Appendix G

VRM Amendment Analysis

- Appendix G-1: BLM Visual Resource Management Amendments Analysis
- Appendix G-2: USDA Forest Service Visual Resource Management Amendments Analysis

Appendix G-1
BLM Visual Resource Management Amendments Analysis

Appendix G-1

Bureau of Land Management
Visual Resource Management Amendments Analysis

Gateway West Transmission Line Project

Prepared by Tetra Tech

Submitted To:

Bureau of Land Management

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACEC	area of critical environmental concern
AOI	area of inconsistency
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FO	Field Office
Forest Service	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Gateway West	Gateway West Transmission Line Project
GIS	geographic information system
IDT	Interdisciplinary Team
KOP	key observation point
kV	kilovolt
LRT	Linear Routing Tool
MFP	management framework plan
NF	National Forest
NHT	National Historic Trail
NM	National Monument
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
Project	Gateway West Transmission Line Project
RMP	resource management plan
RMPPA	Rawlins Management Plan Planning Area
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	right-of-way
SMA	Special Management Area
SQR	Scenic Quality Rating
SR	State Route
SRBOP	Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
VCR	visual contrast rating
VRI	Visual Resource Inventory
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WHMA	Wildlife Habitat Management Area
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River
WWE	West-Wide Energy

1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides an analysis of locations where visual resource management driven amendments to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource management plans (RMPs) and/or management framework plans (MFPs) may be necessary for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (Gateway West or Project). It also provides the support documentation required for using the "Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing and Disruptive Activities" (included as an appendix in Wyoming BLM land use plans) where projects would otherwise not be in conformance with management strategies. Gateway West consists of 10 segments between the Windstar Substation at Glenrock, Wyoming, and the Hemingway Substation approximately 30 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho, a total distance of approximately 990.5 miles (see Figure 1-1).

The transmission line would cross numerous BLM district and field offices. Activities on BLM-managed land are governed by direction found in individual RMPs and MFPs. These lands are subject to visual resource management objectives as developed using the BLM Visual Resource Management (VRM) System (BLM 1984) and are presented in the RMP or MFP. The BLM system identifies four VRM Classes (I through IV) with specific management prescriptions for each class. The system is based on an inventory of the existing scenic quality, viewer sensitivity, and viewing distance zones. The management class for a given area is typically arrived at by comparing the scenic quality, visual sensitivity, and distance zone with the overall goals set forth for the area. The objectives of each VRM classification from the VRM Visual Resource Inventory Manual are stated below:

- VRM Class I. The objective is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
- VRM Class II. The objective is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
- VRM Class III. The objective is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate or lower. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
- VRM Class IV. The objective is to provide for management activities that require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

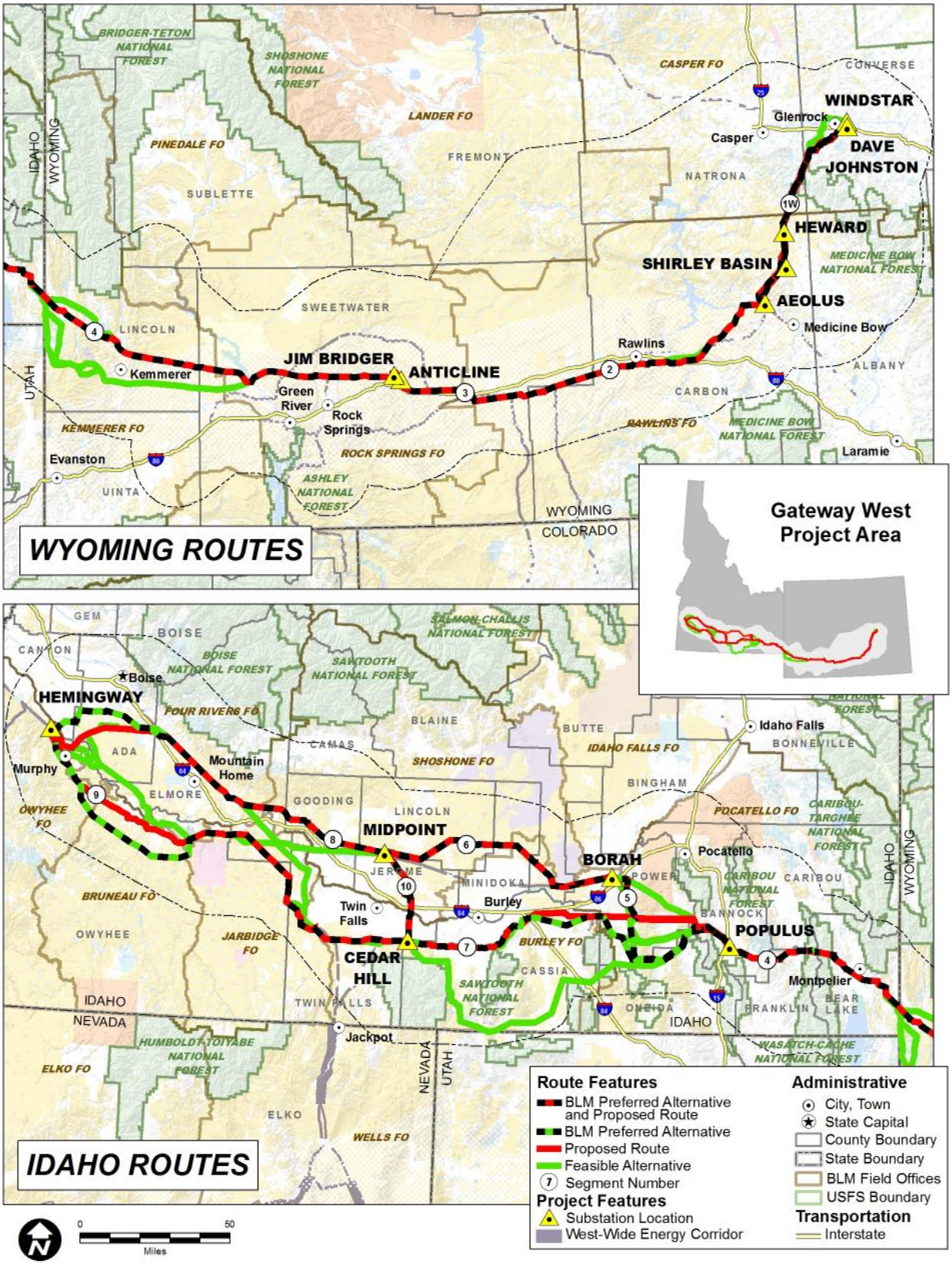


Figure 1-1. Project Overview

The VRM classifications are assigned after a Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) has been conducted of the area. VRI information is presented for each area of inconsistency (AOI) where information was available. The following description is taken from BLM Manual H-8410-1 (BLM 1986b):

> *The visual resource inventory process provides BLM managers with a means for determining visual values. The inventory consists of a scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity level analysis, and a delineation of distance zones. Based on these three factors, BLM-administered lands are placed into one of four visual resource inventory classes. These inventory classes represent the relative value of the visual resources. Classes I and II being the most valued, Class III representing a moderate value, and Class IV being of least value. The inventory classes provide the basis for considering visual values in the resource management planning (RMP) process…*
>
> *…Scenic quality is a measure of the visual appeal of a tract of land. In the visual resource inventory process, public lands are given an A, B, or C rating based on the apparent scenic quality which is determined using seven key factors: landform, vegetation, water, color, adjacent scenery, scarcity, and cultural modifications…*
>
> *…The planning area is subdivided into scenic quality rating units for rating purposes. Rating areas are delineated on a basis of: like physiographic characteristics; similar visual patterns, texture, color, variety, etc.; and areas which have similar impacts from man-made modifications…*
>
> *…Visual resource classes are categories assigned to public lands, which serves two purposes: (1) an inventory tool that portrays the relative value of the visual resources, and (2) a management tool that portrays the visual management objectives. There are four classes (I, II, III, and IV). … Visual resource inventory classes are assigned through the inventory process. Class I is assigned to those areas where a management decision has been made previously to maintain a natural landscape. This includes areas such as national wilderness areas, the wild section of national wild and scenic rivers, and other congressionally and administratively designated areas where decisions have been made to preserve a natural landscape. Classes II, III, and IV are assigned based on a combination of scenic quality, sensitivity level, and distance zones. … Inventory classes are informational in nature and provide the basis for considering visual values in the RMP process. They do not establish management direction and should not be used as a basis for constraining or limiting surface disturbing activities.*

The presence of a transmission line in VRM Classes I and II and, in some special circumstances, Class III areas usually does not conform with visual management objectives. Areas where this occurs are identified as AOIs.

Best Management Practices for tower design and location were applied to reduce plan inconsistency as much as possible. This report describes each of the AOIs and explains why the VRM Class I, II or, in some cases, III would be crossed and what consideration was given to avoiding the area. The type of amendment required, should the proposed or an alternative route be selected, is then proposed. Two types of land use plan amendments were considered: 1) changing the VRM classification, or 2) allowing the proposed use to occur without changing the VRM classification. No amendment is proposed for the AOI in Rawlins, Wyoming, as the conditions of the AOI were found to meet the requirements under Appendix 1 of the Rawlins RMP ("Wyoming Bureau of Land Management Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing and Disruptive Activities"). The analysis is provided in this appendix to meet the documentation requirements of the RMP.

Maps showing the distribution of VRM classes within RMP and MFP boundaries are shown in Section 5.

2 PROJECT FEATURES AFFECTING VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Facility Components

The Project facility components that affect the visual environment include:

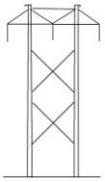
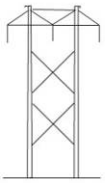
- Approximately 990.5 miles of transmission lines and associated support structures and conductors.
  - Approximately 147 miles (1,119 structures) would be single-circuit 230-kilovolt (kV) or 345-kV steel H-frame structures between 60 and 90 feet tall with an 800-foot average distance between structures.
  - Approximately 838 miles (3,724 structures) would be single-circuit 500-kV lattice steel structures between 145 and 180 feet tall with a 1,200- to 1,300-foot average distance between structures.
  - Approximately 5.1 miles (25 structures) would be single-circuit 345-kV steel H-frame structures between 80 and 110 feet tall with an 800-foot average distance between structures.
  - The Project would have 12 substations, including 3 proposed new Project-specific substations and 9 existing substations that would be expanded for this Project;
- Ancillary facilities such as construction roads (up to 16-feet wide) and 8-foot-wide service roads, temporary construction multipurpose yards, regeneration stations, power supply to new substations, and other similar facilities would also be visible in the construction and operations phases of the Project.

Table 2.1-1 describes aspects of the primary proposed structures that would affect the visual environment.

Table 2.1-1. Primary Transmission Structures – Visual Description

Project Facility	Description
Transmission Line Segments	
Transmission Line Features Common to All Proposed 500-kV Segments Example single-circuit structure	• Conductors: Bundled with three subconductors per phase. Non-specular (dull) finish rather than a shiny finish. • Estimated subconductor diameter: 1.504 inches. • Bundle spacing: Distance between subconductors is 18 inches and 25 inches. • Non-reflective, non-refractive insulators. • Typical ground clearance: 35 feet. • Structure types: lattice steel single and double circuit structures. Dulled galvanized steel finish. • Structure heights: Single-circuit structure varies between 145 and 180 feet. Average height of 156 feet. • Approximate distance between structures: 1,200 to 1,300 feet. • Right-of-way (ROW) width: 250 feet.

Table 2.1-1. Primary Transmission Structures – Visual Description (continued)

Project Facility	Description
Transmission Line Features for Segment 3A (345-kV)  Example single-circuit structure	• Conductors: Bundled with three subconductors per phase. Non-specular (dull) finish rather than a shiny finish. • Estimated subconductor diameter: 1.345 inches. • Bundle spacing: Distance between subconductors is 18 inches and 25 inches. • Non-reflective, non-refractive insulators. • Typical ground clearance: 30 feet. • Structure types: single-circuit steel H-frame structures, self-weathering steel. • Structure heights: varies between 80 and 110 feet. • Approximate distance between structures: 800 feet. • ROW width: 150 feet.
Transmission Line Features Common to All Proposed 230-kV Segments  Example single-circuit structure	• Conductors: Bundled with two subconductors per phase. Non-specular finish. • Bundle spacing: 18 inches vertical. • Non-reflective, non-refractive insulators. • Typical ground clearance: 28 feet. • Structure types: single-circuit steel H-frame structures, self-weathering steel. • Above-ground structure heights: varies between 60 and 90 feet. • Approximate distance between structures: 800 feet. • ROW width: 125 feet.

2.2 Project-wide Visual Mitigation Measures Proposed by the Proponents

The Proponents have incorporated three mitigation measures into the Project to reduce visual impacts:

1. Transmission towers would be constructed of dulled galvanized steel to minimize visual ‘impacts.
2. Non-specular (dull appearance) transmission line conductors would be used.
3. Self-weathering steel pole H-frame structures would be used in Segment 1 and in certain visually sensitive areas.

3 STUDY ASSUMPTIONS

The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) assumed that BLM land use plan amendments would be required for AOIs. The IDT also assumed that design elements and/or other mitigation measures that reduce impacts would not always reduce the visual contrast to a level that conformed with an area’s VRM class.

For the purpose of this study, the following approaches were used:

- The location of the Proposed Route or Route Alternatives across VRM Class III is consistent with the class objectives if consideration was given to alternative alignments that would avoid the area and feasible mitigation was applied. It was

determined that the proposed alignment and alternatives would not dominate the characteristic landscapes and would comply with VRM Class III objectives except in a few special circumstances, where crossing VRM Class III would not be consistent with the visual characteristics of the management class. Those areas received visual analysis, as described in Section 5.

- Direction for considering visual resource values stated in RMPs and MFPs were taken into consideration. Where absent or general in nature, the management direction provide in BLM Handbook H-1601-1, *Land Use Planning,* was considered (BLM 2005a).
- The AOI analysis area consisted of up to 15 miles from either side of the centerline of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives.

4 PROJECT-WIDE ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

During transmission line siting, VRM Class I and Class II lands were avoided where possible. The routes were also sited to avoid historic trails (where possible) and monuments, wildlife refuges, state or federal parks or monuments, prominent peaks, and populated areas and a variety of natural resources including raptor nests, sage-grouse leks, and core areas. The objective was to have the least overall impact.

Constraint analyses have been used for the Project to assist in siting the transmission line routes and alternatives. In the initial phase, the Proponents attempted to locate the routes between required interconnection points (substations) using a comprehensive set of avoidance and opportunity criteria. Using this information, the Proponents initially identified, evaluated, and compared alternative corridors for each of the 10 segments. A Proposed Route was selected and alternative corridors were also evaluated for each segment.

Two general approaches were used to identify and evaluate alternative routes and select the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives carried forward for detailed study for each segment.

1. In proposed and established utility corridors[1] such as the Section 368 Energy Act West-wide Energy (WWE) corridor (DOE and BLM 2009) or BLM and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) designated utility corridors, and/or where existing transmission lines exist, analyses were completed to characterize the resources present in the areas crossed by the corridors and to determine if use of such corridors would result in significant environmental effects. A combination of constraint mapping, stakeholder input, and field reconnaissance was used to confirm the use of existing or planned corridors. In several cases, new routes deviating from the existing or planned

[1] In order to achieve the capacity rating needed to serve present and future loads within the Proponents' service area, the Western Electricity Coordinating Council requires a minimum separation from existing transmission lines that serve substantially the same load as that served by each of the new Gateway West transmission segments. As described in Chapter 1 of the environmental impact statement, that minimum separation depends on the purpose of the existing line, the load it now serves, and the remaining capacity of the rest of the grid to absorb the load if the several co-located lines fail at once. For the purposes of the initial siting study, the longest span was assumed to be 1,500 feet, thereby dictating the minimum distance between existing and proposed transmission lines serving the same load.

corridors were proposed because of adjacent environmental constraints such as sage-grouse leks, historic features, raptor nests, and oil and gas wells.

2. Where no existing or planned corridors existed, a "Greenfield" siting approach was followed.[2] In those cases, a geographic information system (GIS) computer analysis (Linear Routing Tool [LRT]) was used to identify initial corridors for further evaluation. Using data from numerous public sources, the LRT was used to develop alternative transmission line corridors by considering both routing constraints and opportunities. Constraints are defined as resources or conditions that may be negatively affected by transmission line routing. Opportunities are defined as resources or conditions that are favorable to facility construction or operation because of their characteristics.

Opportunities included, but were not limited to, WWE corridors, BLM or Forest Service designated utility corridors, and existing transmission lines energized to at least 230 kV. Many constraints were considered. These included railroads, pipelines, highways, state and national parks, wildlife refuges, BLM areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs), Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Department of Defense land, Bureau of Indian Affairs land and reservations, prime farmland, irrigated agriculture, confined animal feeding operations, dairies, airports, residences, cities and towns, oil and gas wells, oil and gas leases, surface and underground mining, erodible soils, geologic hazards, steep slopes, paleontological and historical resources, wetlands and floodplains. A wide variety of plant and animal concerns were also considered, including plant and animal species of concern, sage-grouse leks and core areas, raptor nests, crucial big game winter and parturition ranges, wild horse and burro management areas, and sensitive fisheries. Visual considerations included BLM VRM Class I, II, and III areas; scenic overlooks; scenic highways; federally designated scenic areas; and state and local scenic by-ways. Following selection of proposed and alternative routes via the LRT process, the alternatives were further refined by reviewing aerial photography and topographic maps or on the basis of important input received from stakeholders, field reconnaissance, and other sources.

In subsequent phases that have extended over one year, BLM evaluated initial routes, made adjustments and added additional routes to minimize impacts. Later cooperators and other stakeholders identified routes, often to accomplish a dominant objective based on a single resource such as agriculture or historic sites over other resources including VRM classes. Taking all of the various constraints and opportunities into consideration, crossing of VRM sensitive lands could not be avoided throughout the Project. Section 5 describes each AOI and identified proposed land use plan amendments for the Project to conform to the applicable land use plan.

5 AREAS OF INCONSISTENCY

This section of the report summarizes the conditions for each AOI. It is organized by RMP or MFP from east to west by route segment and by individual AOI. Analyses of AOIs that would occur on the BLM's Preferred Route (Proposed Segments 1, 2, 3,4, 6,

[2] "Greenfield route" is a route that would be located away from linear corridors, thereby creating a new land use.

and 10; and combinations of proposed and alternative routes for Segments 5, 7, 8, and 9) are described first. AOIs occurring only in alternatives that are not part of the Proposed Route are presented after. The description for each AOI includes a summary of the applicable BLM land use plan and any visual considerations described in the plan. The route segments and alternatives are then described by location and the rationale provided for why routes could not avoid VRM Class I, II and, in some cases, III areas. The general discussion is followed by a summary of the existing landscape conditions within the study area.

Site maps are included that show VRM classes and a visual analysis conducted for an area within a 15-mile radius of the AOI. Viewshed analyses were run using 190-foot transmission structures for those segments (Segments 2, 3, and 4) where a design alternative was considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The double-circuit transmission structures are no longer being considered; therefore, the degree of visibility demonstrated in the viewsheds for these segments is greater than would actually occur. The viewshed analyses were not rerun at the lower maximum tower height of 180 feet. Actual tower heights will vary depending on topography and other design considerations. The range for tower height discussed in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS is between 145 and 180 feet. The intent of the viewshed analyses is to provide an indication of areas that could potentially have a view of the Project in the AOIs. While the 190-foot height is 10 feet greater than what will be considered, it still provides a visual indication of the degree of potential Project visibility in areas of VRM concern.

The last section of each AOI discussion is a consistency analysis describing the results of the analysis, and the degree to which the AOI conforms or differs from the VRM class objective. Included in some AOIs are simulations of the Project within the landscape. A detailed description of the method for these simulations is provided in Section 3.2 of the Final EIS. Simulations for Segments 2, 3, and 4 were created for the Draft EIS using a double-circuit tower configuration that is no longer being used. Simulations showing the differences between the double-circuit and the proposed single-circuit configurations are provided in Appendix E, Figures E.2-12 and E.2-13 in the Final EIS. The analysis also describes proposed plan amendments for the AOIs that do not conform to existing land use plans.

The proposed and alternative routes for the Project would require BLM actions to account for visual impacts in areas within 12 different BLM land use plans. Transmission line Segments 1W, 2, 3, and part of 4 are located in Wyoming (Figure 1-1). The Rawlins, Green River, and Kemmerer RMPs apply to actions in these segments. The Casper Field Office (FO) has reviewed areas that were previously identified as AOIs for Segment 1W and stated that they were the result of mapping errors and that these areas would no longer be VRM Class II after the plan maintenance action they were conducting to address these mapping errors has been conducted. Segment 2 and the eastern portion of Segment 4 contain a total of eight AOIs. Segment 3 does not contain any AOIs.

The remainder of Segment 4 and Segments 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are located in Idaho. Affected land use plans include the Pocatello RMP, Cassia RMP, Twin Falls MFP, Jarbidge RMP, Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (SRBOP) RMP, Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP, and Bruneau MFP. Segments 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 contain a total of 16 AOIs. Segment 6 involves energizing an existing

transmission to 500 kV and does not contain any AOIs, nor does Segment 10. The Wells RMP management area is no longer crossed by any Project alternatives; therefore, visual analyses are no longer provided for the Wells RMP in this appendix.

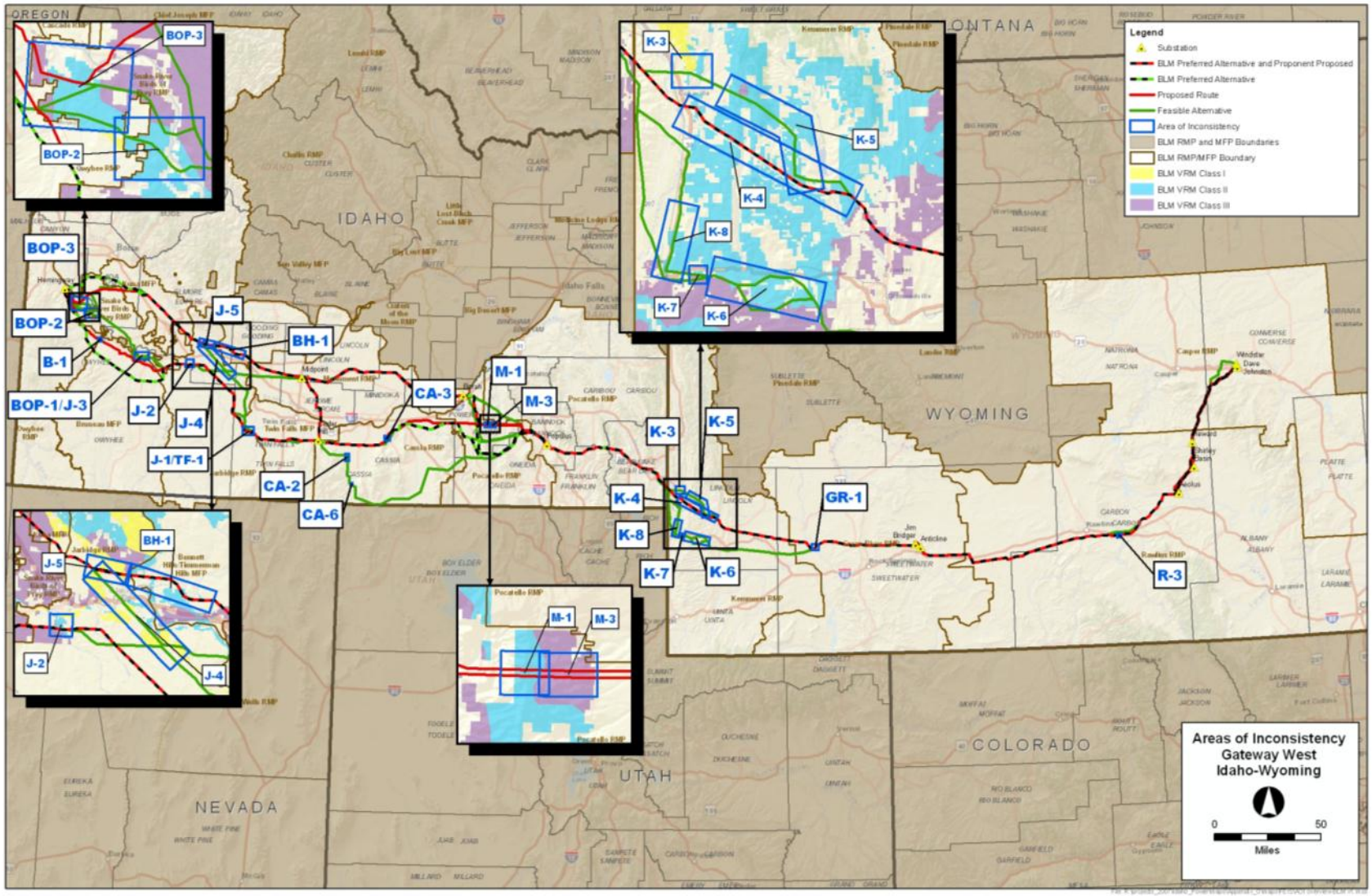
Table 5-1 lists AOIs by RMP/MFP and VRM class. Some AOIs have been dropped since the Draft EIS due to changes in routes or management. AOI CA-6 is a new AOI resulting to routing changes in Route Alternatives to Segment 7 (see Section 5.6.3). Figure 5-1 is an overview map showing AOIs Project-wide.

