise, buzzing, and humming noise which never quits.
- Noise from construction.
- The high frequency sounds produced by high voltage transmission lines, substations, and power generating facilities, are uncomfortable and annoying.
- Added noise would interfere with hearing aids.

#### Visual Quality

General concerns about the effects on visual quality included:

- Aesthetically, the transmission line would be a devastating blow to the panoramic scene which is prevalent on the upper reaches of both valleys.
- Please analyze future connected actions related to the transmission lines, such as future development of additional wind turbines, their associated power lines, and the resulting lights that are visible for many miles. Information available indicates the Project will enable future development of up to 300 additional wind towers in Baker County (Oregon).
- Would detract from the beauty of the area.
- Huge towers and lines would detract from the peace, seclusion, and beauty of the valley.

Comments identified visually sensitive areas

- Malheur Butte and associated Highway 20 scenic overlook (Oregon).
- Scenic overlook off Highway 20 on Trenkel Hill (Oregon).
- Oregon trail (Oregon and Idaho).
- National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center on Flagstaff Hill (Oregon).
- Baker Valley from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (Oregon).
- East side of Baker Valley directly below Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (Oregon).
- From the Keating Valley, the spectacular view is to the northeast towards the snowcapped Eagle Cap Mountains (Oregon).
- Viewshed that is a gateway to the Eagle Cap wilderness area (Oregon).
- Hwy 203 Scenic Byway (Oregon).
- Mitchell Butte (Oregon).
- Medical Springs and Pondosa designated scenic route (Oregon).
- BLM VRM Class 2 area in the Powder River Valley south east of Keating (Oregon).
- View of the Wallowa and Eagle Cap Mountains (Oregon).

- Highway 203 and Highway 86 Oregon State Scenic Byways (Oregon).
- Brown Butte (Oregon).
- The three rivers area (Oregon).
- The vistas and lack of development offered in the grass/sagebrush communities the Upper Holman and upper Pritchard Creek drainages are as dramatic, scenic, unique and unspoiled as almost any other in the south county (Baker County, Oregon).
- View of the majestic Wallowa Mountains (Oregon).
- View of Big and Little Lookout Mountains (Oregon).
- View of the Elkhorns of the Blue Mountains (Oregon).
- The Snake River Scenic Byway (Idaho).

#### Historical and Cultural Resources, Native American Interests

Concerns about the effects on historical and cultural resources and Native American interests included:

- Given that we were blocked from minor development because three miles of Oregon Trail ran through our property, it seems unbelievable that now Idaho Power can place enormous towers in the same area.
- Conduct consultation with all affected tribal governments, consistent with Executive Order (EO) 13 I 75 (Consultation and Coordination, with Indian Tribal Governments).
- Effects on historical or traditional cultural places of importance to the area's Native American communities.
- Perform the cultural surveys necessary for solid decision-making.
- Physical alterations to significant viewsheds associated with the Oregon National Historic Trail and other historic trails.
- The National Trust formally requests to participate as a consulting party in the Section 106 process for the Project pursuant to 36 CFR & 800.2.
- Urges BLM to begin the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for impacts on the Oregon Trail and other historic properties.
- Mining in Baker County (Oregon) needs to be researched prior to any development.
- Archeological and historical sites of Indian settler confrontations on private land.
- Identify historic resources, and assure that treaty rights and privileges are addressed appropriately.
- Historical landmarks like Starvation Camp, Old Fort Boise, Utter Camp, Snake Ferry Kingman Colony, and a historical grave located where East Clover exits the basalt canyon.
- The Lindsey Mountain Kitchen Creek and Hill Creek valleys are rich in historic, cultural, and archeological resources; old homesteads, orchards, bomber crashed, Native American cultural artifacts.
- Historic 100+ year ranches in the Keating Valley. Some of these ranches have gravesites on them.