Table 5-1. BLM RMP and MFP Areas of Inconsistency

Land Use Plan	AOI Designation	Area Name	Route Designation (Maximum Transmission Structure Height)	VRM Class Crossed
Rawlins RMP	R-3	North Platte	Proposed 2 (180 feet)	IV
Green River RMP	GR-1	Green River	Proposed 4 (180 feet)	II
Kemmerer RMP	K-3	Sublette Range	Alternative 4F (180 feet)	II
	K-4	Tunp Range	Proposed 4 (180 feet)	II
	K-5	Hams Fork	Alternative 4F (180 feet)	II
	K-6	Fossil Butte	Alternatives 4B,C, (180 feet) Alternatives 4D,E (180 feet)	II
	K-7	Sillem Ridge	Alternatives 4C,E (180 feet)	II
	K-8	Boulder Ridge	Alternatives 4C,E (180 feet)	II
Pocatello RMP	M-1	Deep Creek	Proposed 5 (180 feet) Proposed 7 (180 feet)	II
	M-2	Snake River	Proposed 5 (180 feet)	II
	M-3	Deep Creek East	Proposed 5 (180 feet) Proposed 7 (180 feet)	III
Cassia RMP	CA-2	Cottonwood Creek	Alternative 7K (180 feet)	III
	CA-3	Spring Canyon	Alternative 7E (180 feet)	II
	CA-6	Goose Creek	Alternative 7K (180 feet)	II
Jarbidge RMP/Twin Falls MFP	TF-1/J-1	Salmon Falls Creek	Proposed 9 (180 feet)	II
Jarbidge RMP	J-2	Saylor Creek	Proposed 9 (180 feet)	II
	J-4	Oregon Trail	Alternative 8A (180 feet) Alternative 9B (180 feet)	I
	J-5	North Oregon Trail	Proposed 8 (180 feet)	I
SRBOP RMP/Jarbidge RMP	BOP-1/J-3	South Oregon Trail	Alternatives 9D, 9G (180 feet)	II
SRBOP RMP	BOP-2	Sinker Butte	Alternatives 9D, 9F, 8E (180 feet) Alternatives 9G. 9H (180 feet)	II
	BOP-3	Guffey Butte	Proposed 8 (180 feet) Alternatives 9D, 9F, 8E (180 feet) Alternatives 9G, 9H (180 ft)	II
Bennett Hills/ Timmerman Hills MFP	BH-1	Burnt Ridge	Proposed 8 (180 feet)	II
Bruneau MFP	B-1	Castle Creek	Proposed 9	II

MFP – Management Framework Plan; RMP – Resource Management Plan; SRBOP – Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

Figure 5-1. AOI Overview Map



5.1 Casper RMP

Preferred Route: No amendments are being proposed for the Casper RMP related to visual resources.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: No amendments are being proposed for the Casper RMP related to visual resources.

The Casper RMP (BLM 2007a) provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Casper FO in east-central Wyoming. The Casper RMP planning area encompasses approximately 8,500,000 acres in Natrona, Converse, Platte, and Goshen Counties. The Casper RMP discusses VRM visual resource values in Decision 5019 as "being managed under the VRM classes defined as mapped in the Casper FO GIS database. Changes in the number of acres within each VRM class depict a balance between development activities and protection of visual resources. These decisions included managing the foreground/middle ground of National Historic Trails (NHTs) as Class II until inventories are completed. If trail segments contribute to the overall eligibility that has integrity of setting they will be managed as VRM Class II. Where integrity of setting is lacking, the foreground/middle ground of NHTs will be managed as Class III." While the routes do cross NHTs, they do not do so on BLM-managed land in the Casper FO; however, some trail crossings would be close to BLM VRM Class II managed areas.

The northern portions of Segment 1W are located within the Casper FO. Segment 1W routes consist of single-circuit 230-kV transmission lines between the existing Windstar Substation near the Dave Johnston Power Plant at Glenrock, Wyoming, and the planned Aeolus Substation near Hanna, Wyoming. The distance between the substations is approximately 75 to 80 miles. Certain factors, such as following the existing WWE corridor, minimizing the length of the lines, avoidance of large population centers, and location within favorable topography, were considerations for all segments. Specific constraints within Segment 1W that affected the route location included big game crucial winter range, NHTs, raptor nest sites, avoidance of VRM Class I and II, sage-grouse leks and sage-grouse core areas, oil and gas wells, large private landholders who placed high values on the natural scenery, and threatened or endangered plants and animals. There is a mosaic of public and private land along the Proposed and Alternative Routes and, as a result, the lines pass through scattered parcels of VRM Class II land, a few miles or less in length at the time of the Draft EIS publication.

Portions of the proposed Project were identified in the Draft EIS as not conforming to the Casper RMP. However, proposed amendments included in the Draft EIS to the Casper RMP associated with Segments 1E and 1W are no longer included. Amendments associated with Segment 1E and Alternative 1E-C are no longer relevant because these routes are no longer being considered. The small parcels of BLM-managed land shown as VRM II in the Draft EIS (crossed by Segment 1W) were determined by the Casper FO to be incorrectly mapped. The correct designation is VRM III; therefore, the proposed amendments for these parcels are not needed. Also, a Plan Maintenance Action reclassified the WWE corridor, which contains an existing 230-kV transmission line, as VRM IV (BLM 2012d), eliminating the need for the Bates Creek amendment in Segment 1W.

5.2 Rawlins RMP

Preferred Route: No amendment is being proposed for the Rawlins RMP related to visual resources. Segment 3 (Preferred Route) would cross VRM IV land in the Platte River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and would not conform to management goals for this area, however, following further review, the BLM determined that conflicts can be resolved using the administrative process outlined in the Rawlins RMP under Appendix 1, "Wyoming Bureau of Land Management Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing and Disruptive Activities." The following analysis is provided in accordance with the requirements for documentation under Appendix 1 of the Rawlins RMP.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: The only AOI present in the planning area covered by the Rawlins RMP is the AOI on the Preferred Route. There are no alternative routes for Segment 3.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The Rawlins RMP (BLM 2008a) provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Rawlins FO in southeastern Wyoming. The Rawlins RMP planning area covers approximately 11,200,000 acres in Sweetwater, Carbon, Albany, and Laramie Counties, Wyoming (see Figure 5.2-1). The current objective of visual resource management within the Rawlins Management Plan Planning Area (RMPPA) is to minimize adverse effects on visual resources while maintaining the effectiveness of other land use allocations. Visual resources in the RMPPA are managed according to the VRM classes to which they are assigned. The Rawlins RMP also states that visual resources should be managed to meet the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands. The RMP states, "VRM classes are designated as shown on Map 2-50 (Table 2-9 and Appendix 25)."

The southern portion of Segment 1W, Segment 2, and the eastern portion of Segment 3 cross the RMPPA. Single-circuit 230-kV lines would enter Aeolus Substation in Segment 1 from the north and east. A single-circuit 500-kV line is proposed from Aeolus west to Anticline Substation. Constraints and opportunities within the RMPPA are very similar to those found along the northern Segment 1 routes. A high priority was placed on following the WWE corridor, minimizing the length of the lines, and locating within favorable topography. Specific constraints within the RMPPA that affected route location included big game crucial winter range, national historic trails, raptor nest sites, VRM Class I and II areas, sage-grouse leks and sage-grouse core areas, mining claims, oil and gas wells, landowner concerns, and threatened or endangered plants and animals. The number of oil and gas wells to be avoided was also an important routing concern. Additional considerations specific to Segment 2 included the Fort Fred Steele State Historic site and nearby residences, the existing Seven Mile Hill Wind Energy Project, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail SRMA, the North Platte SRMA, and historic trails. Use of the WWE corridor was not always feasible due to existing energy developments, thus attempts were also made to locate the routes within the Interstate 80 corridor, where other constraints did not preclude this location. There is a mosaic of public and private land within the northern part of the RMPPA and a very distinct checkerboard pattern in the western part. The land use pattern and consideration cited

above resulted in the Proposed Route crossing land where the Project would not conform to the RMP objectives and would require resolution of conflicts using the administrative process under Appendix 1 of the Rawlins RMP.

One AOI was identified where the Project would not conform to current VRM objectives; however, the Record of Decision (ROD; approved in October 2012) for the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project and Approved Visual Resource Management Plan amendment (BLM 2012c) changed the VRM classification to VRM Class IV. This crossing would still not conform to the RMP for specific visual management goals related to the North Platte River SRMA. This language states that "Surface disturbing activities on public lands within one-quarter mile on either side of the river will be intensively managed to maintain the quality of the visual resource" (BLM 2008i; North Platte SRMA, Management Action #9, page 2-27).

The North Platte AOI (AOI-R3)[3] is located where the Proposed Route would cross an area managed as VRM Class III until the October 2012 amendment changed the classification to VRM Class IV. While a transmission line would likely conform to VRM Class IV objectives, it would dominate the view of the casual observer and may therefore not conform to management goals within the SRMA, which require intensive management to preserve the visual resource within 0.25 mile of the river.

5.2.1 AOI R-3 North Platte SRMA AOI (Segment 2 – Preferred [Proposed] Route)

The North Platte AOI is located approximately 2 miles southeast of Fort Steele, Wyoming, and the Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site in Segment 2. This portion of the Project would comprise a single-circuit 500-kV line. The Proposed Route is a 92 mile-long 500-kV single-circuit line between the proposed Aeolus Substation and the location of the originally planned Creston Substation. This segment generally follows a combination of the WWE corridor and existing transmission lines. The route crosses the southern end of the Fort Steele Breaks near Walcott Junction and then parallels I-80 on the north side for approximately 4.5 miles before crossing I-80 and the North Platte River and associated North Platte SRMA beginning 0.25 mile east of the river to west edge of the AOI. In the Draft EIS, the AOI included a single BLM parcel of approximately 951 acres of VRM Class III land that would be crossed for 1.2 miles. The 2012 amendment to the RMP reclassified this land as VRM Class IV. The RMP still has the requirement within the North Platte River SRMA for managing the land within 0.25 mile of the North Platte River to "maintain the quality of the scenic resource." Figure 5.2-2 is the viewshed analysis for this AOI and its location within the landscape. Figure 5.2-3 shows the detailed location of the North Platte SRMA AOI, Proposed Route, VRM management classification, and the North Platte SRMA.

5.2.1.1 Alternatives Considered

The Proponents report that the prime reason that led them to identify the Preferred Route (which is the revised Proposed Route following the same alignment as Alternative 2C in the Draft EIS) in this area was to respond to residents and stakeholders including the Governor's Office and State Department of Parks and Recreation to avoid the area in the vicinity of Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site. In doing so, the alignment was pushed south of Interstate 80 due to a combination of

[3] AOIs R-1 and R-2 are no longer crossed by the Project.

constraints including the community of Fort Steele, the Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site, raptor nests, an SRMA, sage-grouse leks, and oil and gas wells and buffers. The original proposed route, now Alternative 2B, followed an existing transmission line closer to the historic fort.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.2.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

Within the 15-mile-radius study area surrounding AOI R-3, topography is highly irregular with many steep slopes such as the Fort Steele Breaks, Saint Mary's Ridge, and Edson Ridge as well as larger areas of flat to rolling terrain such as Overland Flats and Severson Flats. The most significant waterbodies are the Seminoe Reservoir and the North Platte River; however, a number of ponds and drainages occur throughout the area. There are agricultural lands along Pass Creek, Rattlesnake Creek, and the North Platte River and an area of strip mining in the northeast. Interstate 80 is the primary road crossing the center of the area from east to west. Around Interstate 80 a utility corridor has developed including railroads, pipelines, and transmission lines. Other roads in the area include U.S. Highways (US) 30 and 287 and State Route (SR) 130. Communities include Sinclair on the north side of Interstate 80 in the western portion of the study area and Rawlins on the western boundary of this area. Sensitive viewing areas include the towns and highways, historic sites like Fort Fred Steele, historic trails, and recreation areas like Sinclair Recreation Park.

The VRI classifies the North Platte River in this area as Scenic Quality B, with the following description: "Very pleasant and scenic river corridor. Dominant water feature, cottonwood-riparian vegetation and pleasant pastoral setting with adjacent cultivated fields." The classified polygon is 20.3 square miles, 2.4 acres of which is on BLM-managed land in the AOI (approximately 0.02 percent of the area of the VRI polygon), and 0.34 square mile on BLM-managed land within 5 miles of the Project (the distance estimated to include foreground and middleground visual effects of the project). This makes up approximately 1.7 percent of the land area in the VRI polygon. A total of 3.6 square miles of the VRI polygon are within 5 miles of the Project. This is 17.8 percent of the total polygon area. Approximately 0.2 mile of the Project crosses this VRI polygon; however, only 0.02 mile of this length is on BLM-managed land. The remaining area within the North Platte AOI is classified as Scenic Quality C with the following description: "A vast open landscape with minimal vertical relief and minimal variety." This VRI polygon is 144.9 square miles.

Attachment A, Figure R-3a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 822, south of the Preferred Route, looking north at the proposed alignment. The landscape in this area is a mix of riparian vegetation and water, bordered by steep hillsides in the foreground and mountains in the background.

Views from KOP 824 represent the views of a residence directly adjacent to the North Platte River looking east between the Hogback geologic formation and Whitehorse Canyon. Open panoramic views of the flat to rolling and rugged terrain are considered to have Class B scenic quality (Rawlins FO VRI). The presence of a variety of natural landscape elements adds to the scenic quality, while human-made alterations detract

from the scenic quality. The river corridor is not BLM-managed land but there are BLM parcels on both sides of the river corridor.

Attachment B, Figure B-1 shows the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 824.

5.2.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.2-2 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used to establish the degree of conformance with the visual management goals for the North Platte SRMA. Attachment A, Figure R-3b simulates the proposed transmission line, consisting of a single -circuit line, on the existing landscape conditions for the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP 822, south of the Preferred Route, looking north at the proposed alignment. While multiple towers can be seen within the simulation, only one tower, to the east of the river, is both within 0.25 mile of the river and located on BLM-managed land.

Scenic views of the North Platte River adjacent to the Hogback are important to the surrounding sensitive viewers such as recreational users of the Rochelle Public Access Area at KOP 822. The Fort Steele Breaks are visible and create a layered silhouette background. These riparian and mountain terrain views exhibit a diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few human-made features visible from this particular location. From low valley vantage points it is apparent that screening and other mitigation efforts would be only moderately successful at lowering impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area when compared to other portions of this alignment. The various undulating forms and ridgelines, curvilinear water features, and strong horizon would be directly contrasted by the structures of Segment 2, which would be visible and dominant. While this change is acceptable for a VRM Class IV designation, the Rawlins RMP includes addition visual resource management within this area, which is part of the North Platte SRMA. The RMP includes management language to protect the viewshed of the North Platte River, including this scenic riparian terrain which exhibits moderate to high scenic quality in proximity to the North Platte River.

High-sensitivity residential viewers at KOP 824 would have a high level of Project visibility (0.13 mile from the Preferred/Proposed Route). The viewer would have an expansive and panoramic view toward the Preferred Route with some opportunities for screening provided by the terrain and large vegetation adjacent to the North Platte River. The majority of the lands crossed by the alignment would have Class C scenic quality, with the river corridor and Hogback geologic formation having Class B scenic quality. The majority of the area would have a moderate sensitivity level with the river corridor being high. Contrast levels are anticipated to be moderate to high for the Preferred Route. Impacts of the Project on residential viewers from this KOP and in the general vicinity are expected to be moderate to high due to the proximity of the view and moderate to high contrast level, moderated by the presence of visible human-made alterations adjacent to the view.

The Rawlins RMP states, for the North Platte SRMA, that “Surface disturbing and disruptive activities will be restricted to maintain the quality of the visual resource.” The presence of a high-voltage transmission line may not meet the RMP requirements, as there would be visual impact to the SRMA from the Project. Under the Surface Disturbance Mitigation Guideline in Appendix 1 of the Rawlins RMP, it states that an “exception, waiver, or modification of this limitation may be approved in writing, including documented supporting

analysis, by the Authorized Officer." The above analysis is presented in support of allowing the Project without amending the restrictive language in the Rawlins RMP. Mitigation and micrositing will be used to reduce the visual impact of the transmission line in this area. These actions will maintain the current level of VRM management and provide protection of the scenic resources important for the SRMA objectives.