Specific features of concern:

- Umatilla Indian Reservation (Oregon).
- Oregon Trail Historical Site (Oregon).
- Malheur Butte (Oregon).
- Oregon Trail Area of Environmental Concern near Farewell Bend (Oregon).
- Indian settlements.
- Petroglyph's-100 year old cabin.
- Summer and winter grounds for the local Indians.
- Historical and cultural landscapes.
- Oregon National Historic Trail.
- Native American Migration and movement historical and archeological treasures.
- Native Americans artifacts.
- Several cemeteries dating back to 1800's (Oregon).
- The Snake River crossing at the Owyhee River is also the site of the Utter and VanOrman Family massacres and 'Starvation Camp'. Not all these sites are marked, since they are on private land (Oregon).
- Oregon NHT and other NLCS resources in Idaho and Oregon under its administration. Other NLCS areas that may be impacted include. The National Trust strongly recommends that a thorough evaluation of alternatives be prepared to avoid impacts on these sensitive areas.
- Historically significant ditch are a concern to the landowners.
- This pristine area has a remarkable historic past, with some local books describing the rural area with stories of Indians coming to the hot Medical Springs, Oregon for healing and rest, and Abraham Lincoln's cousin living there, etc.

#### Air Quality

- Keating alternative would result in more solid waste because it is longer (Oregon).
- The air quality analysis should address effects on: all criteria pollutants (including ozone), visibility impairment, and air quality related values in the protection of any affected Class I Areas, any significant concentrations of hazardous air pollutants, and protection of public health.
- The proposed route should result in fewer carbon emissions than any of the current alternatives.

#### Water

- BLM and FS should coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine if the project would require a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act.
- Assess the impact on surface water and springs from erosion, contamination, pesticides, subsidence, and an increase in road density.
- Impacts on drinking water.
- Identify all source water protection areas within the project area.
- Identify all activities that could potentially affect source water areas.

- Identify all potential contaminants, including transformers and capacitors.
- Removal of the trees would affect the timing of the snow pack melt off, impact soil and water temperatures, encourage erosion due to the rapid melt.
- Address impacts on 303(d) listed water bodies.
- Any construction project disturbing a land area of one or more acres requires a construction storm water discharge permit under the Clean Water Act or the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for discharges.
- Determine the potential for stormwater discharge to a surface water body and total disturbed area in order to evaluate whether the 1200 C construction stormwater permits is required for the proposed project.
- Document consistency with applicable storm water permitting requirements.
- A water right is needed even for temporary use, per Oregon water law unless it fits within one of the narrow exemptions for water uses.
- Presence of underground springs in the Medical Springs, Oregon area, some of which are geothermal are very likely to escalate the costs of installing power line poles.
- What happens to the water rights for the ROW?
- Will there be any effects on ground water levels, contamination, and disruption.
- Unless obtained from a Municipal supplier, water used in the construction, dust abatement, and road watering will require Limited Licenses. Such licenses cannot authorize use or discharge of water outside a single basin. Multiple Limited Licenses may be required.
- Effects of stray voltage on soil and water quality.
- The inability to implement best management farming practices due to placement of the powerline will have an impact on water quality in the Owyhee and Snake Rivers.

#### Wildlife

- It will affect bee flight.
- Rare and/or sensitive wildlife habitats, kipukas, lava tubes, caves (natural and manmade).
- The lines will adversely impact deer, elk, bear, cougar, turkey, golden and bald eagles, Canadian geese, blue heron, ducks, water fowl, beavers. quail, chukars, pheasant, song birds, antelope, swans, hawks, owls, coyote, porcupines, frogs, lizards, sandhill cranes, sage grouse, pygmy rabbit, bats, sage rabbits, western sage grouse, Washington ground squirrel, furbearers, ferruginous hawk, loggerhead shrike and sage sparrow. Surveys should be conducted for all of them.
- Disturb wildlife and breeding habitat.
- Effects on wildlife habitat, fisheries, plants, animals.
- Threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.
- Habitat in the wetlands area.
- Infestations of rodents such as gophers would increase.

- Keating Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has declared almost all of this route a category I resource area.
- Migratory corridors for elk, mule deer, moose, and pronghorn antelope may be blocked.
- Riparian and game species habitat.
- Riparian and game species that depend upon irrigated farmlands would be adversely affected and are habitat for deer, elk, chukar, pheasant, hawks, peregrine falcons, pelicans, ducks, geese, cormorants, owls, swans and hawks.
- Describe the critical habitat for the species.
- The Oregon State Game Commission has designated this area as an Elk overlay area.
- Wetlands in the spring prime habitat for the Long Billed Curlews.
- It is the rule of the Dept of Fish and Wildlife and the BLM to not create any more new disturbances of wildlife if possible.
- Eagles and owls will leave their nests and move if the line is approved and constructed.
- Animals' sensitivity to electricity in the air and electrical surges.
- There are three Wildlife Management Areas within Morrow County.