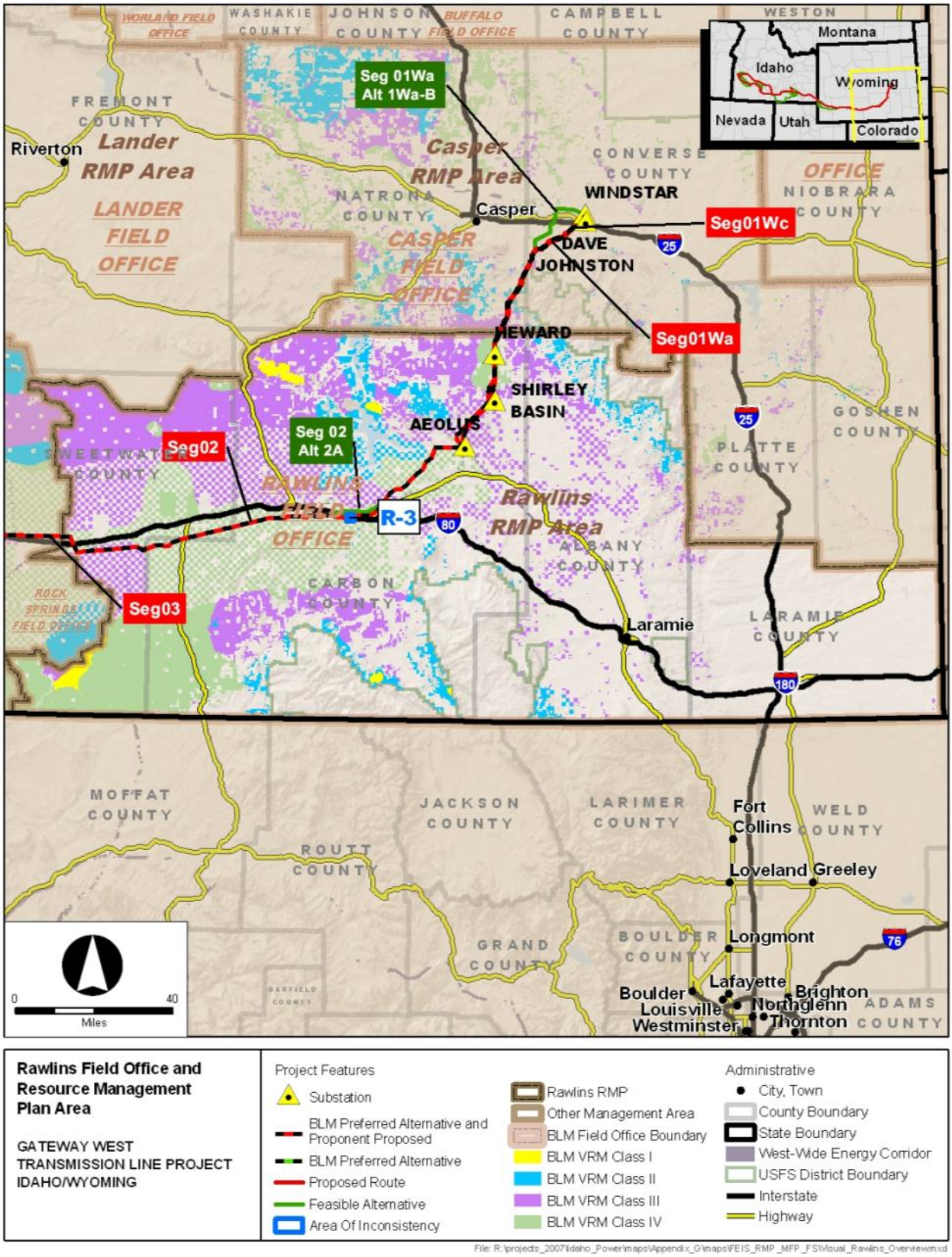


Figure 5.2-1. Rawlins RMP Boundary Map

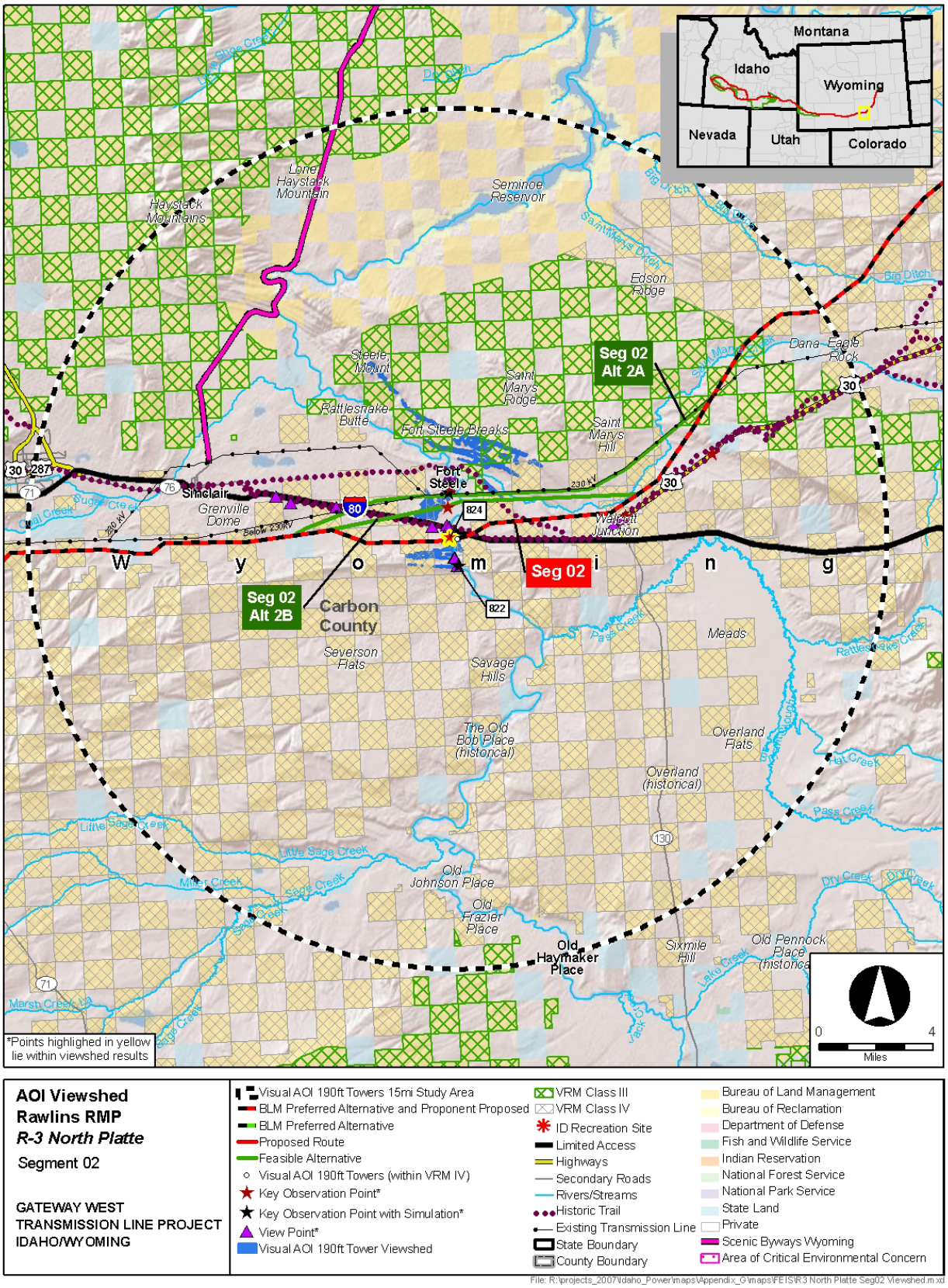


Figure 5.2-2. AOI R-3 North Platte Visual Analysis

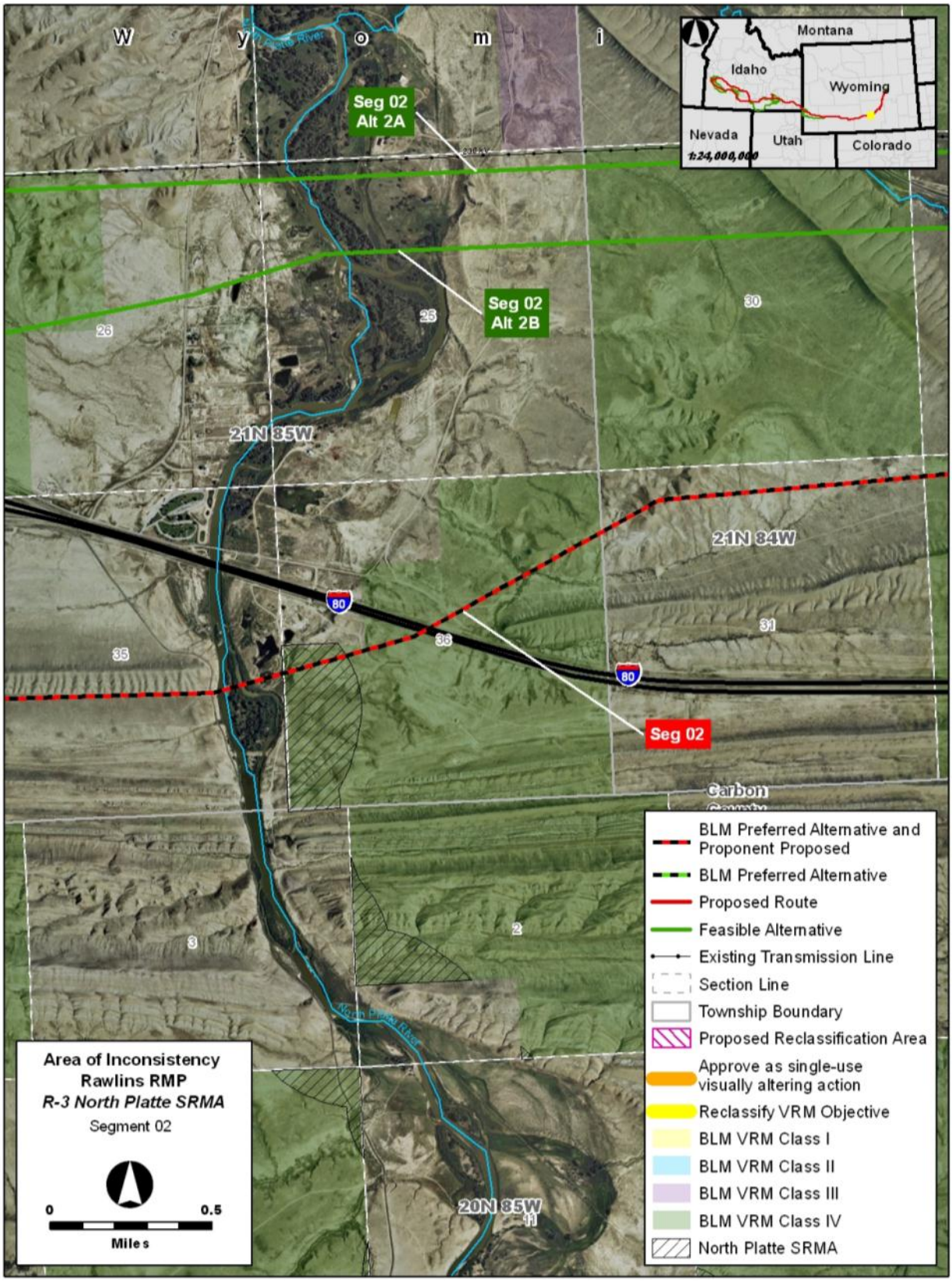


Figure 5.2-3. AOI R-3 North Platte Detailed Map

5.3 Green River RMP

Preferred Route: The following amendment is proposed for Segment 4 (Preferred Route). "Management actions on public lands with a Class II visual resource management classification must be designed to blend into and retain the existing character of the natural landscape*. The Gateway Transmission Line will be permitted for the construction and placement of the Gateway West Transmission line, allowing the powerline across VRM Class II designated areas on both sides of the Green River as well as one river crossing in sec10, 20N 109W."*

Alternative other than the Preferred Route: The only AOI present in the planning area covered by the Green River RMP is the AOI on the Preferred Route. There are no alternative routes for this portion of Segment 4.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The Green River RMP (1997) provides management direction for approximately 3.6 million acres of public land surface and 3.5 million acres of federal mineral estate administered by the BLM in the Green River Resource Area under the jurisdiction of the Rock Springs FO. The resource area administrative boundary includes parts of Sweetwater, Lincoln, Sublette, Fremont, and Uinta Counties, in southwestern Wyoming (see Figure 5.3-1). The objectives for management of visual resources are to: 1) maintain or improve scenic values and visual quality and 2) establish priorities for managing the visual resources in conjunction with other resource values.

The Green River RMP contains several visual management action goals to protect visual resources, including the following:

- Visual resource classes will be retained or modified to enhance other resource objectives such as those for cultural resource and recreation management, wild horse viewing, and special management areas.
- Projects and facilities will be designed to meet the objectives of the established visual classifications and appropriate mitigation will be included.
- Management actions on public lands with a Class II visual resource management classification must be designed to blend into and retain the existing character of the natural landscape.
- Management actions on public lands with a Class III visual resource management classification must be designed to partially retain the existing character of the landscape.
- Management actions on public lands with a Class IV visual resource management classification could result in major modification of the character of the landscape.
- All surface-disturbing actions, regardless of the visual resource management class, are required to be mitigated to reduce visual impacts.
- All activities that could be viewed from the Fontenelle Reservoir will be designed to be subordinate to the landscape.

In all, the Green River RMP designates 681,560 acres as VRM Class II, 632,370 acres in VRM Class III, and 2,251, acres in VRM Class IV. None of the lands managed under the Green River RMP have been designated as VRM Class I.

The Proposed Route for Segment 4 is 197.6 miles long and generally follows existing transmission lines. It consists of a single 500-kV circuit between the proposed Anticline Substation in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, and the existing Populus Substation in Power County, Idaho. Within the Green River RMP boundary, the WWE corridor extends in a southwest direction and does not provide a feasible option for an east-west connection between the Anticline and Populus Substations.

Visual resources in the Green River RMP area would be affected by this Project. One VRM Class II management area is crossed by the Proposed Route. The presence of a transmission line in this landscape would not meet VRM Class II objectives. As a result, if the Proposed Route is approved, it would be necessary to amend the VRM management requirements to allow the Project to conform with the RMP. The AOI is described in Section 5.3.1 below.

5.3.1 AOI GR-1 Green River (Segment 4 – Preferred [Proposed] Route)

Much of the eastern portion of Segment 4 of the Proposed Route follows existing 345-kV transmission lines. However, about 4 miles east of the Green River, the Proposed Route leaves the existing transmission line corridor and turns southwest, then west to pass south of the Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Routing in this area is further constrained by the OCI Wyoming LP Trona Mine, which is located just east of the river and south of the Proposed Route. Within this confined area, the route would pass through about 0.8 mile of VRM Class II as it crosses the Green River. Following the river crossing, the Segment 4 of the Proposed Route would proceed back to the northwest to re-join the 345-kV corridor just west of the NWR. Figure 5.3-2 shows the viewshed of the Green River AOI, the location of the Proposed Route, and the VRM Class II lands. Figure 5.3-3 shows the AOI and Proposed Route with the amendment management recommendation. This AOI includes one 410-acre parcel designated VRM II.

5.3.1.1 Alternatives Considered

In this area the existing 345-kV transmission corridor offered the best routing opportunity for the proposed 500-kV transmission line; however, the existing transmission lines cross the Seedskadee NWR. As a result, the Proponents evaluated potential routes avoiding the NWR. Because the NWR extends for at least 15 miles to the north, no alternative routes were evaluated north of the WWE corridor. Options to the south are severely constrained due to the presence of the trona mine, BLM parcels designated as VRM Class II extending close to 20 miles to the south, and additional mines. The Proponents determined that the Proposed Route just to the south of the NWR boundary would have less impact to all resources; however, this alignment would cross one parcel of land managed for VRM Class II objectives (Figure 5.3-3).

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.3.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The topography in the 15-mile-radius study area surrounding AOI GR-1 is mostly flat to rolling except for the steep slopes cut by the rivers and streams traversing the area. The Green River runs northwest to southeast across the central portion of the study area and Blacks Fork is located in the southwest quadrant. The area is without forests and is very sparsely developed except along the I-80/US 30 corridor. The community of Granger is located along this corridor, just west of the 15-mile-radius study area and Jamestown and Riovista are located just outside the southeast portion of the area. Other development is sparse and scattered. There is a 345-kV transmission corridor extending east to west across the center portion of the area and many lower-voltage lines in the southern half. Numerous historic trails cross the area mostly from northeast to southwest. The Seedskadee NWR is situated along the Green River in the northwest quadrant. Sensitive viewers include motorists on the interstate, local residents and visitors to the NWR, and historic resources in the area.

The Seedskadee NWR is situated along the Green River in the northwest. Sensitive viewers include motorists on the interstate, local residents and visitors to the NWR, and historic resources in the area. The visual inventory recorded the Green River corridor as exhibiting Class A scenic quality and a sensitivity rating indicating that the maintenance of visual quality would have a high value.

The Preferred Route would cross two VRI class polygons, one with a Scenic Quality Rating (SQR) Code of A and the other with an SQR Code of C. Within AOI G-1, 0.48 mile of the Preferred Route would cross the unit with a scenic quality rating of A and 0.32 mile would cross the unit with scenic quality rating C. The Unit with the A rating code is adjacent to the Green River and is 10.1 square miles, 9.8 of which would be within 5 miles of the Route crossing. A total of 2 square miles (20.5 percent) of this would be on BLM-managed land. BLM-managed land in this VRI unit is managed as both VRM Class II and Class. Approximately 1.2 square miles of the affected area would be on VRM Class II and 0.8 square mile on VRM Class IV. The Unit with the scenic quality rating of C is 16.7 square miles, 13.3 square miles of which would be within 5 miles of the Route crossing. A total of 5.6 square miles (42.3 percent) of this would be on BLM-managed land. BLM-managed land in this VRI unit is managed as both VRM Class II and Class. Approximately 0.4 square mile of the affected area would be on VRM Class II and 5.3 square miles on VRM Class IV.

Attachment A, Figure GR-1a shows the existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1353. The views of the undulating terrain and simple geometric forms show little diversity in form, line, color, and texture with numerous human-made features. The visible developments include transmission lines and the trona plant located adjacent to this VRM Class II managed area. The topography adjacent to KOP 1353 is mostly flat to rolling except for the steep slopes cut by the rivers and streams traversing the area.

5.3.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.3-2 shows the viewshed, AOI, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used in evaluating the conformance of the proposed facilities with the existing landscape conditions and VRM Class II management requirements. Figure 5.3-3 shows the existing landscape in proximity to this AOI, the VRM classification. Scenic views of the Green River west of the Blue Rim in the Seedskadee NWR are important to

recreational viewers on the Green River, motorists traveling on SR 372, approximately 2.0 miles to the west, and local viewers on minor arterial roads. These views are represented by KOP 1353. Attachment A, Figure GR-1b shows a simulation of the proposed Project structures within the existing view of KOP 1353. It is apparent from KOP 1353 that the Proposed Route would be highly visible in the surrounding landscape and that screening and other mitigation efforts would most likely not lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The Proposed Route would be somewhat co-dominant with many of the human-made features, including the three high-voltage transmission lines in the middleground of the view, to the north, however it would still contrast with the undulating terrain containing simple vegetative patterns and would draw the attention of the casual observer.

There are high-contrasting industrial structures nearby, such as the trona plant; however, it has been present within the landscape for many years, thus additional new industrial structures are still likely to create a heightened sense of awareness among viewers for structural contrast. The Project would deviate from the natural form, line, color, and texture of the landscape and would thus not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.3.1.4 Proposed Plan Amendment

For the transmission line to be allowed, the Green River RMP would need to be amended to permit the project as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification. This would allow for the continuing protection of the visual quality of the Green River corridor.

Allowing the Project would not conform to the VRM Class II objectives because it would create a new linear element and lower scenic quality. The presence of a transmission line in this area would make it an attractive location to site future linear projects. This situation will likely result in incremental visual impacts to the area over time and eventually the area may not meet the visual quality criteria required by managing the area to meet VRM Class II objectives. A visual resource inventory was recently conducted for the area prior to the proposal of the Project. This inventory found the area to still meet the criteria described for VRM Class II objectives; however, if the project is approved it may result in an adjustment in the visual resource inventory assessment for the area.

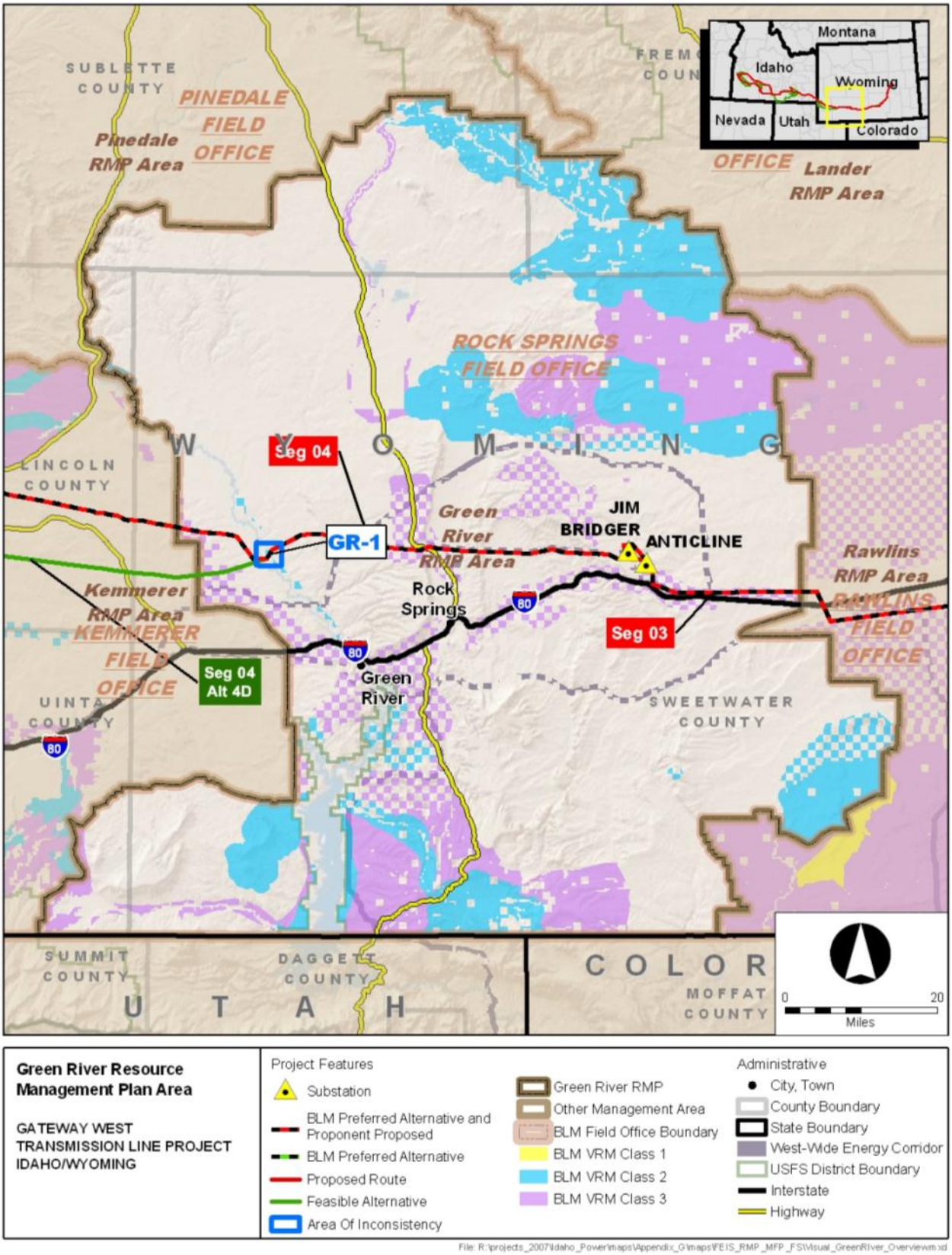


Figure 5.3-1. Green River RMP Boundary Map

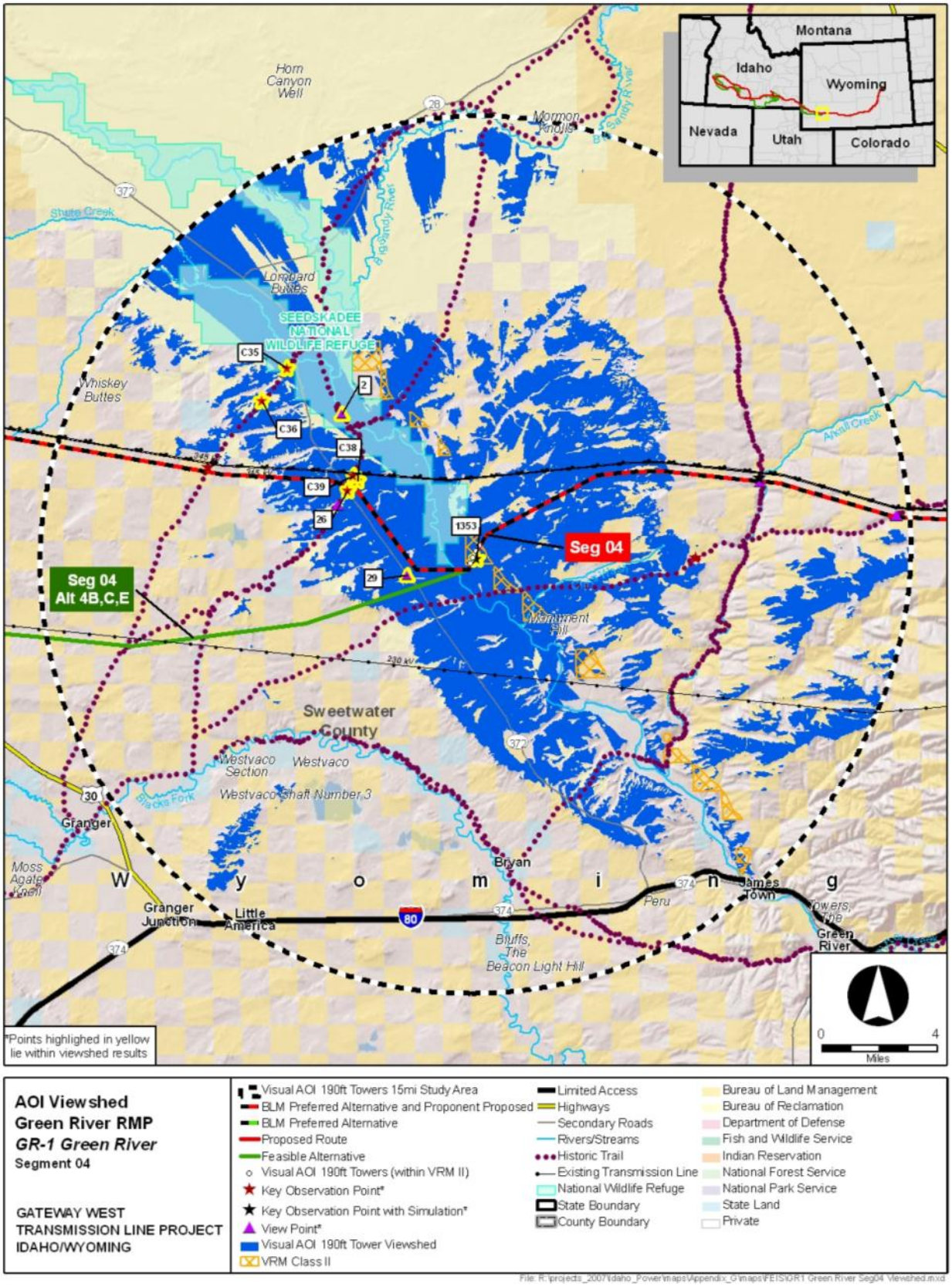


Figure 5.3-2. AOI GR-1 Green River AOI Visual Analysis

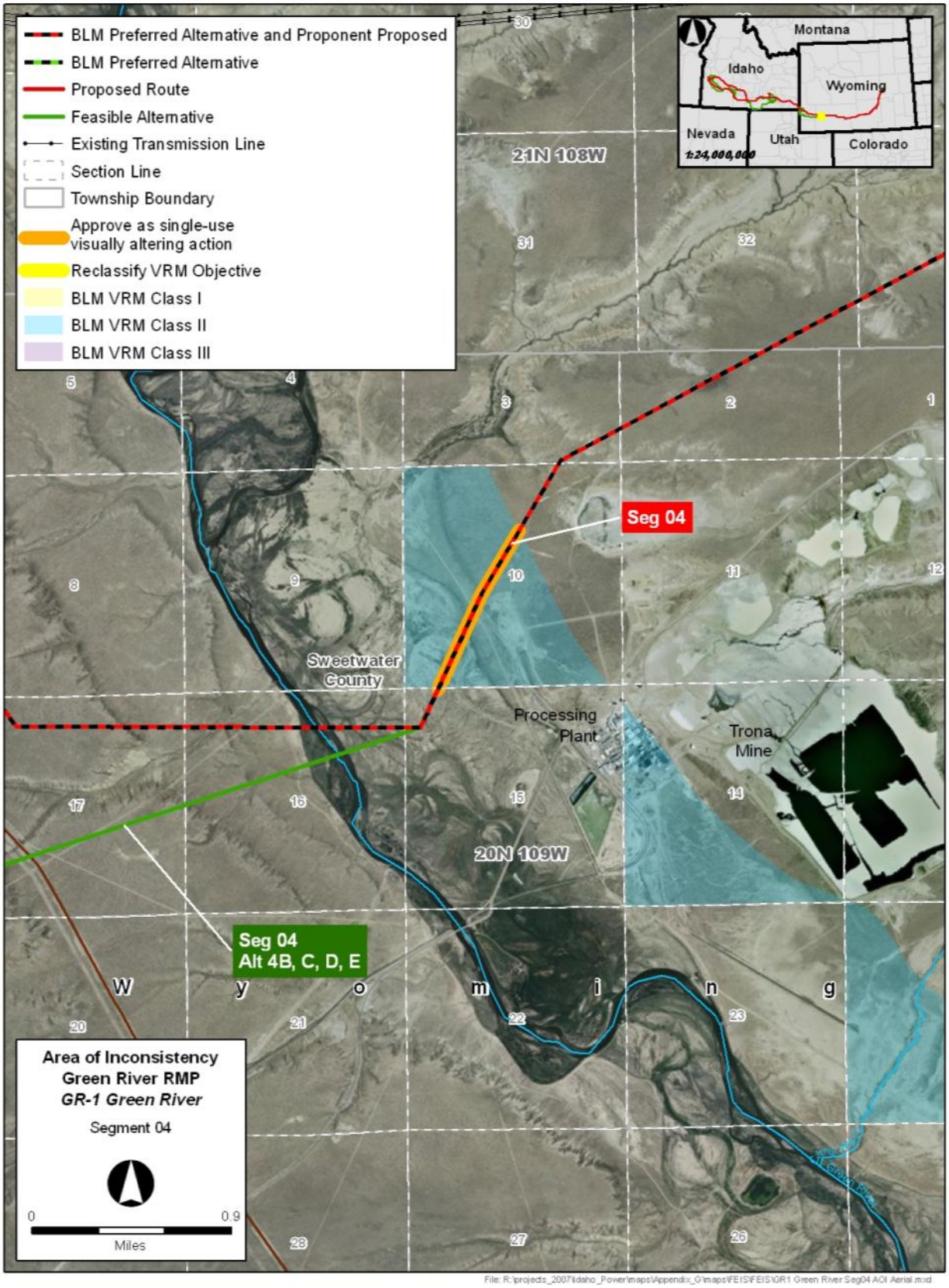


Figure 5.3-3. AOI GR-1 Green River AOI Detailed Map Showing the Proposed VRM Action for Amendment #1

5.4 Kemmerer RMP

Preferred Route: An amendment is proposed for AOI K-4. This would amend Decision 6051 of the Kemmerer RMP to allow the Project to cross the VRM Class II areas without changing the VRM classification.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: There are five additional AOIs on alternative routes for Segment 4. These AOIs would have associated amendments if they were selected.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

On June 1, 2010, the ROD was signed for the revised Kemmerer RMP (BLM 2010b), providing direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Kemmerer FO in west-central Wyoming. The RMP planning area encompasses approximately 1,630,000 acres in Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta Counties (see Figure 5.4-1). The Kemmerer RMP contains detailed descriptions of visually sensitive areas by VRM Class. In all, the Kemmerer RMP designates 32,807 acres as VRM Class I, 392,719 acres as VRM Class II, 347,214 acres as VRM Class III, and 654,724 acres as VRM Class IV.

In addition, there are eight designated sites where viewsheds within 3 miles are designated to be preserved to retain the existing character of the landscape so developments do not dominate the visible area and detract from the feeling or sense of the historic time period of the site. The RMP also sets the goal to manage the viewsheds of NHT segments. Section 5.4.10 describes the conformance of the Project for these resources.

The Preferred Route for Segment 4 is 197.6 miles long and generally follows existing transmission lines where it would not be in conflict with other resource concerns such as sage-grouse leks, oil and gas wells, raptor nests, and historic trails. The Preferred Route follows the same alignment as Alternative 4A from the Draft EIS. It consists of a single-circuit 500-kV line between the proposed Anticline Substation in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, and the existing Populus Substation in Power County, Idaho. Segment 4 within the RMP planning area contains the Preferred Route and five feasible alternatives. Alternative 4F follows existing transmission lines for much of its length, and the four southern alternatives (Alternatives 4B through 4E) avoid some of the major historic trails, portions of sage-grouse core areas, and crucial big game winter range but pass near the Fossil Butte National Monument (NM). Several alternatives are proposed to avoid specific constraints such as NWRs (Cokeville Meadows, Seedskadee, and Bear Lake), Fossil Butte NM, sage-grouse leks and core areas, historic trails, raptor nest buffers, crucial big game range, oil and gas wells, and coal and trona mining.

VRM management objectives could be affected by the proposed and alternative routes in seven separate areas; depending on the route selected. The presence of a transmission line in these landscapes would not be in conformance with VRM Class II objectives. As a result, BLM action would be necessary to modify visual classifications to conform with the RMP or to permit a one-time allowance. The AOIs are described in Sections 5.4.1 through 5.4.7 below.

Two AOIs (K-1 and K-2) identified in the Draft EIS no longer apply as they were associated with an alignment for a portion of the Proposed Route no longer under consideration.

5.4.1 AOI K-3 Sublette Range (Segment 4 – Alternative 4F)

The Sublette Range runs north to south and is located to the west of the Tunp Range and north of the community of Cokeville. The Sublette Range AOI is located at the southern end of the Sublette Range just north of Rocky Point at the junction of the Alternative 4F. The route crosses approximately 1 mile of VRM Class II lands. Figure 5.4-2 shows the viewshed of the Sublette Range AOI for the Alternative 4F and the VRM classifications. Figure 5.4-3 shows the AOI, route and the amendment management recommendation. Alternative 4F AOI crosses two segments of a 1.3-acre VRM Class II parcel for approximately 0.7 mile.

5.4.1.1 Alternatives Considered

As described in the EIS, many alternatives have been evaluated to avoid constraints in and adjacent to the northern border of the Kemmerer FO. These include the Bear River Valley, the community of Cokeville, VRM Class II lands, and a Raymond Mountain WSA. Alternative 4F follows an existing transmission corridor for much of its length and would require significantly less Greenfield right-of-way (ROW) than would be required constructing the line outside of this corridor. However, this alternative crosses high quality trails. Alternatives 4B and 4E are approximately 24 miles to the south and cross through VRM Class II managed lands for portions of their routes south of Fossil Butte NM, thus avoiding the Sublette Range and other areas managed to conform to VRM Class II objectives. Because of the extent of VRM Class II lands, they cannot be avoided.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.4.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The terrain in the 15-mile area surrounding this AOI is very rugged with many steep slopes along north-south oriented topographic features, including the Sublette Range, Tunp Range, Rock Creek Ridge, Dempsey Ridge, and Commissary Ridge; and valleys following the Bear River, Hams Fork River, and other drainages. The Naughton and Kemmerer Reservoirs are located along Hams Fork River. The vast majority of the area is undeveloped, with some agriculture along the valleys. The small community of Cokeville is situated along US 30, the primary highway through the area. There are three 345-kV transmission lines passing southeast to northwest through the study area and several other lower voltage transmission lines in the southwest. Forest land increases proceeding north towards and into the Bridger National Forest (NF). Potentially sensitive viewing areas include the highways, communities, historic trails, the Cokeville Meadows NWR, and other recreational and natural areas.

The VRI classifies the Smith Fork Ferry unit as Scenic Quality A. The classified polygon is 105.3 square miles, 52.9 square miles of which are on BLM-managed land. The 2.1 square miles of BLM-managed land that contains the AOI is approximately 2 percent of the area of the VRI polygon and 4 percent of the BLM-managed land in the polygon. Approximately 5.3 square miles of VRI polygon on BLM-managed land is within 5 miles (the distance estimated to include foreground and middleground visual effects of the

project) of the alignment through the AOI. This is makes up approximately 10 percent of the BLM-managed land area in the VRI polygon. A total of 30.3 square miles of the VRI polygon are within 5 miles of the Project, which is 28.8 percent of the total polygon area. Approximately 6.2 miles of the Project crosses this VRI polygon; however, only 0.71 mile of this length is on VRM Class II BLM-managed land.

Attachment A, Figure K-3a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 635. The topography is rolling to steep, covered with sage brush with a small lake in the foreground. Other than a local dirt road and a fence, no other human-made features are apparent in the view. Terrain encloses the views of recreationists and ranchers around this KOP located adjacent to Quealy Reservoir on the south and a WSA immediately north. The BLM road that provides access to the reservoir continues east and eventually turns north providing access to the east side of the WSA. The town of Cokeville, not visible from this point, is located about 2.8 miles to the southeast along US 30. Scenic quality is considered Class B due the minimal human-made alterations, water, variable landforms, and vegetation.

5.4.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.4-2 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile radius study areas for the Alternative 4F used to evaluate the consistency of the proposed transmission facilities with the existing landscape and VRM Class II objectives. Attachment A, Figure K-3b simulates landscape conditions showing the Alternative 4F as viewed from KOP 635.

KOP 635 represents scenic views in the southern portion of the Sublette Range across Quealy Reservoir and toward Coke Mountain that are important to sensitive viewers. The views of the undulating terrain and background mountain silhouettes and simple geometric water forms create diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few man-made features. From this KOP, it is apparent that Alternative 4F would be highly visible on the ridge and that screening and other mitigation efforts would not effectively lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. Transmission line structures and access roads would contrast with the undulating terrain, simple geometric forms, and mottled vegetation. As a result, Alternative 4F would draw the attention of the casual observer and would not conform to VRM Class II objectives. Review of the VRI indicates that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect the Oregon NHT corridor as well as adjacent scenic resources. The landscape surrounding Alternative 4F should continue to be managed for VRM Class II objectives.

5.4.1.4 Associated Plan Amendment

Should Alternative 4F be selected, an amendment would be needed to permit the Project without changing the VRM classification. This would allow the Project but would maintain the underlying protective VRM classification to preserve historic trail and scenic resources and would not allow additional transmission line projects to be permitted without going through a similar analysis and amendment proposal process. Mitigation measures and BMPs should be used to lower potential impacts to trails and the scenic qualities of the surrounding landscape.

Mitigation would include moving the towers farther south to lower visual impacts.

5.4.2 AOI K-4 Tunp Range (Segment 4 – Preferred [Revised Proposed] Route)

The Preferred Route for Segment 4 includes the alignments for the Proposed Route and Alternative 4A that were presented in the Draft EIS. This alignment follows a corridor with three existing transmission lines and proceeds to the northwest to the Idaho-Wyoming border. This route was Alternative 4A in the Draft EIS and was reassigned as the Preferred Route when the original Proposed Route from the Draft EIS was removed from consideration. The Tunp Range AOI begins at the southern end of Commissary Ridge, proceeds west across the Hams Fork Plateau and Rock Creek Ridge in the Tunp Range, and ends at the Bear River Valley just southeast of Cokeville. In this area, the Proposed Route crosses approximately 16 miles of land managed as VRM Class II. This area also includes a portion of the Rock Creek/Tunp Range SRMA, an administrative area with multiple restrictions on development due to its unspoiled character. Figure 5.4-4 shows the viewshed of the Tunp Range AOI, the location of the Proposed Route, and the VRM classification. Figure 5.4-5 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation. Two parcels designated as VRM Class II ranging in size from 1,872 acres to approximately 280,000 acres are crossed.

5.4.2.1 Alternatives Considered

Segment 4 of the Proposed Route is the same alignment as Alternative 4A in the Draft EIS and follows three existing 345-kV transmission lines, passing southeast to northwest. Because this alignment follows an existing transmission corridor, it was considered a feasible alternative. However, following this existing corridor results in crossing an expanse of scenic topography designated as VRM Class II, high-quality historic trails, and two preservation viewsheds (see Section 5.4-4). To avoid these resource areas would require selection of one of the southern alternatives (Alternatives 4B through 4E); however, these cross through additional VRM Class II areas.

The Kemmerer RMP has the objective, stated in Decision 6054, to preserve the viewshed within 3 miles of Class 1 segments north and east of US 30 and west of the Hams Fork River (Tunp/Dempsey Trail area), where the visual characteristics of the setting contribute to the eligibility of the site, by managing projects in federal sections to retain the existing character of the landscape so developments do not dominate the visible area to detract from the feeling or sense of the historic time period of the trail setting. It also states that ROWs should be designed to preserve the visual integrity of the settings consistent with the BLM visual resources handbook and manual.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.4.2.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The vast majority of the area around AOI K-4 is undeveloped with some agriculture along the valleys. The terrain in the 15-mile-radius area surrounding this AOI is very rugged with many steep slopes. Numerous north-south oriented features present include the Sublette Range, Tunp Range, Rock Creek Ridge, Dempsey Ridge, and Commissary Ridge; and valleys following the Bear River, Hams Fork River, and other drainages. Naughton and Kemmerer Reservoirs are located along Hams Fork River. The small community of Cokeville is situated along US 30, which runs north to east through the area, and Kemmerer and Diamondville off US 189 on the east side of the

area. There is an existing transmission corridor with three 345-kV lines passing southeast to northwest through the study area and several other lines in the southwest. Forest land increases proceeding north approaching and entering the Bridger NF. Potentially sensitive viewing areas include the highways, communities, historic trails, the Cokeville Meadows NWR, Fossil Butte NM, and other recreational and natural areas.

The Preferred Route would cross four VRI polygons within this AOI: Commissary (Scenic Quality Rating [SQR] = B), Upper Hams Fork (SQR = A), Dempsey (SQR = B), and Rock Creek (SQR = B).

- Commissary:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 117.7 (67.4 [VRM II = 57.9, VRM III =7.7, VRM IV = 1.7]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 48.7 (22.0 [VRM II = 19.8, VRM III = 0.5, VRM IV = 1.7]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percentage of BLM-managed) = 41.4 (32.7) square miles. Approximately 7.5 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 2.3 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.
- Upper Hams Fork:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 70.3 (18.1) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 21.1 (3.3) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (BLM-managed) = 30.0 (18.2) square miles. Approximately 1.5 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 1.0 mile of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.
- Dempsey:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 132.7 (87.2 [VRM II = 74.4, VRM III = 9.2, VRM IV = 3.7]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 84.5 (57.3 [VRM II = 55.6, VRM III = 1.3, VRM IV = 0.4]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percent of the BLM-managed) = 63.7 (65.7) square miles. Approximately 8.2 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 5.2 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.
- Rock Creek:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 130.6 (82.9 VRM II = 82.9, VRM III = <0.01) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 62.5 (38.0 [VRM II = 38.0]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (BLM-managed) = 47.5 (45.8) square miles. Approximately 9.0 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 5.1 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.

As can be seen in Attachment A, Figures K-4a and K-4c, the topography in the vicinity of AOI K-4 as viewed from KOPs C110 and C8 varies from flat to steep-sloping to mountainous. Much of the area is covered with sage brush with some agriculture. From KOP C110, there are also glimpses of Hams Fork River. The existing transmission lines are the primary manmade feature in both views.

5.4.2.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.4-4 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius area used to evaluate the consistency of the proposed transmission facilities located along the Preferred Route (revised Proposed Route) with the existing landscape and the VRM Class II objectives.

Scenic views from the Nancy Hill grave site, located along the Sublette Cutoff on a finger ridge between several deep canyons, and views from the White Hill Trail Monument east of the Nancy Hill grave site are important to sensitive recreational viewers on the Oregon NHT. These sensitive viewers are represented by KOPs C110 and C8. Attachment A, Figures K-4b and K-4d simulate landscape conditions showing the revised Proposed Route as viewed from KOPs C110 and C8.

KOP C8 is located on a flat ridge top that overlooks Robinson Creek to the north, Shuster Basin (North Fork Twin Creek) to the south, and the head of Quakenasp Canyon to the east. KOP C110 is located on the Hams Fork Plateau on the north rim of Quakenasp Canyon, approximately 1.5 miles west of the Hams Fork River. The White Hill Trail Monument overlooks the Hams Fork River and provides sweeping views of the Uinta Mountains, the Wind River Mountains, and Ham's Plateau. Views of the undulating terrain, background pyramidal mountainous silhouettes, and mottled vegetation exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few human-made features.

From these KOPs, visibility of the Preferred Route (revised Proposed Route) would be low to moderate because of the similarity of the Project's design with the existing structures in the area and the distance from the KOPs to the Route Alternative. As a result, the visual contrast rating (VCR) from these KOPs would be weak to moderate in the undulating terrain with mottled vegetation. The addition of 500-kV facilities to the three existing sets of structures and access roads would increase their prominence within the view but may not draw the attention of the casual observer.

5.4.2.4 Proposed Plan Amendment

It has been assumed that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this area to protect the landscape quality of the Nancy Hill grave site, White Hill Trail Monument, and the Oregon NHT corridor and scenic quality of the area in general. It is recommended that if the revised Proposed Route is selected, the Project be allowed as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification. This would provide the most protection for visual resource management goals.

Mitigation may include moving the alignment closer to the existing alignment to lower contrast and replant grasses to lower contrast from the tower pads.

5.4.3 AOI K-5 Hams Fork (Segment 4 – Alternative 4F)

The Hams Fork AOI is located on Alternative 4F where it proceeds northwest across Commissary Ridge and the Tunp Range, north of the Preferred Route (revised

Proposed Route). The Hams Fork AOI crosses approximately 16 miles of VRM Class II land within Dempsey Basin, and Dempsey Ridge and Rock Creek Ridge within the Tunp Range. Figure 5.4-6 shows the viewshed of the Hams Fork AOI, the location of Alternative 4F, and the VRM classifications. Figure 5.4-7 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation. The crossing of this AOI includes one parcel designated as VRM Class II comprising approximately 280,000 acres.

5.4.3.1 Alternatives Considered

Alternative 4F was the Proponents' original Proposed Route through the Kemmerer area. It was sited to avoid as much as possible resource issues including sage-grouse leks and core areas, historic trails, VRM Class II lands, Special Management Areas (SMAs), the Cokeville Meadows NWR, and big game wintering and parturition areas. Later, the route just to the south of Alternative 4F was adopted as the Proposed Route to further minimize impact to high-quality trails. However, no alternative has been identified that minimizes to acceptable levels impacts to all the resources that occur along this segment. To minimize crossing of VRM Class II lands would require selection of one of the southern alternatives (Alternatives 4B through 4E).

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.4.3.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The vast majority of the 15-mile-radius area surrounding this AOI is undeveloped with some agriculture along the valleys. The terrain is very rugged with many steep slopes. The numerous north-south oriented features include the Sublette Range, Tunp Range, Boundary Ridge, Dempsey Ridge, Commissary Ridge; and valleys following the Bear River, Hams Fork River, and other drainages. Naughton and Kemmerer Reservoirs are located along Hams Fork River. The small community of Cokeville is situated along US 30, which runs north to east through the area. Kemmerer, Frontier, and Diamondville are located off US 189 on the east side of the area. There is an existing transmission corridor with three 345-kV lines passing southeast to northwest through the study area and several other lines in the southwest. Forest land increases proceeding north; approaching and entering the Bridger NF. Potentially sensitive viewing areas include the highways, communities, historic trails, the Cokeville Meadows NWR, Fossil Butte NM, and other recreational and natural areas.

The Preferred Route would cross five VRI polygons within this AOI: Commissary (SQR = B), Upper Hams Fork (SQR = A), Dempsey (SQR = B), Pine Creek (SQR = B), and Rock Creek (SQR = B).

- Commissary:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 117.7 (67.4 [VRM II = 57.9, VRM III =7.7, VRM IV = 1.7]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 52.3 (31.3 [VRM II = 22.8, VRM III = 6.7, VRM IV = 1.7]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percentage of BLM-managed) = 44.4 (46.4). Approximately 9.3 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 2.8 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.

- Upper Hams Fork:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 70.3 (18.1) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 44.3 (6.1 [VRM II = 5.0, VRM III = 0.5, VRM IV = 0.6]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (BLM-managed) = 63.0 (33). Approximately 1.8 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 0.2 mile of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.
- Dempsey:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 132.7 (87.2 [VRM II = 74.4, VRM III = 9.2, VRM IV = 3.7]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 94.6 (60.1 [VRM II = 58.3, VRM III = 1.3, VRM IV = 0.4]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percent of the BLM-managed) = 71.3 (68.9). Approximately 12.1 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 8.7 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.
- Rock Creek:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 130.6 (82.9 VRM II = 82.9, VRM III <0.01) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 31.2 (18.1 [VRM II = 18.1]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (BLM-managed) = 23.9 (21.8). Approximately 0.5 mile of the route would cross the VRI polygon, all of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.
- Pine Creek:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 25.3 (23.8 [VRM II = 22.7, VRM III =0.9) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 21.2 (19.1 [VRM II = 18.1, VRM III =0.9) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (BLM-managed) = 83.8 (80.2). Approximately 2.5 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, all of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.

Attachment A, Figure K-5a shows the landscape in the vicinity of AOI K-5 as viewed from KOP C620. In this view, the topography varies from flat to steep-sloping and is covered in grasses and sage brush. The only human-made feature is a two-track road. Figure K-5c provides a view of AOI K-5 from KOP 636 showing grass covered rolling topography with a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs in the middle ground. The only human-made features in this view are a two-track road and a fence. Attachment B, Figure B-2 shows the existing conditions viewed from KOP 637 toward the Alternative 4F alignment.

5.4.3.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.4-6 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to evaluate the consistency of the proposed 500-kV facilities with the existing VRM Class II objectives.

Scenic views from Dempsey Ridge north of Coke Mountain are important to recreational viewers on the Oregon NHT. The area of inconsistency generally spans between Rock Creek Ridge and the Tunp Range to Commissary Ridge across Dempsey Basin. Sensitive viewers are represented by KOPs C620, 637, 636, and C110. Attachment A, Figures K-5b and K-5d simulate landscape conditions showing the revised Proposed Route (formerly Alternative 4A) as viewed from KOPs C620 and 636 respectively. Scenic views of Pink Hill are important to recreational viewers on the Dempsey Hockaday Cutoff of the Oregon NHT. These sensitive viewers are represented by KOP C620. From KOP C620, there are sweeping views of the Dempsey Basin, Hams Fork Plateau, and Pink Hill. The views of the undulating terrain, background mountainous silhouettes, and mottled vegetation exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few human-made features and simple geometric patterns. From KOP 636, located on Dempsey Ridge, there are sweeping views of the Dempsey Basin, Rock Creek Ridge, and Coke Mountain. The views of the undulating terrain with pyramidal mountainous silhouettes in the background, and contrasting vegetation exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few human-made features and simple geometric patterns.

From these KOPs it is apparent that Alternative 4F of the proposed Project would be highly visible. The proposed Project facilities would draw the attention of the casual observer, with skylined structures dominating the views from KOP 636 and to a lesser extent from KOP C620. While micrositing of structures may lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area, the proposed single-circuit structures would remain dominant in the view and not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.4.3.4 Associated Plan Amendment

It appears that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect the Oregon NHT corridor and scenic undeveloped character of the area. It is recommended that if Alternative 4F is selected, the Project be allowed as a one-time visually altering action without changing the VRM classification. Appropriate mitigation measures and BMPs to lower potential impacts to visual resources would be followed. This would allow the continuation of VRM Class II objectives to protect the sensitive scenic resources associated with the Oregon NHT and other nearby historic locations.

Mitigation may include clearing tower pads in a shape that is less geometric and contrasting, modifying the color of the towers to blend in better with backdrop landscape and vegetation, and move towers farther from the KOP to reduce skylining effects. An additional mitigation measure that would apply to KOP 636 may include moving towers below the ridgeline to take advantage of the topography's ability partially hide towers and conductors.