#### Winter Range

- In the placement of the parcels (6 home sites owned by Swartz), we were required to have Idaho Department of Fish and Game direction and approval for precise placement of homes sites in order to not create any physical object to disturb the protected Big Game (Elk and Deer) Winter Overlay. Any lines placed here would do that.
- May increase motorized access to winter ranges from road construction.
- The alternative Keating line will directly affect the migration of deer and elk in the area. Wintering ground for these animals and would be greatly impacted.

#### Sage or Sharp-tailed Grouse

- The alternative route would further fragment the largest remaining sage grouse habitat in Baker County (Oregon).
- Keating Valley has areas with Sage Grouse (Oregon).
- Sage grouse also nest and winter on the ranch boundaries.
- Sage grouse with small numbers any development could be detrimental to their population growth.
- Sage-grouse populations and habitats could be affected. Grouse may avoid or abandon otherwise suitable breeding habitat, brood areas, and other habitats near linear features (i.e. roads) or tall structures (i.e., towers) or degraded habitat.
- Towers with perching sites for raptors and nesting sites for corvids could result in reduced lek attendance and increased grouse predation and nest depredation rates.
- The alternate route would go through a sensitive sage grouse area with several leks.
- The transmission line could have negative impacts to the Greater Sage Grouse habitat.
- Why is it ok to harm Sage Grouse Leks on our lands but not on BLM- Is not the species endangered or not?

#### Water Fowl

- Love Reservoir is a stopping place for migrating waterfowl and year around habitat for other birds and animals.
- Snake, Owyhee, Boise, and Malheur rivers and Gamble Island are prime water fowl habitat.
- Waterfowl and shorebird high-use areas, wildlife management areas, national wildlife refuges, and areas of high and concentrated use during spring and fall migration, nesting, and brood rearing seasons, could be affected.
- Waterfowl and shorebird migration routes may be affected.

#### **Passerine Birds**

• Assess the effects on seasonal passerine bird migration routes from electrical transmission corridors, including bird mortality.

#### Bats

• Bat populations and habitats should be evaluated.

#### Amphibians and Reptiles

• Assess the effects on reptile and amphibian populations and habitats, particularly hibernacula.

#### Raptors

- Assess how towers will affect eagles and owls.
- Assess the effects of construction, operation, and maintenance on resident and migratory raptors, including electrocution.

#### Small Mammals

Assess the effects of ground disturbance and fragmentation on pygmy rabbits and their habitat.

#### Large Mammals

- Assess the impacts on elk, antelope and mule deer.
- The Keating Valley is feeding and travel route for elk, prime wintering grounds for mule deer.

#### Recreation

- Recreation activities that should be assessed include motorized recreation (off-highway vehicles and 4-wheeling), public access, patterns of transportation and other infrastructure development, hunting (waterfowl, upland game, big game), fishing, rock hounding, air shows, floating, boating, and sightseeing.
- Recreational facilities that should be assessed include the model remote control airplane strip near Malheur Butte, National Historic Oregon Interpretive Center, golf courses, and Beagle Creek Recreational facility (Oregon).
- Recreational areas that should be assessed include Malheur County, Malheur, Boise, Owyhee, and Snake Rivers, Upper Holman and upper Pritchard Creek drainages (Oregon), Canyon County Scenic Byway and the Boise River Trails Route.

• Assess the effects from visual impacts on recreational facilities, activities, and areas.

#### Access/Road Construction

- Impacts on roads may include curtailed access, degradation, trespassing.
- Impacts from roads may included trespassing, higher maintenance costs, dust, erosion.
- How will access roads and areas taken out of production be maintained to ensure no noxious weeds and invasive species?
- What is the liability for injury on private property that was accessed by the easement?
- Will all Idaho Power employees with trucks and equipment come onto properties anytime without notifying land owners?
- Snowmobiles using the ROW.

#### Vegetation/Weeds/Wetlands

- Assess impacts on spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants, timber, riparian areas, meadows, sensitive and listed plant species, permanent and seasonal wetlands, riparian areas, and old growth forest.
- The Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility and three Research Natural Areas are dominated by native shrub-steppe and grassland habitats (Oregon).
- How will vegetation be managed within the transmission line corridor? Will herbicide be the primary mode of vegetation management?
- Heavy equipment not allowed within 100 feet of the open meadow land known as Howard Meadows (Oregon).
- Will adequate oversight and inspection of equipment for cleanliness be factored into the cost of implementation?
- Analyze the effects of the vegetation management.
- Require Idaho Power to restore the land after construction and after retirement of the facilities, even if reseeding or restoration activities need to be repeated.
- Asses the effect fire occurrence, frequency, and severity; especially as it relates to shrub-steppe and forests.
- Will payment for trees that are removed be for existing or future loss as well?

#### Fish

• Beagle Creek is an unpolluted ecosystem that hosts the Red Banded Trout (Oregon).

#### **Special Designations**

- The blue and red routes would create easements which interfere with the line of vision of a pilot approaching the bombing target on the adjacent Boardman Bombing Range (Oregon).
- The Nature Conservancy manages the Boardman Conservation Area under a lease With Threemile Canyon Farms (Oregon).
- Baldock Slough Wetlands Restoration Project under permanent conservation easement (NRCS).
- Catherine Creek Park (Oregon).

- National Monuments, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Scenic and Historic Trails, and Wilderness Areas.
- Fort Boise Wildlife Management Area (Idaho).
- Takatori Access (Idaho).
- Boise River Trail system in the Parma area (Idaho).

#### Land Use

- Land use concerns to consider include the effects on farming and ranching, specifically: interference with aerial spraying, disruption to farming, maneuvering of livestock, effects on livestock, hazards to tractors and harvest machinery (height and obstruction), interference with electronic monitoring of irrigation systems, interference with computer and GPS influenced equipment, impacts on maintaining fences and other infrastructure, damages to fencing, and impacts on siphon structures.
- Land uses concerns other than farming include; radio and TV interference, cell phone interference, family cemeteries, increased fire danger, interference with aircraft communication, access and radio communications for fire fighting, buffer zones for other power lines, future uses, model airplane flying.
- Conflicts with land use plans and zoning that should be considered are; identified goal of the Baker City in pursuing economic development, while maintaining the authenticity of Baker's quality of life; violation of exclusive farm use zoning; land in CREP, prime farmland; current use (Owyhee River, Snake River and Malheur River valleys), CRP (riparian forest buffer, wetland/riparian areas, sagebrush steppe), management of State Endowment lands, residential use areas, statewide planning goals adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission, Goal 3 of the Oregon Land Use law, Malheur County's exclusive farm use or exclusive range use zones, Right To Farm law. City of Boardman long term master planning for the wastewater treatment system.
- Stray voltage affecting certified organic crop lands.
- If bees are affected, it would affect pollination.
- Land removed from production for towers and access roads.
- Assume the local landowners will be entitled to the same agreement the BLM has recently done with regards to power issues.
- Funding for additional fire fighting facilities and staffing in rural areas.
- Increased trespass activity due to new roads.
- Increased chance of lightening striking a tower, causing an extreme fire danger.
- Inefficiencies will cost farmers money.
- Noise effects on livestock (buzzing and crackling).
- Because of Oregon's land use laws, how can you justify running major power lines through our farms, our feedlots, our sheds and shops?
- Union County, Oregon land use requirements to evaluate at least 1320 feet on either side of the right of way to address possible county recognized Goal 5 resources. Therefore, we believe the study area should include at least one-quarter mile on either side of a proposed right of way.
- Ongoing changes in irrigation methods will place a priority on sprinkler lines.