5.4.4 AOI K-6 A and B, Fossil Butte (Segment 4 – Alternatives 4B/4C and 4D/4E)

The Fossil Butte AOI is located near the southern boundary of Fossil Butte NM. This AOI relates to the four southern Segment 4 Route Alternatives (Alternatives 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E). All four Route Alternatives follow a combination of two routes, proceeding

from southeast to northwest in southern Lincoln County, Wyoming. Alternatives 4B and 4C follow a joint route to the northwest until they reach US 30. Just south of this highway, joint Alternatives 4B/4C turn to the west and continue for approximately 3 miles paralleling the south side of US 30 and an existing low-voltage transmission line, then angle southwest and west. Fossil Butte NM is located on the north side of US 30. A siting goal was to preserve the views from the visitor center and surrounding trails. Alternatives 4D and 4E follow a more southern joint route farther from US 30 and Fossil Butte NM. Figures 5.4-8 and 5.4-10 show the viewshed of the Fossil Butte AOI, the location of Alternatives 4B/4C and 4D/E, and VRM classifications. Figures 5.4-9 and 5.4-11 show the AOI, routes, and amendment management recommendation. Alternative 4B/4C crosses in and out (7.5 miles) of one large irregularly-shaped parcel designated as VRM Class II comprising approximately 280,000 acres. Alternatives 4D/4E cross the same large VRM Class II lands in two locations for a total of 4.5 miles.

5.4.4.1 Alternatives Considered

In this area south of US 30 there were a variety of constraints considered in routing the proposed transmission line, including sage-grouse leks and buffers, wetlands, raptor nests, VRM Class II land, and potential visibility from Fossil Butte NM. Alternatives 4B/4C and 4D/4E were attempts to minimize impacts to these resources and meet the needs of Wyoming and federal agencies. The major feature of these routes is avoidance of high-quality trail crossings and fewer miles of VRM Class II lands crossed.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.4.4.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The majority of topography in the 15-mile area surrounding this AOI is very rugged with many steep slopes. Exceptions to this include the Bear River Valley, running north to south through the western half of the area, the valley along Hams Fork River, and Cumberland Flat in the east. There are many north-south oriented ridges, including Dempsey Ridge and Tunp Ridge, and several well-defined drainages. The vast majority of the area is undeveloped with farms and farmland mostly in the Bear River Valley and along Hams Fork River. Other development includes coal-mining, as well as the communities of Kemmerer and Diamondville located in the southeast near the intersection of US 30 and 189. SRs 89 and 30 provide access from western Wyoming into northeastern Utah and intersect with US 30 in the western portion of the area. There are several transmission lines entering and exiting the Naughton Substation and a generally east to west 345-kV corridor in the north. Forest land occurs in scattered locations, mostly in the central part of this area. Potentially sensitive viewing areas include the highways, communities, historic trails, Cokeville Meadows NWR, Fossil Butte NM, and other recreational and natural areas. Overall scenic quality in this area is Class B due to the diversity of color in vegetation and land forms. Landforms also add variety of form, line, and texture with a general lack of visible human-made elements.

Alternatives 4B/4C would extend across Fossil Ridge and an area of federal lands south of the NM. Scenic views across Twin Creek toward Fossil Ridge from the Fossil Butte NM visitor's center are important to sensitive recreational viewers represented by KOPs 654, 655, and 676. Scenic views toward Fossil Ridge from Twin Creek Road are

important to sensitive recreational viewers south of Fossil Butte NM. This AOI includes a portion of Fossil Ridge adjacent to the historic Susanna Lewis Homestead. Sensitive recreational viewers are represented by KOPs 631 and 652, and from viewpoint 651.

Alternatives 4B/4C would cross one VRI polygon within this AOI: West Divide Slope (SQR = B).

- West Divide Slope:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 381.2 (240.9 [VRM II = 63.5, VRM III =135.1, VRM IV = 42.3]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 102.3 (84.8 [VRM II = 28.4, VRM III = 56.4, VRM IV = 0.01]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percentage of BLM-managed) = 26.8 (35.2). Approximately 19 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 8 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.

Alternatives 4D/4E would cross one VRI polygon within this AOI: West Divide Slope (SQR = B).

- West Divide Slope:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 381.2 (240.9 [VRM II = 63.5, VRM III =135.1, VRM IV = 42.3]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 106.7 (87.6 [VRM II = 28.5, VRM III = 59.1, VRM IV = 0.01]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percentage of BLM-managed) = 28.0 (36.4). Approximately 20 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 5 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.

Attachment A, Figure K-6a shows existing landscape conditions crossed by Alternatives 4B/4C viewed from KOP 655. The topography is flat to steep sloping with sagebrush in the foreground and little in the way of human-made features. The views of the undulating terrain, sweeping mesas, and mottled vegetation exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with man-made features including the Union Pacific railroad and existing wood-pole transmission lines in the middleground.

Attachment B, Figure B-3 shows the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 654 facing southeast toward Alternatives 4B/4C. Figure B-4 shows the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 676 facing southwest toward Alternatives 4B/4C. Figures B-5 and B-6 show the existing conditions as viewed from KOPs 631 and 651, respectively, toward the same alternative alignment.

Attachment A, Figure K-6c shows existing landscape conditions crossed by Alternatives 4D/4E as viewed from KOP 652; the land is undulating with evenly dispersed sage brush in the foreground and there is little in the way of human-made features seen in this view.

5.4.4.3 Conformance Analysis

Figures 5.4-8 and 5.4-10 show the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area for Alternatives 4B/4C and Alternatives 4D/4E used in evaluating

the degree of consistency of the proposed 500-kV transmission facilities with the existing VRM Class II objectives.

Attachment A, Figure K-6b simulates landscape conditions showing Alternatives 4B/4C as viewed from KOP 655. From KOP 655, Alternatives 4B/4C of the proposed Project would be moderately visible but seen in the context of the existing railroad and transmission lines. The proposed Project elements would draw the attention of the casual observer but would not dominate the setting. Screening and other mitigation efforts, such as micrositing, may reduce impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. Because the transmission facilities along this alternative route would be backdropped and located 1.5 miles or more from this KOP, the line would blend with the landscape. However, it would represent a deviation from the natural form, line, color, and texture of the landscape and would not conform to VRM Class II objectives. It has been assumed that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect the historic resources adjacent to the Fossil Butte NM. It is recommended that, if either Alternatives 4B or 4C are selected, the following area be reclassified to VRM Class III: the portion of the planning area south and west of US 30 (the highway) beginning on a north-south line along the high ridgeline approximately ¼ mile west of the current active coal leases (west of the town of Kemmerer); south along the high ridgeline to the ridgeline behind the active coal leases in Township 21 North, Range 117 West, Section 25; then west following the high points of the topography approximately 3 miles south of the highway to Township 21 North, Range 118 West, Section 28; then northwest following the high points of the topography within approximately 3 miles of the highway to Township 21 North, Range 118 West, Section 18; then northwest following the high points to within approximately ½ mile of the highway in Township 21 North, Range 118 West, Section 12; then west to the junction of US 30/SR 89 (see Figure 5.4-9).

Attachment A, Figure K-6d simulates landscape conditions showing Alternatives 4D/4E as viewed from KOP 652. The views of the undulating terrain, background mountainous silhouettes, and mottled vegetation exhibits diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few human-made features and simple geometric patterns. From KOP 652, Alternatives 4D/4E would be moderately visible from less than a mile due to the landscape backdrop absorbing the proposed structures. The Project would represent a deviation from the natural form, line, color, and texture and will not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.4.4.4 Associated Plan Amendment

It appears that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect the historic resources south of Fossil Butte NM as well as the monument itself. As a transmission line in this setting would not conform to the VRM Class II objectives, it is recommended that if either Alternative 4D or 4E is selected, that the following area be reclassified to VRM Class III: the portion of the planning area south and west of US 30 (the highway) beginning on a north-south line along the high ridgeline approximately ¼ mile west of the current active coal leases (west of the town of Kemmerer); south along the high ridgeline to the ridgeline behind the active coal leases in Township 21 North, R117W, Section 25; then west following the high points of the topography approximately 3 miles south of the highway to Township 21 North, Range 118 West, Section 28; then northwest following the high points of the topography within approximately 3 miles of the highway to Township 21 North, Range 118 West, Section 18; then northwest following the high points

to within approximately ½ mile of the highway in Township 21 North, Range 118 West, Section 12; then west to the junction of US 30/State Highway 89. Portions of the route that do not fall within this recommended reclassification area would be permitted a one-time allowance without changing the VRM Classification (see Figure 5.4-11).

Mitigation measures may include choosing the southern alternative yet another alternative may be to use design of structure and a mottled color pattern to blend better with the background landscape throughout the season but especially during any high tourist seasons.

5.4.5 AOI K-7 Sillem Ridge AOI (Segment 4 – Alternatives 4C/4E)

The Sillem Ridge AOI comprises an isolated 341-acre parcel with a total VRM Class II area crossed of 0.11 mile that would be crossed by Alternatives 4C and 4E (see Figure 5.4-12). The AOI is centered on a peak just south of US 30. The Project would cross the southern ridgeline and associated foothills and lowlands within the AOI.

5.4.5.1 Alternatives Considered

Alternatives 4C and 4E follow a joint route in this AOI and were identified as a means of following US 30 thereby substantially avoiding the Cokeville NWR, high-quality trail crossings, and the Rock Creek/Tunp SMA. The Proposed Route and Alternatives 4B, 4D, and 4F would avoid this AOI but would cross VRM Class II land and other resources.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.4.5.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

Figure 5.4-12 shows the 15-mile radius viewshed, the proposed routes and alternatives, VRM classifications, and towers used to evaluate the viewshed impacts. The western portion of the analysis area is flat to rolling topography with some pivot-plot agriculture. The Bear River Valley NWR is approximately 4 miles northwest of the AOI. The eastern portion of the analysis area is rolling to mountainous with steep ravines and U-shaped valleys. The vegetation occurs in mottled forms of coarse grasses/bushes and patchy clusters of natural vegetation and grasses. The Bear River runs north-south through the western area of the analysis area, and Twin Creek crosses east-west through the center of the analysis area before joining with Bear River. Historic trials run from the southeast to northwest in both the southern and northern portions of the analysis area and join in the western portion along the eastern edge of the NWR. Existing transmission lines run through the middle of the analysis area, branching north and southwest just south of the NWR, as well as running through the northeast section of the analysis area. Highway 30 crosses east-west through the middle of the area, following Twin Creek and then north, along the eastern edge of the NWR and the Bear River Valley.

Alternatives 4C/4E would be highly visible to moderate-sensitivity viewers traveling along this wildlife auto tour route. A pull-out site located approximately 0.25 mile west of where the alternative alignment crosses US 30 would be the primary viewing location. This enclosed view includes deer fencing, a railroad, an electric distribution line, a communication tower on the hill to the east, and the highway that results in an overall moderate visual contrast.

Alternatives 4C/4E would cross one VRI polygon within this AOI: West Divide Slope (SQR = B).

- West Divide Slope:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 381.2 (240.9 [VRM II = 63.5, VRM III =135.1, VRM IV = 42.3]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 47.7 (38.9 [VRM II = 6.3, VRM III = 32.6]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percentage of BLM-managed) = 12.5 (16.1). Approximately 19 miles of the route would cross the VRI polygon, 8 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land. One mile of this consists of the AOI K-7 crossing.

Attachment A, Figure K-7a shows the landscape in the vicinity of KOP 632. There is a relatively enclosed view that includes existing powerlines and other infrastructure.

5.4.5.3 Conformance Analysis

Figures 5.4-12 and 5.4-13 show the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to evaluate the degree of consistency between the proposed 500-kV facilities and the existing landscape including VRM Class II lands as well as the aerial view and recommended amendment action. Attachment A, Figure K-7b simulates landscape conditions showing Alternatives 4C/4E as viewed from KOP 632.

Alternative 4C would be highly visible to viewers traveling along this wildlife auto tour route. Viewers would be approximately 0.25 mile from Alternative 4C/4E, representing a foreground view of the Project, which would depart from paralleling existing transmission lines as it crosses US 30 from the south to the north. Considering the speed of travel (55 mph), the view duration would be brief; thus, the impacts on viewers traveling along this road would be low to moderate. A pull-out site located approximately 0.25 mile west of where the alternative alignment crosses US 30 would be the primary viewing location. Viewers at this location would have a foreground view of the Project, which would depart from paralleling existing transmission lines as it crosses US 30 from the south to the north.

Crossing this isolated parcel would result in a high degree of contrast as the transmission line would be skylined where it crosses the peak. It would create a dominant element in the landscape. With no realistic mitigation options, the proposed transmission line facilities would draw the attention of the casual observer; dominate the setting and deviate from the natural form, line, color, and texture of the landscape.

5.4.5.4 Associated Plan Amendment

Alternatives 4C/4E will not conform to VRM Class II objectives that have been assigned to this area likely to protect the scenic quality of the peak. If either Alternatives 4C or 4E are selected, micrositing may reduce the length across VRM Class II areas but would not avoid the entire parcel. It is recommended that the Project be allowed as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification in AOI K-7.

5.4.6 AOI K-8 Boulder Ridge (Segment 4 – Alternatives 4C and 4E)

The Boulder Ridge AOI is a common segment of Alternatives 4C and 4E that comes within about 3 miles of the Wyoming-Utah state line before turning abruptly to the north,

up the Bear River Valley, paralleling the east side of US 30 and the west side of Boulder Ridge. The Boulder Ridge AOI is located within the southwest portion of the Rock Creek/Tunp Range SMA, an administrative area with multiple restrictions on development due to its unspoiled character. It is located on the east side of the Cokeville Meadows NWR. Figure 5.4-14 shows the viewshed of the Boulder Ridge AOI, Alternatives 4C/4E, and the VRM classifications. Figure 5.4-15 shows the AOI, routes, and amendment management recommendation. This AOI crosses a total of 5.3 miles across two VRM Class II designated parcels comprising approximately 280,000 acres.

5.4.6.1 Alternatives Considered

Common Alternatives 4C/4E could not easily be moved to avoid the VRM Class II land. If moved farther east, they would increase the amount of VRM Class II land crossed, as well as placing the alternatives farther into the Rock Creek/Tunp Range SMA. The Cokeville Meadows NWR prevents movement to the west. Alternatives 4B/4E, located west of 4C/4E, provide an alternative to crossing the AOI. If Alternatives 4B/4E were selected, the Boulder Ridge AOI would be avoided, and it would cross only one small area of VRM Class II land.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.4.6.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

With the exception of the Bear River Valley running north to south through the western half of the 15-mile-radius area surrounding this AOI, the topography is very rugged with many steep slopes. There are many north-south oriented landscape features including Boundary Ridge, Dempsey Ridge, the Sublette Range, and valleys following the Bear River and numerous other drainages. The vast majority of the area is undeveloped with farms and farmland mostly confined to the Bear River Valley. The small community of Cokeville is situated along US 30, the primary highway in the area. SRs 89 and 30 provide access from Wyoming into northeastern Utah and intersect US 30 south of Cokeville. There are several transmission lines crossing the area from east to west and north to south including a multiple 345-kV line corridor just south of Cokeville. Forest land occurs in scattered locations mostly in the eastern part of this area. Potentially sensitive viewing areas include the highways, communities, historic trails, the Cokeville Meadows NWR, Fossil Butte NM, and other recreational and natural areas.

The AOI is the VRM II Class area to the west of Boulder Ridge where travelers along SRs 89 and US 30 would be 0.1 mile away from, and parallel to, the alignment for approximately 2 miles. Viewpoints 1365 and 1367 and KOP 1368 represent views from drivers and passengers using this travelway. The views along this stretch are fairly similar and represented by KOP 1368. The view from this location is looking east to northeast from SR 89, which is adjacent to the Cokeville Meadows NWR to the west. The Oregon NHT parallels the highway. This enclosed view of Boulder Ridge and Tunp Range in the background is considered to have Class B scenic quality due to the rolling topography and random patterns of vegetation

Within the 5-mile buffer viewing distance for this AOI, the route would cross two VRI polygons: West Divide Slope (SQR = B, score =12) and Rock Creek (SQR = B, score = 17). The route would also parallel the Lower Bear River (SQR = B, score = 14) polygon,

within 500 feet, for much of its length within the Rock Creek polygon. Within the AOI, the route would cross the Rock Creek VRI polygon, paralleling the Lower Bear River polygon.

- Rock Creek:
  - Polygon area (BLM-managed) = 130.6 (83.6 [VRM II = 83.6, VRM III = <0.01]) square miles,
  - Area within 5 miles of AOI (BLM-managed) = 39.8 (26.1 [VRM II = 26.1, VRM III = <0.01]) square miles,
  - Percentage Polygon within 5 miles (percentage of BLM-managed) = 30.5 (31.2). Approximately 13 miles of the route in this area would cross the VRI polygon, 4 miles of which would be crossing VRM Class II BLM-managed land.

Attachment A, Figure K-8a shows the landscape in the vicinity of KOP 1368. In this view, the topography ranges from undulating and rolling to more dramatic mountainous terrain in the background. Attachment B, Figures B-7 and B-8 show the existing conditions as viewed from viewpoints 1365 and 1367 toward Alternatives 4C/4E.

5.4.6.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.4-14 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to evaluate the degree of conformance between the proposed 500-kV facilities and the existing VRM Class II designation for the surrounding landscape. Attachment A, Figure K-8b simulates landscape conditions with Project construction, showing Alternatives 4C/4E as viewed from KOP 1368.

Alternatives 4C/4E would be skylined and highly visible as a dominant element in the landscape. With no realistic mitigation options, the proposed transmission line facilities would draw the attention of the casual observer; dominate the setting and deviate from the natural form, line, color, and texture of the landscape.

5.4.6.4 Associated Plan Amendment

Alternatives 4C/4E will not conform to VRM Class II objectives that have been assigned to this area to protect the scenic quality of the landscape around and including Boulder Ridge. It is recommended that if either Alternative 4C or 4E is selected, that the Project be allowed as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification (see Figure 5.4-15). This would provide the most protection for adjacent visual resource management goals.

Mitigation suggestions should include clearing tower pads that are less geometric and resemble the lines of the surrounding vegetation and moving the alignment across the road as not to cat lines across historic trail segments.

5.4.7 Designated Viewsheds and Trail Segments

The RMP identifies designated sites where viewsheds within 3 miles are to be preserved, retaining the existing character of the landscape such that developments do not dominate the visible area and detract from the feeling or sense of the historic time period of the site.

These sites include the following:

- Emigrant Spring/Slate Creek (87 acres)
- Emigrant Spring/Dempsey (11 acres)
- Johnston Scout Rock (2 acres)
- Alfred Corum and Nancy Hill emigrant gravesites (0.5 acre)
- Pine Grove emigrant camp (14 acres)
- Rocky Gap trail landmark (15 acres)
- Bear River Divide trail landmark (3 acres)
- Gateway petroglyphs (518 acres)

As shown on Figure 5.4-16 all of the routes are outside of the viewshed of six of the designated sites. Of the remaining sites, the revised Proposed Route (formerly Alternative 4A) would be within the viewshed of the Emigrant Spring/Dempsey and Alfred Corum and Nancy Hill emigrant gravesites (1.3 miles). Alternative 4F would be within the viewshed of the Alfred Corum and Nancy Hill emigrant gravesites (1.5 miles). It is recommended that if either Alternatives 4A or 4F are selected, the Project be allowed as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification, micrositing and alternative structure configurations would be considered in the design. This would provide the most protection of the historic character of the site.

The RMP also sets the goal to manage the viewsheds of national historic trail segments. As started in the RMP, these goals include:

- "(1)(a) Preserve the viewshed within 3 miles of Class 1 segments north and east of US 30 and west of the Hams Fork River (Tunp/Dempsey Trail area), where the visual characteristics of the setting contribute to the eligibility of the site, by managing projects in federal sections to retain the existing character of the landscape so developments do not dominate the visible area to detract from the feeling or sense of the historic time period of the trail setting. Design ROW to preserve the visual integrity of the settings consistent with the BLM visual resources handbook and manual.
- (1)(b) Preserve the viewshed within 1 mile of Class 1 segments outside of the Tunp/Dempsey Trail area and the checkerboard land pattern area, where the visual characteristics of the setting contribute to the eligibility of the site, by managing projects in federal sections to retain the existing character of the landscape so developments do not dominate the visible area to detract from the feeling or sense of the historic time period of the trail setting. Design ROW to preserve the visual integrity of the settings consistent with the BLM visual resources handbook and manual.
- (1)(c) On Class 1 trail segments within the checkerboard land pattern area, manage the viewshed to preserve the existing character of the landscape within the federal section where the trail occurs.
- (2)(a) Preserve the viewshed within ½ mile of Class 2 segments that exist in blocked federal lands west of US 189 (south of Kemmerer) and south of US 30

by managing projects in federal sections to retain the existing character of the landscape so developments do not attract the attention of the casual observer.

- (2)(b) On Class 2 trail segments outside of the area described in (2)(a) manage the viewshed to preserve the existing character of the landscape within the federal section where the trail occurs.
- (2)(c) On Class 3 segments, manage the viewshed according to the appropriate VRM class for the area. The management action is intended to manage developments to maintain setting qualities and not to have an exclusion zone."

As shown on Figure 5.4-17 several of the proposed and alternative routes cross Class I, II, and III trails and associated viewsheds. Table 5.4-1 lists the number of crossings and extent of viewshed crossed by these route alternatives. Section 3.3 of the Final EIS provides more information on the effects to each trail.

Table 5.4-1. Historic Trail Segments

Route Designation	Class I Trail Segments		Class II Trail Segments	Class III Trail Segments
	# of Crossings	Miles within Viewshed	# of Crossings	# of Crossings
Revised Proposed Route (Alternative 4A)	2	16.8 miles within 3-mile viewshed	3	-
Alternative 4B	–	–	–	3
Alternative 4C	–	3.1 miles within 3-mile viewshed	–	2
Alternative 4D	–	–	–	3
Alternative 4E	–	3.1 miles within 3-mile viewshed	–	2
Alternative 4F	1	16.8 miles within 3-mile viewshed	3	–

5.4.7.1 Proposed and Associated Plan Amendments

It is recommended that micrositing and alternative structures be considered for any alternative that crosses a Class 1, 2, or 3 trail segment, in addition to other mitigation measures as described in Table 2.7-1 of the Final EIS. Proposed amendments for the Preferred Route include allowing the Project to cross the Sublett NHT, cross VRM Class II lands without changing VRM Class designations, cross Class 1 and 2 NHT viewsheds, and cross the Rock Creek/Tunp area. These amendments would provide the most protection for the viewsheds of historic trail segments. Similar amendments, other than the Rock Creek/Tunp amendment, would apply to Alternative 4F. The VRM amendment associated with Alternatives 4B through 4E would reclassify portions of the areas crossed. Alternatives 4C and 4E would also need the amendment for the Rock Creek/Tunp area as presented for the Preferred Route.