- Farm equipment become larger in the past 50 years and will continue to see higher capacity, larger machinery in years to come.
- The future use or transition of State Endowment lands will be impacted.
- The City of Boardman planned the future installation of additional wastewater treatment facilities via land application of effluent in the same area where the proposed transmission line is routed.
- The power line will severely and irreversibly impact the city's (Parma Idaho) future growth, development, and annexation.
- Parma recently expanded its area of impact. This impact area will ultimately be annexed into the City of Parma (Idaho) and work has already commenced on a higher density residential and commercial development in this area.
- How many of these lands are Forest Service roaded, or potentially suitable for BLM WSA status?
- 40 square feet and the attendant access roads are a considerable section of land in a field.
- The Parma School District's future building site for a Middle School and Sports Facility on Klahr Road (Idaho).
- The Trailridge Subdivision proposed Phase III (Parma, Idaho).
- Approved commercial and residential subdivision located from Hexon Road to Sharp Lane to Apple Valley Road (Parma, Idaho)
- The University of Idaho Research Center at Klahr Road and University of Idaho Lane, a major agricultural research facility (Parma, Idaho).
- Planned Emergency Response Tower city of Parma and Canyon County (Idaho).
- Proposed future reservoir site, a city of Parma park facility, and a future gravity flow water distribution system for residential and commercial development in the area of impact (Idaho).

#### Irrigation

- Towers and service roads are not compatible with center pivot or wheel line irrigation systems, including those currently in use and future use.
- Would affect ability to meet the Clean Water Act requirements to minimize run off if surface, wheel lines, pivots irrigation can't be used. Current trend is leaning towards banning gravity irrigation and demanding sprinklers only.
- Irrigation ditches will need to be moved, fields cut up to which will make them less efficient to farm and less productive due to loss of the ability to use equipment efficiently.
- Towers in fields and power lines crossing roads and ditches, along with access roads, would make furrow gravity irrigation impossible where a tower is located.
- Too close to sprinklers lines under the high power lines.
- Concerned about the damages to irrigation ditches and underground pipelines.

#### **Greenhouse Gasses and Climate**

• Resources that have been affected by climate change could be affected by the project.

- Resources affected by climate change could affect the project within sensitive areas.
- Quantify and disclose greenhouse gas emissions from the project activities.
- Cutting forests would have a carbon impact.

#### Geology/Soils/Paleontology

- Soil and geological surveys are necessary to ensure that the geology can sustain the construction and the infrastructure necessary for maintenance.
- Removing tree cover will cause erosion during spring run-off.
- A seismic fault lie plus geothermal wells and springs occur in the area. A mesa and rocky cliff that overlooks the Snake River has the history and capacity for future rock slides.
- Soil is very susceptible to erosion in this area.
- The area is composed of steep canyons, hills, valleys and mountains that often experience seismic instability.
- The soils in the Keating and Medical Springs (Oregon) area are highly erosive and unstable.
- Petrified wood has been found on both Lindsey Mountain and in the Kitchen Creek Valley (Oregon).
- Would further damage fossils.

#### Cumulative Effects

Comments in this category included activities that should be considered and which resources might be included in the analysis.

- Activities that should be evaluated in cumulative effects include new corridors/lines/disturbance including natural gas (Ruby, Bronco), DOE corridors and others in the region of Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, California and Utah, improvements, and facilities; Hemingway Substation; and phase 2-4 of the Union County, Oregon wind turbine project, its additional power line connections, and its substations.
- The cumulative effects analysis should include the timeframe and geographic area affected by the proposed action.
- Resources that should be included in the cumulative effects analysis are: farm land crossings, valley crossings, hazards to spray planes, height limitation on farm equipment, removal of prime ground, confined animal operations, high visibility, annoying helicopter overflights, possible electrical interference, creation of new utility corridors that encourage other utilities, residences, historic properties, recreational opportunities, visual resources, grazing disturbances, weeds, the community, and local economies.
- Development and siting of other energy resources including wind, solar, hydropower, and nuclear power facilities need to be considered with this broad corridor context from the perspective of land use and development patterns, and human disturbance and activities.

Appendix A NOI and Scoping Package

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

#### AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Notice of Meeting

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA).

*Date:* Thursday, October 2, 2008 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m., times may be adjusted).

*Location:* National Press Club Ballroom, 529 14th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20045.

Please note that this is the anticipated agenda and is subject to change.

*Keynote:* Henrietta H. Fore, USAID Administrator and Director of United States Foreign Assistance, will speak on key issues before USAID and the foreign assistance community including the High Level Forum in Accra on Aid Effectiveness and the United Nations General Assemby. She will also address the draft recommendations of the ACVFA Subcommittee on Public Outreach.

American Awareness of U.S. Foreign Assistance: The ACVFA's Subcommittee on Public Outreach will provide its draft recommendations to the full Committee and the general public. A respondent will provide feedback to the draft.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Persons wishing to attend the meeting can register online at *http://www.usaid.gov/about\_usaid/acvfa* or with Jocelyn Rowe at *jrowe@usaid.gov* or 202–712–4002.

Dated: September 8, 2008.

#### Jocelyn M. Rowe,

Executive Director, Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA), U.S. Agency for International Development.

[FR Doc. E8–21273 Filed 9–11–08; 8:45 am] BILLING CODE 6116–01–P

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

#### **Forest Service**

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**Bureau of Land Management** 

[OR-030-08-5101-ER-H048; OROR-065375; IDI-036029; HAG-08-0199]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Boardman-Hemingway 500 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Project (Project) in Idaho and Oregon and Possible Land Use Plan Amendments

AGENCIES: Bureau of Land Management, DOI; and Forest Service, USDA. ACTION: Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, possible land use plan amendments, and notice of public scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102 (2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and in response to right-of-way (ROW) applications filed by Idaho Power Company, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Vale District Office, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Wallowa-Whitman National Forest announce their intent to prepare an EIS and conduct public scoping meetings. Idaho Power Company proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a single circuit 500 kV overhead electric transmission line and appurtenant facilities beginning near Boardman, Oregon, and terminating near Melba, Idaho. The proposed route roughly parallels Interstate 84 and is approximately 278 miles long. Authorization of this Project may require the amendment of USFS or BLM land use plans.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process as required by NEPA. The BLM and USFS request that public comments be submitted by November 14, 2008. To provide the public an opportunity to review project information, public meetings are planned in Idaho and Oregon in communities near the proposed route. The following communities are being considered for meeting locations: Ontario, Baker City, La Grande, Pendleton, Pilot Rock, Hermiston, and Boardman, Oregon; Marsing and Homedale, Idaho. The scoping meetings will be conducted in an "open house" format. Staff from the BLM, USFS,

Oregon Department of Energy, Idaho Power Company, and environmental contractors will be available to answer questions and explain their respective roles and responsibilities. The BLM and USFS will announce the exact meeting dates, times, and locations at least 15 days prior to the event. Announcements will be made by news release, individual postcard mailings, and posting on the Project Web site (http://www.boardmanto hemingway.com).

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods: • Web site: http://

www.boardmantohemingway.com.
E-mail: B2HComments@blm.gov.

• *Mail:* Bureau of Land Management, Vale District Office, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon, 97918, Attention: Lucas Lucero.

Documents pertinent to the ROW application are on file and may be examined at:

• Bureau of Land Management, Vale District Office, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon, 97918.

• U.S. Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman Supervisor's Office, 1550 Dewey Avenue, Baker City, Oregon, 97814.

• U.S. Forest Service, La Grande Ranger District, 3502 Highway 30, La Grande Oregon, 97850.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Idaho Power Company has submitted ROW applications to construct, operate, and maintain a 500kV single circuit overhead electric transmission line on Federal lands. The purpose and need of the Project is to relieve existing congestion, capacity, and reliability constraints and allow for the delivery of up to 1500 megawatts (MW) of additional energy to target service areas principally in Idaho and Utah. The proposed project begins near Boardman, Oregon, just north of the Boardman Power Plant, at the newly proposed Boardman Substation. The Project route continues southeast to interconnect with the Hemingway Substation in southeastern Oregon. The Hemingway Substation is being planned and built separately from this Project and will be built regardless of the outcome of this Project so the Hemingway Substation will not be analyzed in this EIS. The Project route then proceeds southeast and terminates near Melba, Idaho, at the newly proposed Sand Hollow

# Notices

Friday, September 12, 2008

Substation. The proposed route is approximately 278 miles long. The requested ROW width is 250 feet. Idaho Power Company proposes to utilize steel lattice type structures approximately 150 feet in height with average spans between towers of 1200 feet. Access roads would be approximately 14 to 20 feet wide. Additional temporary work space would also be required during construction. Approximately 195 miles or 70 percent of the route is privately owned; 45 miles or 16 percent is administered by the BLM; 27 miles or 10 percent is administered by the USFS; and 11 miles or 4 percent is administered by the State of Oregon or other jurisdictions.