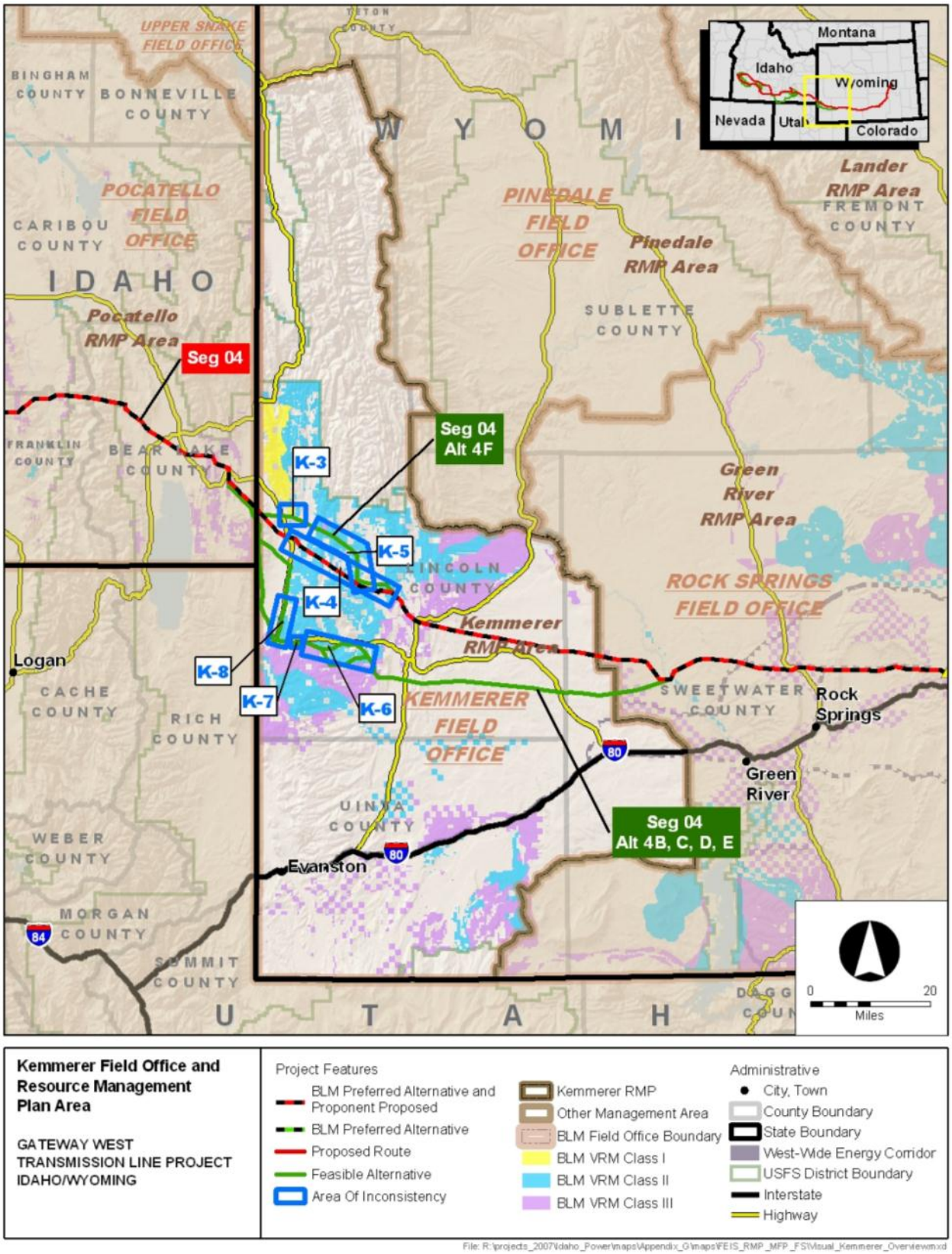


Figure 5.4-1. Kemmerer RMP Boundary Map

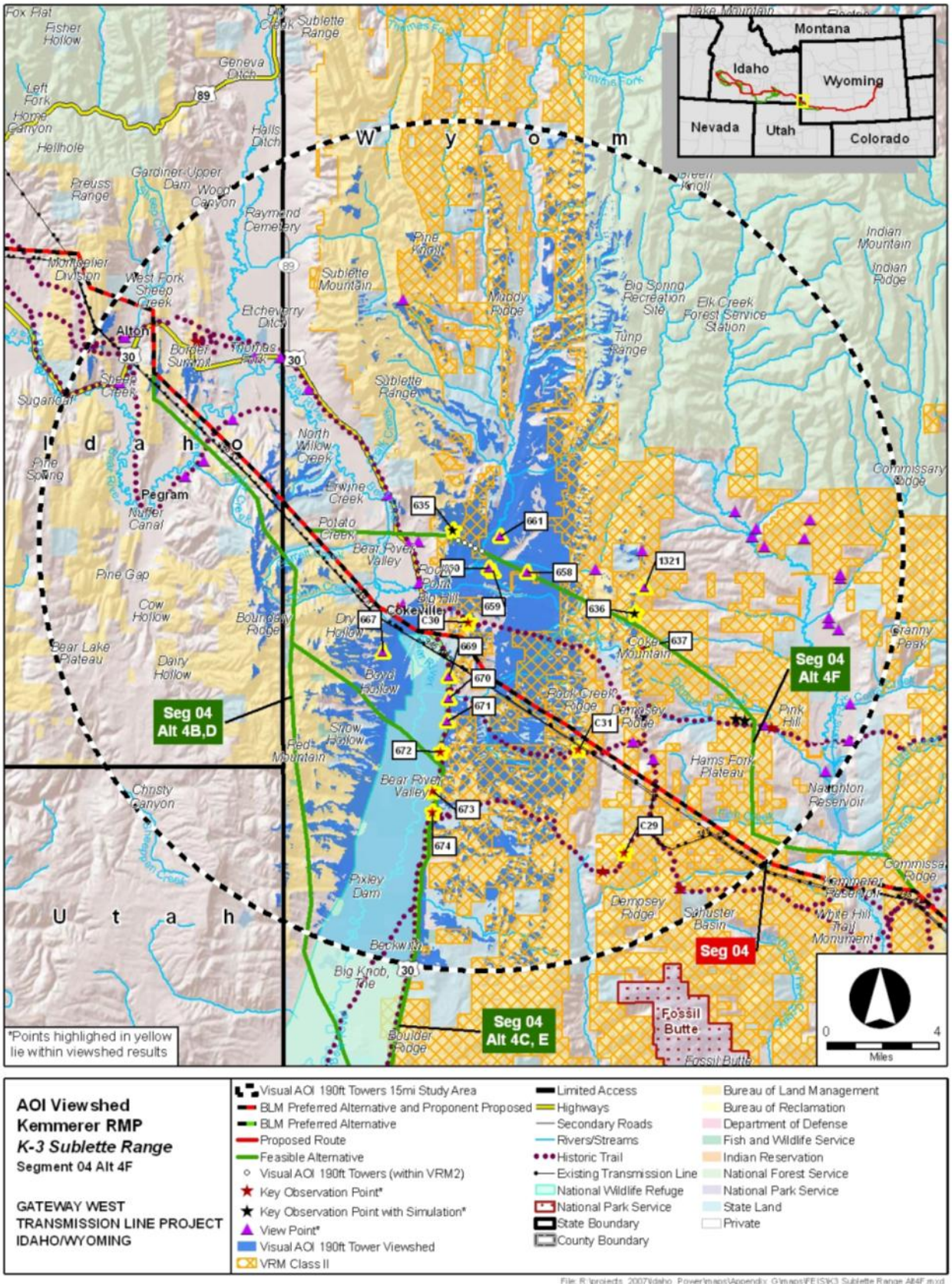


Figure 5.4-2. AOI K-3 Sublette Range AOI Visual Analysis

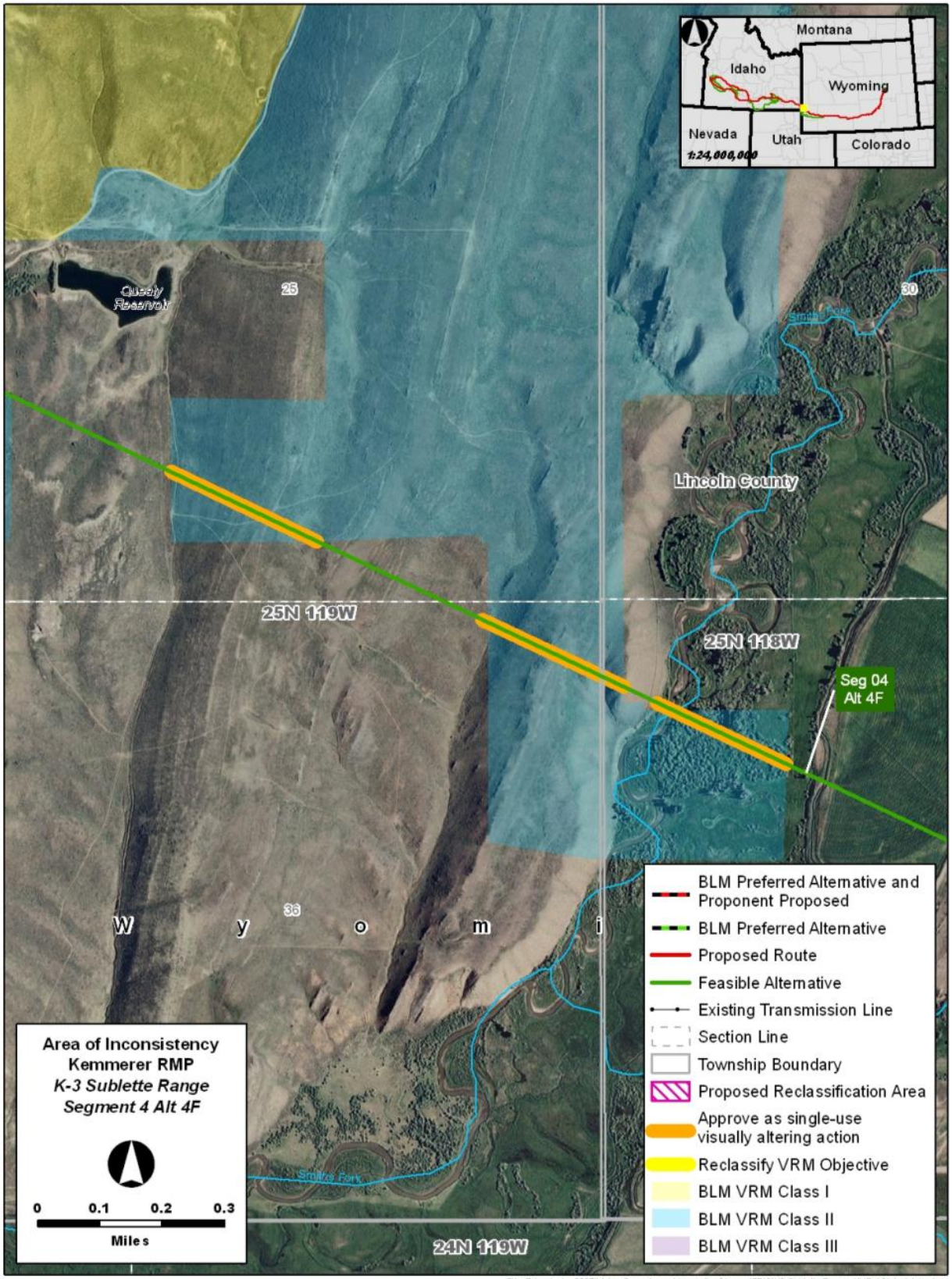


Figure 5.4-3. AOI K-3 Sublette Range AOI Detailed Map

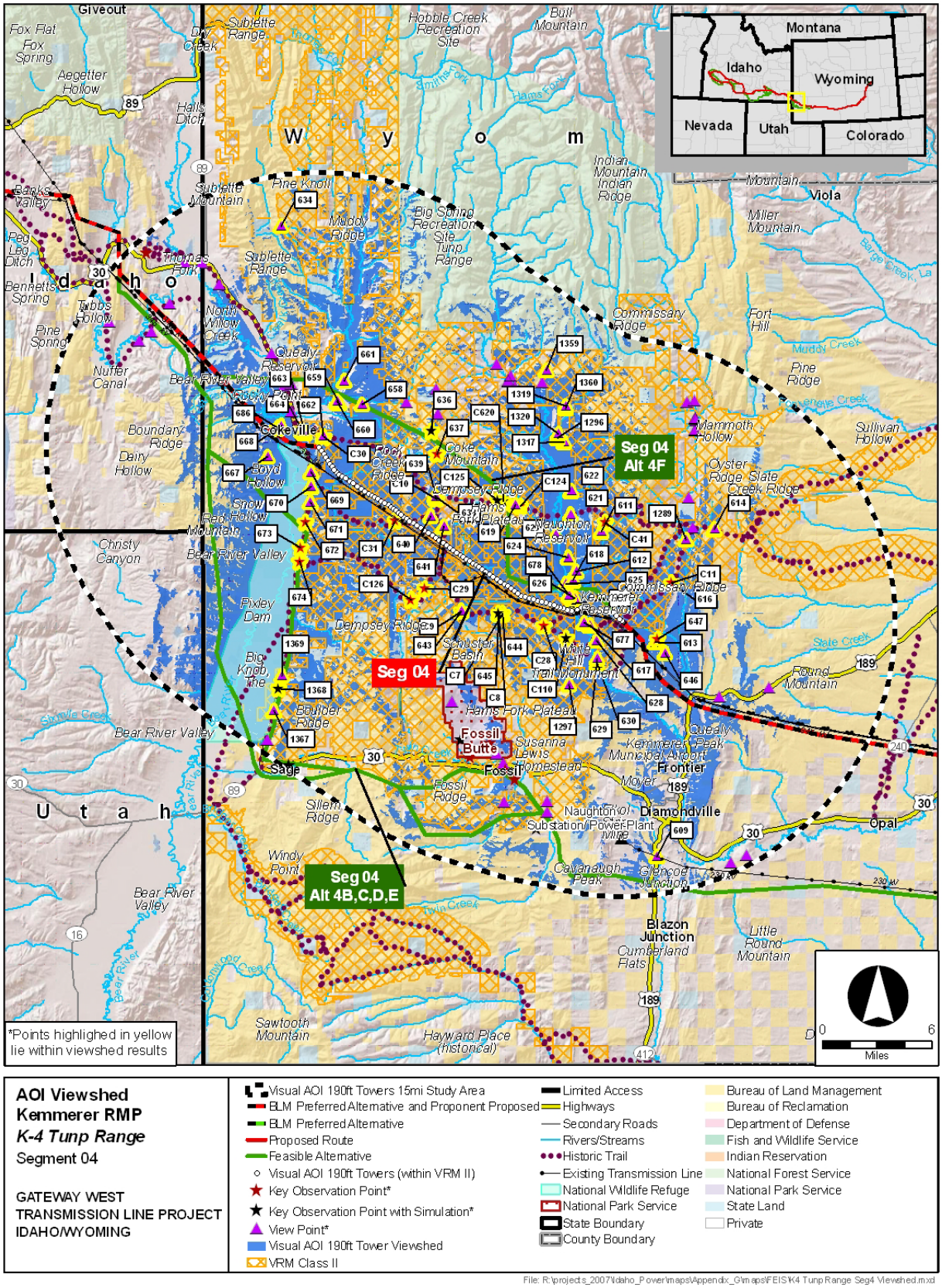


Figure 5.4-4. AOI K-4Tunp Range AOI Visual Analysis

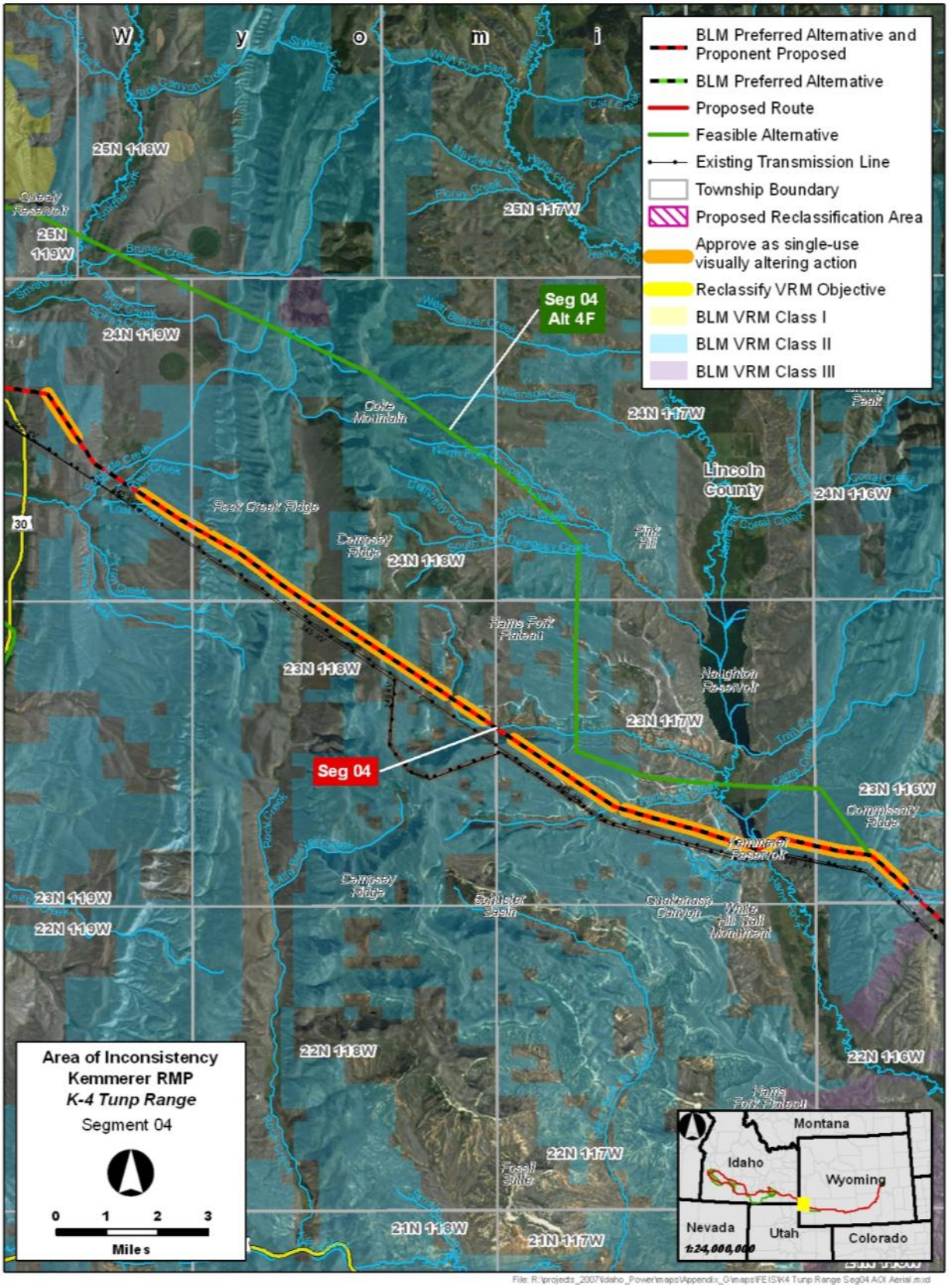


Figure 5.4-5 AOI K-4Tunp Range AOI Detailed Map (Proposed Route) Showing the Proposed VRM Action for Amendments #2 through 5