The route generally parallels Interstate 84 and other existing overhead and underground utilities and roadways. The proposed route also makes use of existing or proposed utility corridors on Federal lands. The BLM is the designated lead Federal agency for preparation of the EIS. Cooperating agencies identified at this time include: USFS, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, and the State of Oregon Department of Energy. Other agencies will be invited to participate as cooperating agencies. The EIS will analyze the proposed action and a reasonable range of route alternatives. The BLM and USFS encourage you to send your comments concerning the Project as currently proposed, feasible alternative locations, possible mitigation measures, and any other information relevant to the Project. Authorization of the Project may require amendments to one or more of the following BLM land use plans: Baker Resource Management Plan, Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan, Owyhee Resource Management Plan, Cascade Resource Management Plan, and one or more of the following USFS Forest Plans: Wallowa-Whitman Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. This notice serves to notify the public of these potential land use plan amendments as required by 43 CFR 1610.2 (c) and 36 CFR 219.7(c). If a land use plan amendment is determined to be required, the BLM and/or USFS will integrate the land use planning process into the NEPA analysis for this Project. Public input is important to ensure project-specific issues are evaluated prior to the agencies making a decision. Comments submitted timely will be considered in the NEPA process. Comments received after November 14, 2008 will be considered to the extent feasible. Please note that public comments and information submitted including names, street addresses, and

e-mail addresses of respondents will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during normal business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday through Friday, except for Federal holidays. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment-including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Periodic project updates during preparation of the EIS will be provided to the public through additional informational meetings, newsletters, postcard notices, or through the project Web site.

# **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information or to have your name added or removed from the project mailing list, contact Lucas Lucero, BLM Project Manager, (702) 515–5059 or *Lucas\_Lucero@blm.gov.*

Dated: September 8, 2008.

**David R. Henderson**, District Manager.

Dated: September 8, 2008.

#### Steven Ellis,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. E8–21285 Filed 9–11–08; 8:45 am] BILLING CODE 4310–33–P

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

#### **Forest Service**

#### Huron-Manistee National Forests, Michigan, White Pines Wind Farm Project

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service has accepted an application for a special use authorization from White Pines Wind Farm LLC for the installation and operation of 20 to 28 wind turbines and associated infrastructure to provide between 50 and 70 megawatts (MW) of wind energy on National Forest System (NFS) lands managed by the Huron-Manistee National Forests. The White Pines Wind Farm Project (the Project) would occupy approximately 75 acres of NFS land within a Project Area of about 10,000 acres on the Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District over its proposed 30year life.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by October 12, 2008. The draft environmental impact statement is expected May 2009 and the final environmental impact statement is expected December 2009.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Patricia O'Connell, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forests, 412 Red Apple Road, Manistee, MI 49660; fax: 231–723–8642. Send electronic comments to: commentseastern-huron-manisteemanistee@fs.fed.us.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patricia O'Connell, Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forests; telephone: 231–723– 2211, ext. 3119; fax: 231–723–8642. See address above under **ADDRESSES**. Copies of documents may be requested at the same address. Another means of obtaining information is to visit the Forest Web page at *http://www.fs.fed.us/ r9/hmnf* then click on "Project and Planning," then "Cadillac and Manistee Projects," and then "White Pines Wind Farm Project."

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### **Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of this project is to respond to an application for a special use authorization submitted by White Pines Wind Farm LLC to develop a wind farm on National Forest System lands within the Huron-Manistee National Forests. White Pines Wind Farm LLC proposes to generate 50 to 70 MW of wind energy by constructing and operating between 20 and 28 wind turbines, in proximity to existing distribution facilities (utility grid), in an area with an adequate wind resource on National Forest System lands with consolidated ownership. The proposed project is needed to help meet Michigan's and the region's growing demand for reliable sources of clean, cost-effective, renewable energy. The project is consistent with the Huron-Manistee National Forests' Land and Resource Management Plan and with Forest Service objectives for management of special uses on National Forest System lands.

#### **Proposed Action**

White Pines is proposing to install and operate the Project on land located mostly within the boundaries of the Huron-Manistee National Forests. The Project proposes construction of the wind turbines and associated infrastructure in April 2010, with an anticipated in-service date of December