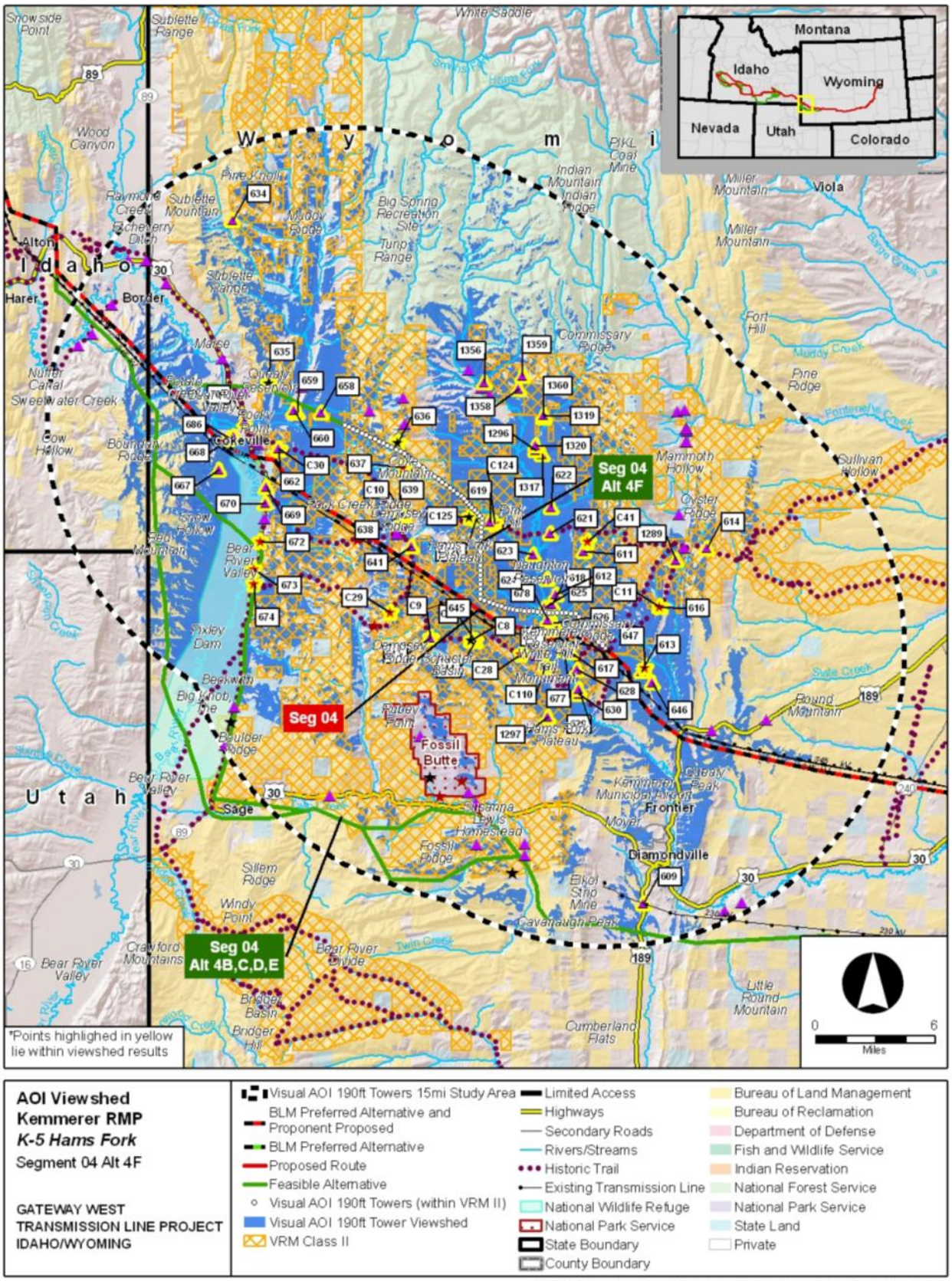


Figure 5.4-6. AOI K-5 Hams Fork AOI Visual Analysis

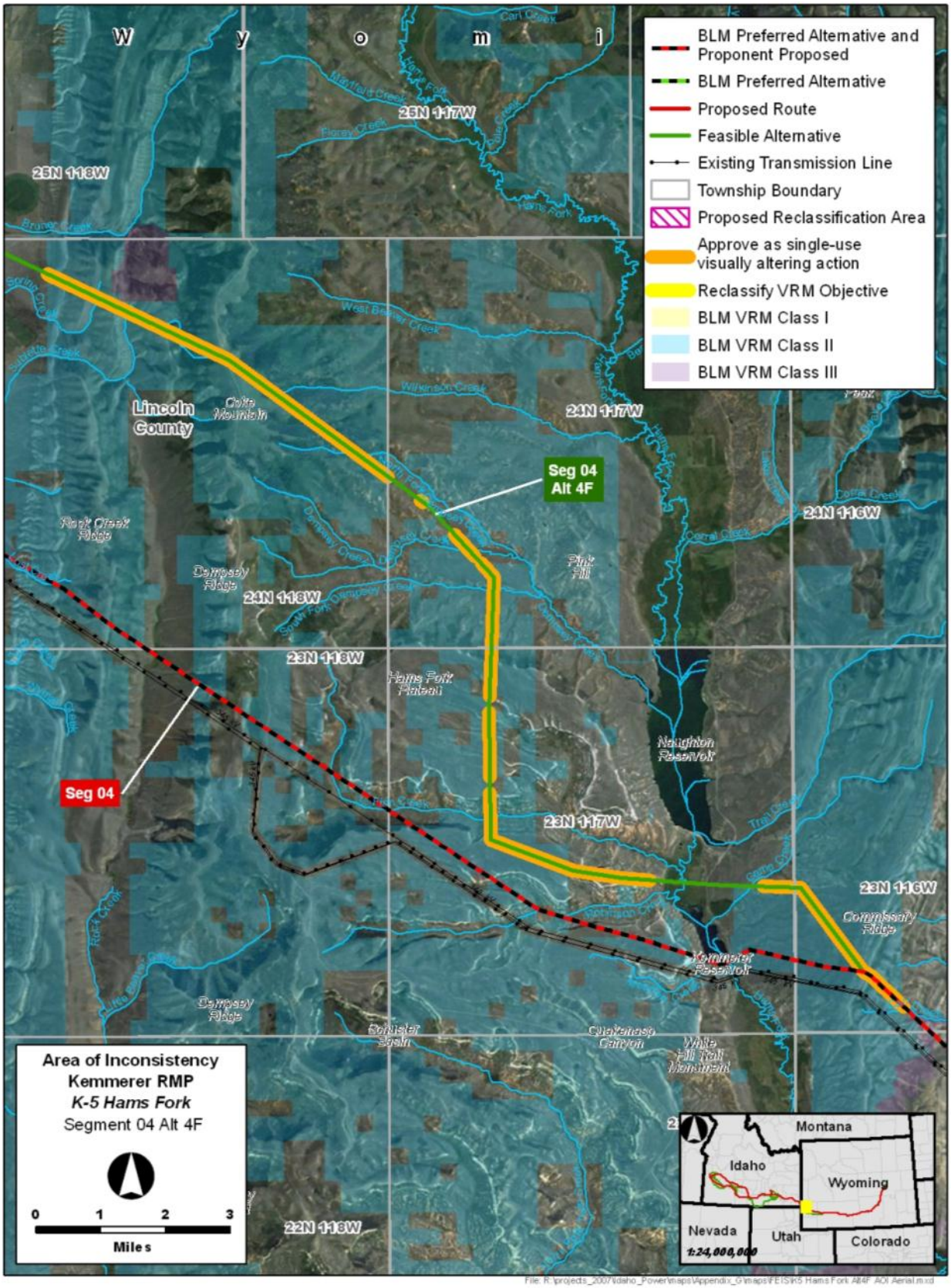


Figure 5.4-7. AOI K-5 Hams Fork AOI Detailed Map

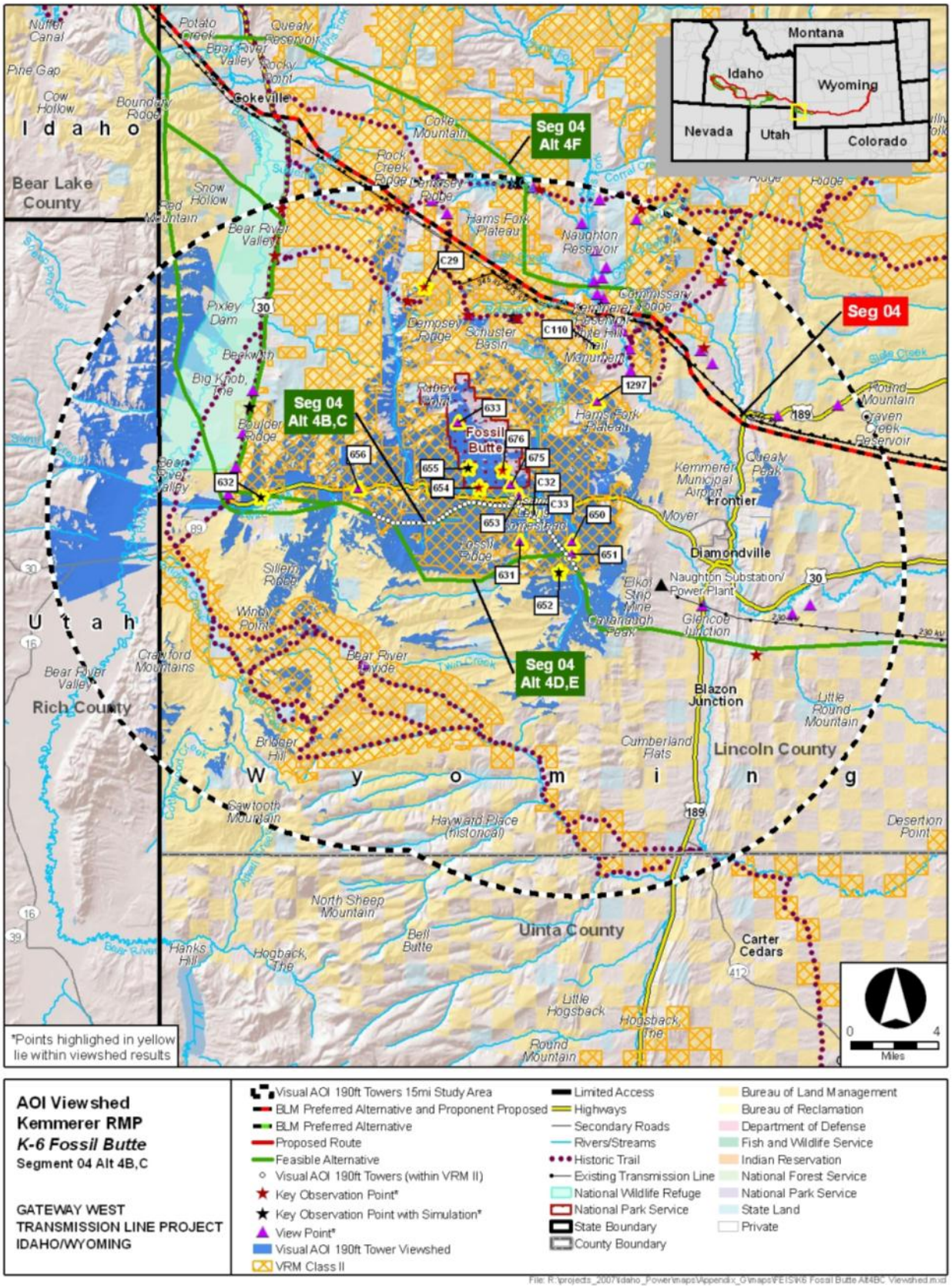


Figure 5.4-8. AOI K-6 Fossil Butte AOI Visual Analysis (Alternatives 4B/4C)

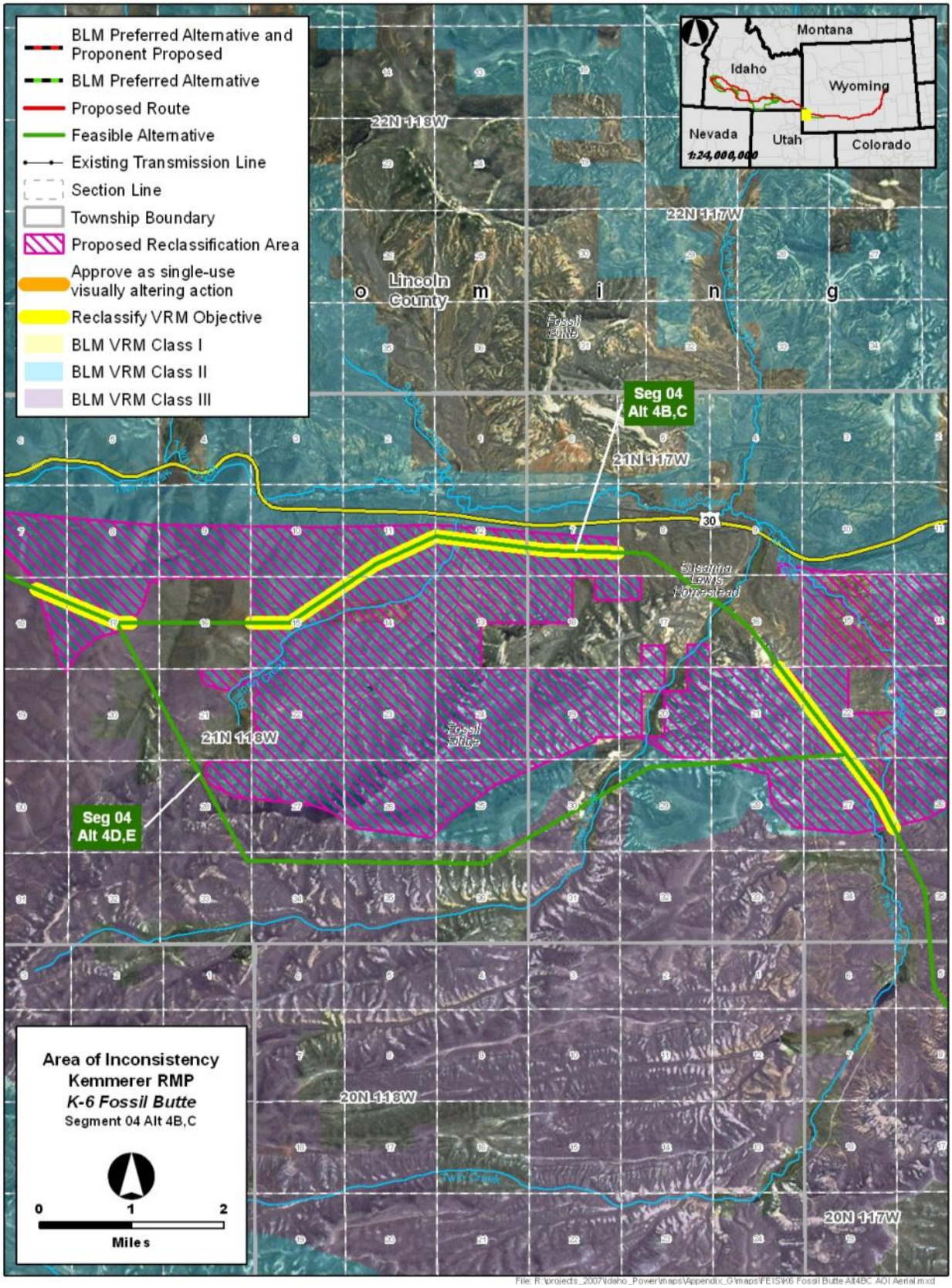


Figure 5.4-9. AOI K-6 Fossil Butte AOI Detailed Map (Alternatives 4B/4C)

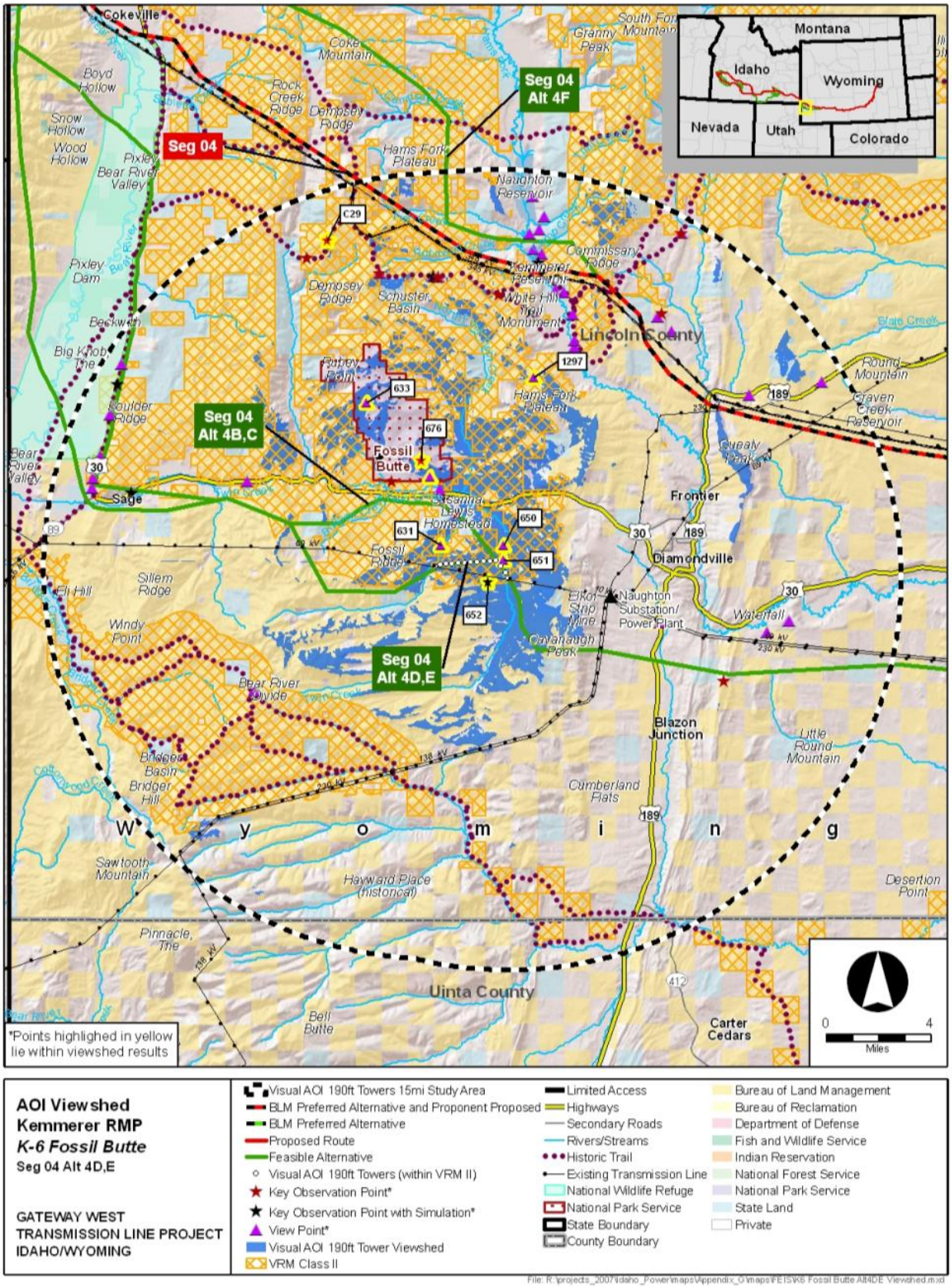


Figure 5.4-10. AOI K-6 Fossil Butte AOI Visual Analysis (Alternatives 4D/4E)

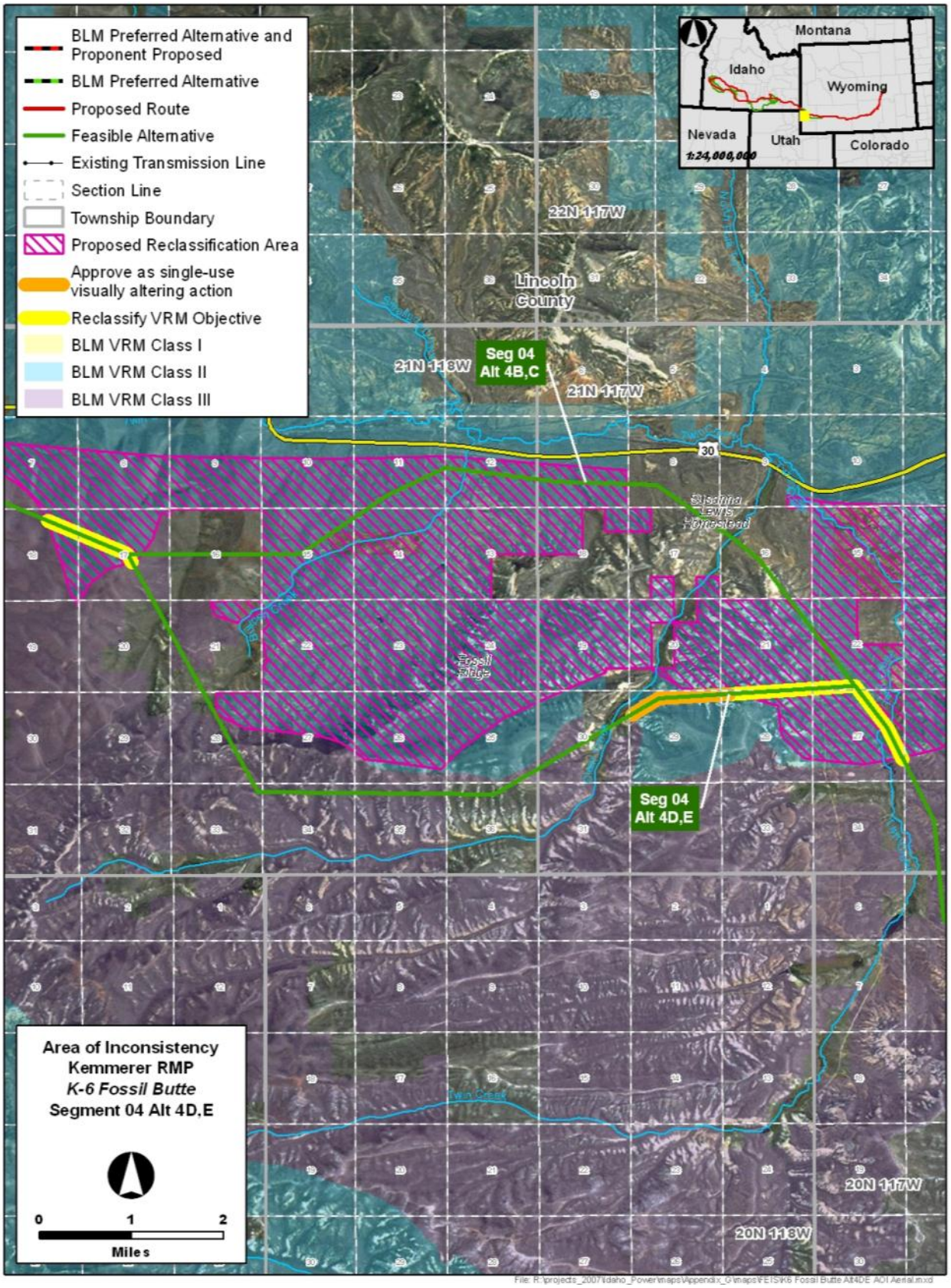


Figure 5.4-11. AOI K-6 Fossil Butte AOI Detailed Map (Alternative 4D/4E)

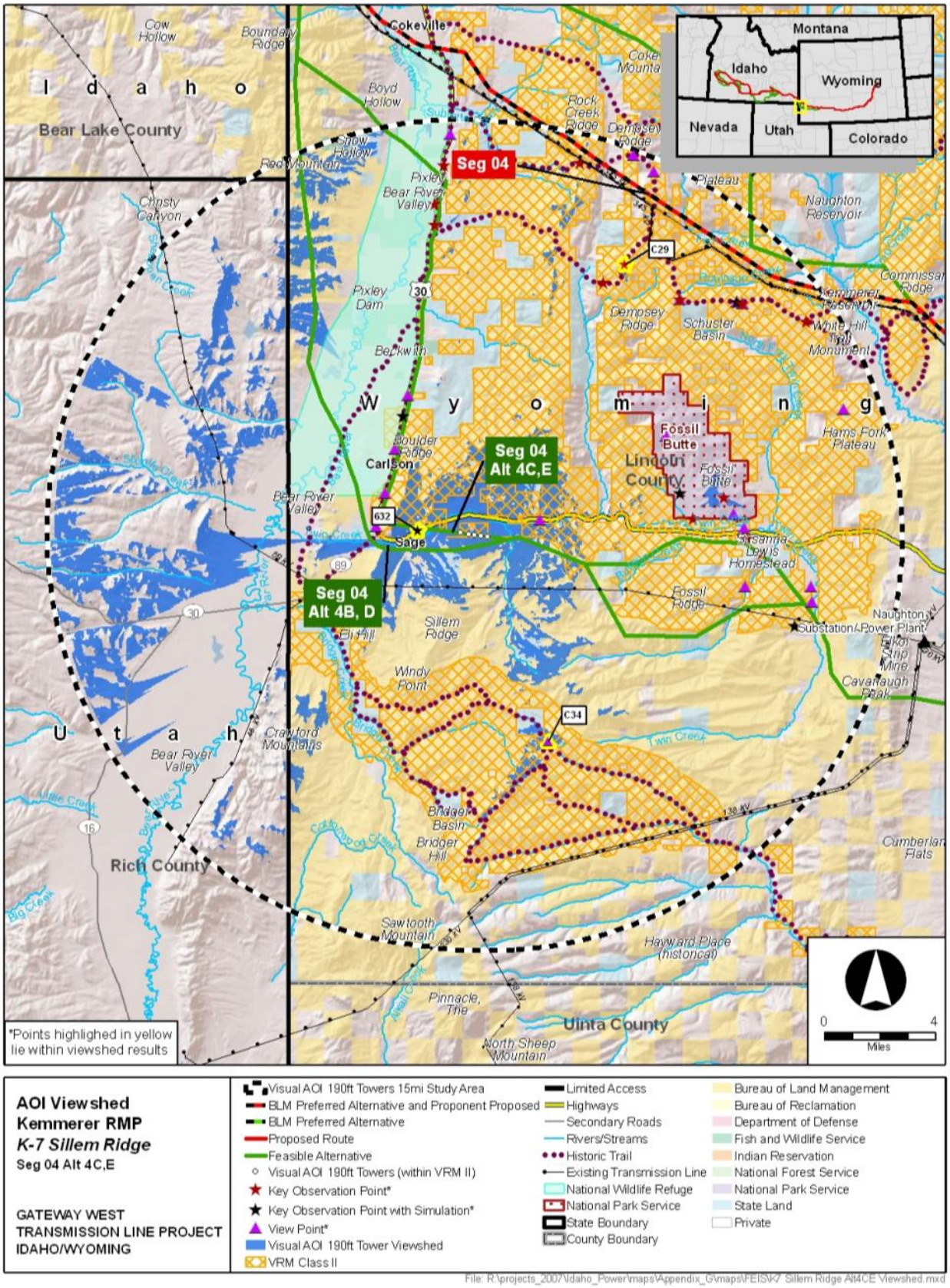


Figure 5.4-12. AOI K-7 Sillem Ridge Visual Analysis (Alternative 4C/4E)

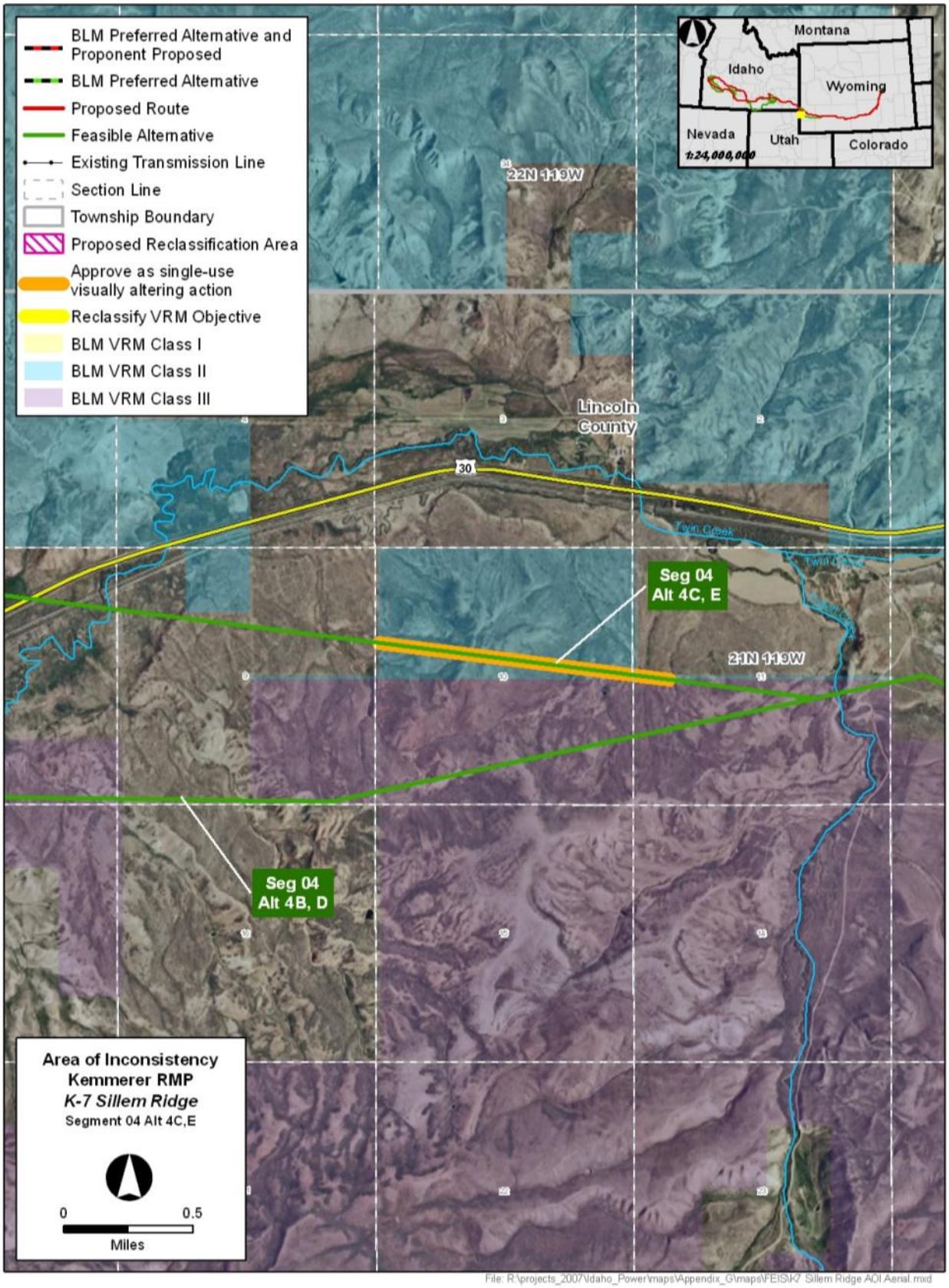


Figure 5.4-13. AOI K-7 Sillem Ridge Detailed Map (Alternative 4C/4E)

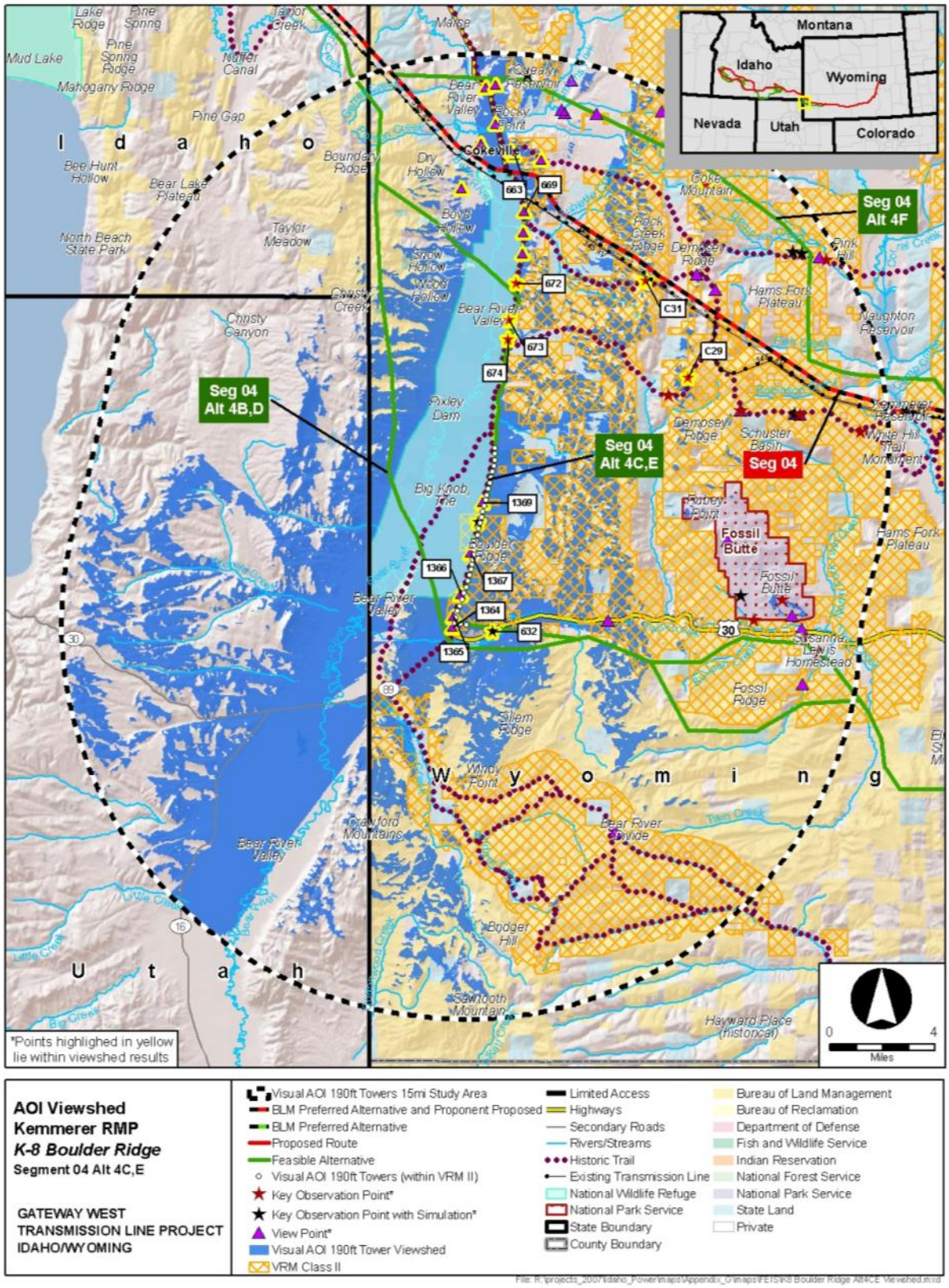


Figure 5.4-14. AOI K-8 Boulder Ridge AOI Visual Analysis (Alternative 4D/4E)

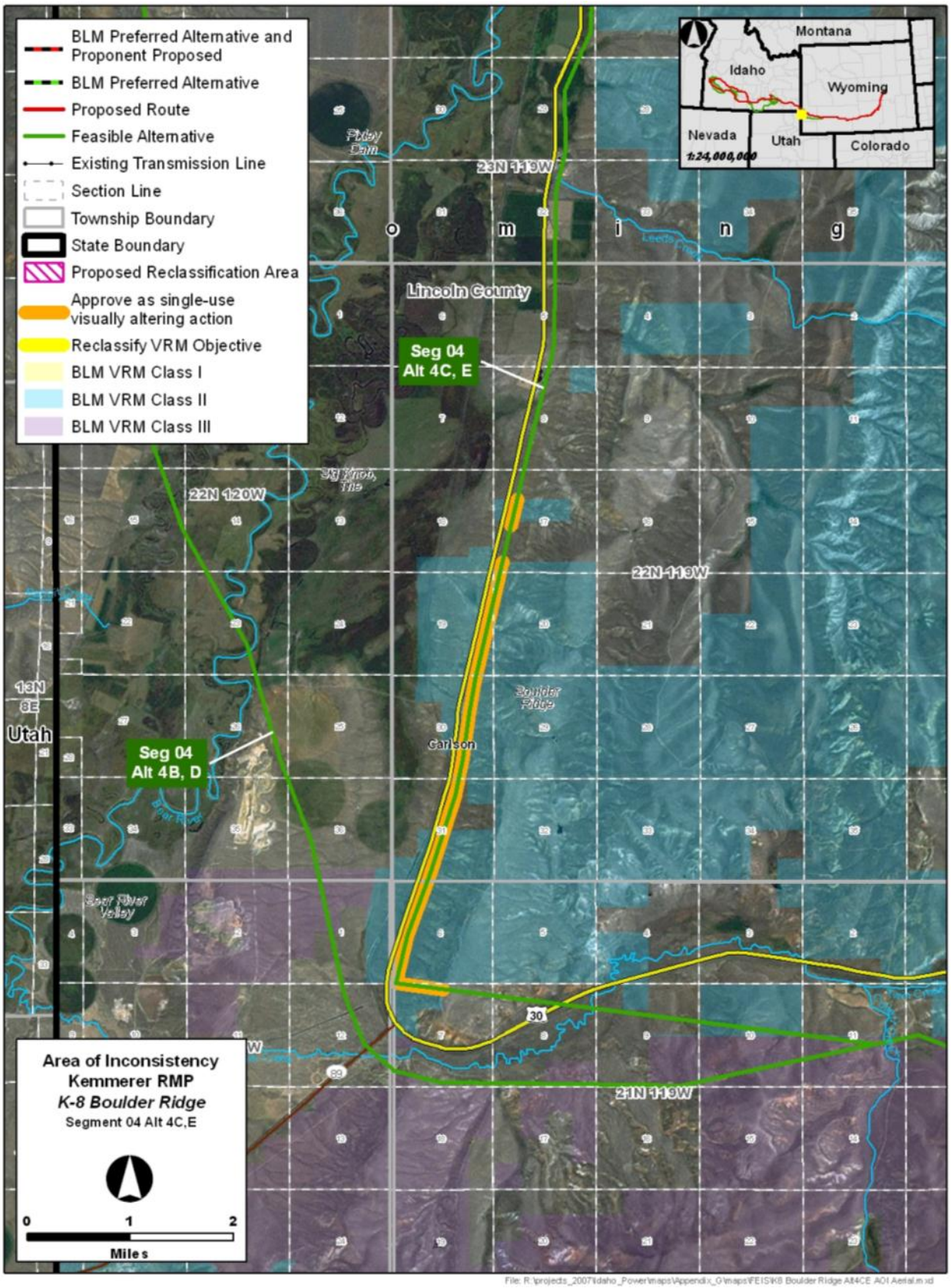


Figure 5.4-15. AOI K-8 Boulder Ridge AOI Detailed Map (Alternative 4D/4E)

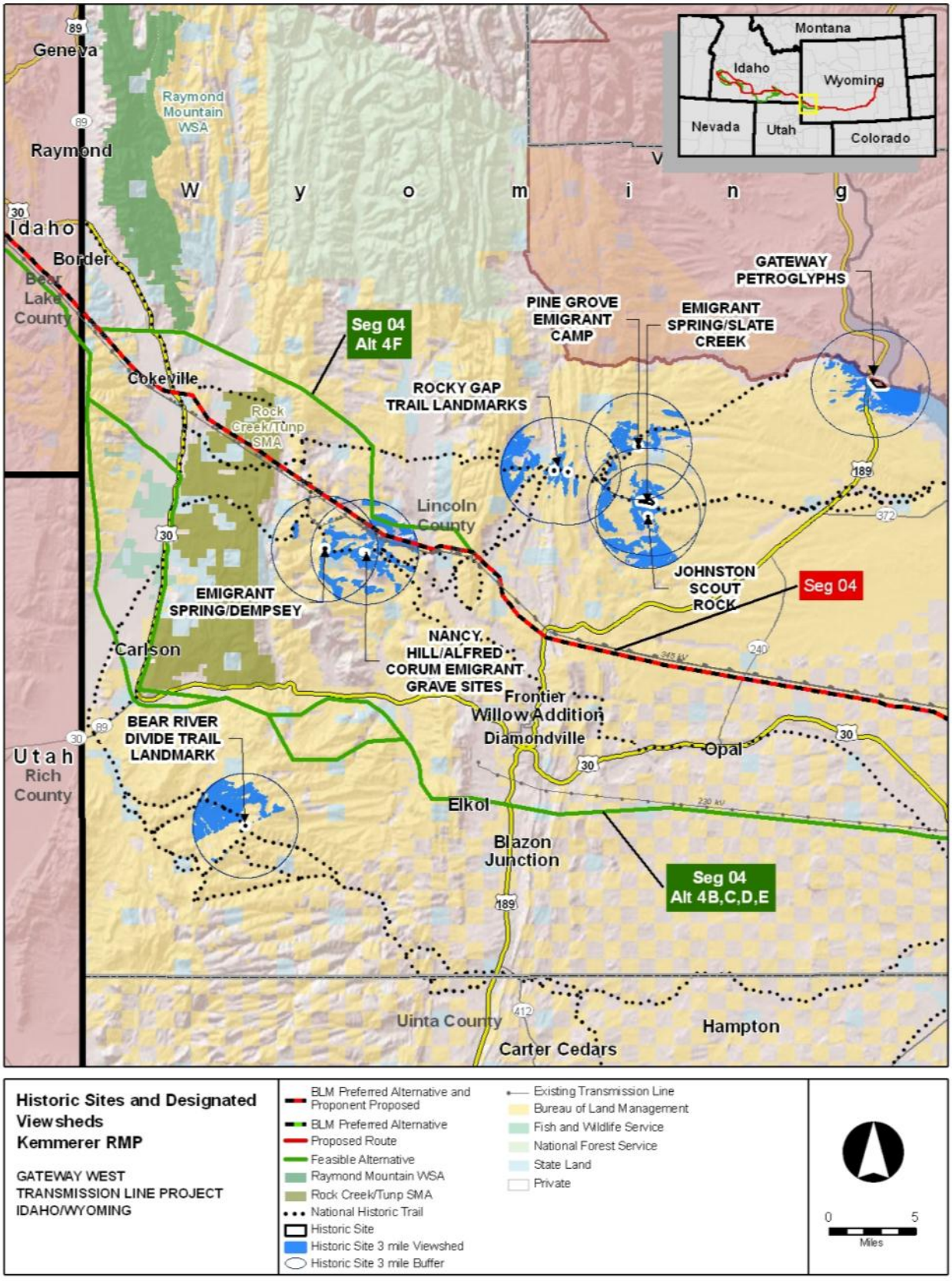


Figure 5.4-16. Designated Viewsheds in the Kemmerer FO

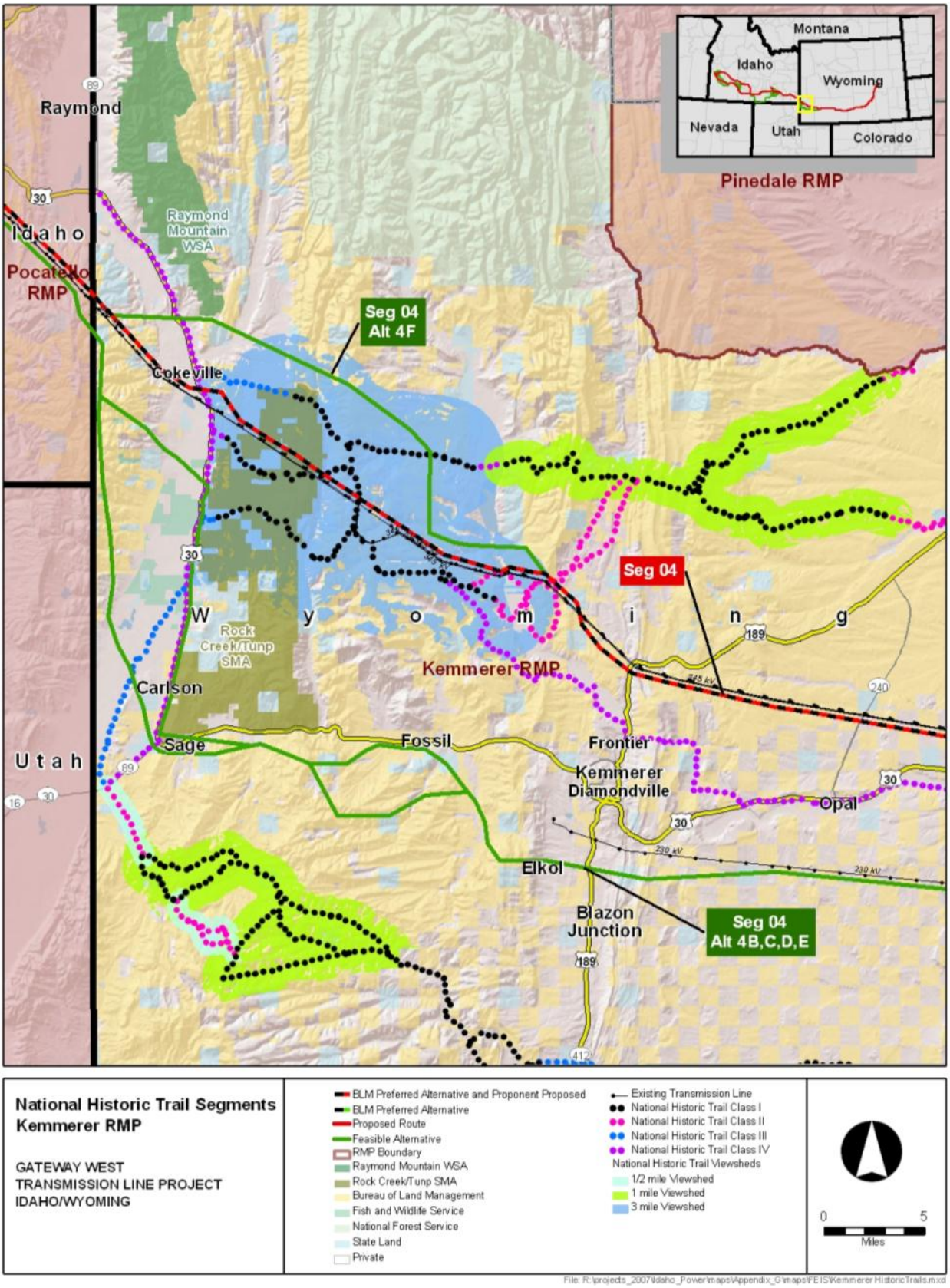


Figure 5.4-17. Historic Trail Segments in the Kemmerer FO

5.5 Pocatello RMP

Preferred Route: No VRM classification amendments are proposed for the Preferred Route.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: Two AOIs (M-1 and M-3) exist on alternative routes. The associated amendments would be to allow the Gateway West Transmission Line Project without changing the VRM classification for both the Class II and Class III areas crossed in the Deep Creek Mountains. A third AOI was identified in the Draft EIS; however, further review showed that the BLM-managed area was submerged and therefore did not present a nonconformance with the RMP.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The Pocatello RMP (BLM 2012b) provides direction for management of resource activities on public lands administered by the BLM within the Pocatello FO (see Figure 5.5-1). The Pocatello RMP was not the current RMP at the time the Draft EIS was published; therefore, the Malad MFP was used for the VRM consistency review. Since July 2012, the Pocatello RMP is the active RMP, and visual assessments have been reviewed for consistency with this newer land-use plan. AOI labels have been retained from the Draft EIS to more easily allow for referencing between the two documents. The Pocatello RMP includes the following visual recommendations that could be applicable to the Project:

- Specific development proposals will be allowed, located, and designated in accordance with the existing VRM class restrictions with emphasis on Class I areas.
- Allow changes within the landscape that are as natural as possible with appropriate location design and mitigation.
- Maintain a degree of management that minimizes changes in the visual dominance elements.

The Project begins in Wyoming and proceeds west into southeast Idaho. Beginning at Populus Substation, the Proposed Route splits into a northern route (Segments 5, 6, and 8) and a southern route (Segments 7 and 9). In the eastern portion of the Pocatello FO, the Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7 are parallel and closely aligned; however, farther west they diverge.

Segment 5 is 55.7 miles long and consists of a single-circuit 500-kV line between Populus Substation and Borah Substation. Routing issues in this segment include a subdivision, an eagle nest, the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, VRM Class II lands in the Deep Creek Mountains, avoidance of cultivated lands, establishment of a new ROW in rolling hills to mountainous terrain, residential development near the approach to the Borah Substation, and Power County zoning. There are no WWE corridors available for Segment 5. Segment 5 contains five feasible alternatives that are being studied in the EIS to provide options in negotiating the identified constraints.

Segment 7 also begins at Populus Substation and comprises a 118.2-mile-long single-circuit 500-kV line connecting with the Cedar Hill Substation. Routing issues in this

segment include agricultural operations such as concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFOs), pivot irrigation, livestock, proximity to residences and a local hang gliding area. Cultural resource concerns include proximity to historic trails such as the California Trail, Hudspeth's Cutoff and the Oregon NHT, and the City of Rocks National Reserve. Big game winter range, sage-grouse key habitat and leks, visual impact, and conformance with BLM and Forest Service management plans are other concerns for this segment. There are no existing east-west transmission lines or WWE corridors available for Segment 7. Due to its long distance and considerable public interest, eight feasible alternatives are being studied in the EIS for Segment 7.

In the Pocatello RMP planning area this Project would cross two VRM Class II management areas and one VRM Class III area. The presence of a transmission line in these landscapes would not meet the designated VRM objectives. As a result, BLM action would be necessary to allow the Project without changing the visual classification in order for the Project to be in conformance with the MFP. The AOIs are described in Sections 5.5.1 through 5.5.3 below.

5.5.1 AOI M-1 Deep Creek (Segment 5 and Segment 7 – Proposed Routes)

The Deep Creek AOI is located in the Deep Creek Mountains, approximately 17 miles southeast of American Falls, Idaho. The Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7 leave Populus Substation and proceed northwest for about 15 miles following existing transmission lines, before turning due west and crossing the Deep Creek Range and lands managed for VRM Class II objectives, but avoiding the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Segment 5 of the Proposed Route turns to the north on the west side of the reservation and continues for approximately 20 miles to Borah Substation. Segment 7 of the Proposed Route continues approximately 90 to 100 miles farther west to the proposed Cedar Hill Substation.

These routes result in Segment 5 and Segment 7 crossing about 1.5 miles and 1.3 miles, respectively, of land managed for VRM Class II lands in the Deep Creek Mountains. Figures 5.5-2 and 5.5-3 show the viewsheds of the Deep Creek AOI, Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7, respectively. Figure 5.5-4 shows the AOI, routes, and amendment management recommendation. This AOI includes one 17,638-acre VRM Class II parcel.

5.5.1.1 Alternatives Considered

The VRM Class II area is extensive, measuring approximately 10 miles north to south, and no small adjustments are possible to avoid it. BLM identified Alternatives 5A and 7A, which are approximately 5 to 6 miles south of the Proposed Route, and Alternatives 5B and 7B, approximately 10 to 12 miles farther south, to avoid the VRM Class II land and high quality forests. However, Alternatives 5A/5B and 7A/7B would cross more agricultural land than the Proposed Route that is of concern to local government and citizens. Alternative 5C, also identified by BLM, diverges from the Proposed Route east of the AOI avoiding the VRM Class II area, following an existing transmission line through the Fort Hall Reservation.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.5.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The landscape within a 15-mile-radius area of AOI M-1 has varied topography consisting of north-south oriented hills/mountains and valleys. The mountainous areas include the Deep Creek Mountains in the center of the study area, the Bannock Range along the eastern boundary, and the Sublette Range to the west. The Arbon Valley is located between the Deep Creek Range and the Bannock Range; Rockland Valley is located between the Deep Creek and Sublette Ranges in the western portion of the study area. Vegetation is dominated by grasses, forbs, and cropland in the valleys, and forests in the mountains. SR 37 and Arbon Valley Road cross the study area. Small communities like Rockland and Pauline as well as extensive agricultural lands are located in the valleys. A 345-kV transmission corridor passes east to northwest through the area. Scenic views of the Deep Creek Range are important to sensitive viewers in the surrounding area such as at the trailhead (KOP 920) and the scenic overlook at KOP 907. From both locations there are pristine mountain views exhibiting diversity in form, line, color, and texture and the lack development or manmade features.

Attachment A, Figure M-1/M-3a shows the existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 907. This view is used for both AOI M-1 and AOI M-3. The area is mountainous with a mixture of open land, forest land, and rock outcrops with no apparent manmade modifications. Attachment B, Figure B-9 shows the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 920 toward the Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7.

5.5.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figures 5.5-2 and 5.5-3 show the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study areas used to assess the consistency of the Project with existing landscape conditions for the Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7. In the north-south valleys east of AOI M-1 there are significantly more viewing areas and viewers, but these areas are located 3 to 15 miles away, significantly reducing potential visibility and visual impact.

Attachment A, Figures M-1/M-3b and M-1/M-3c simulate landscape conditions of the Proposed Routes for Segment 5 and Segment 7, respectively, on the existing landscape from KOP 907. From high points such as KOP 907 on a scenic ridgeline, it is apparent that micrositing, screening, and other mitigation efforts may lower impacts to scenic resources, especially for Segment 5. However, the pyramidal forms, meandering ridgelines, and dominant rugged vegetation would contrast with transmission structures and access roads, which would draw the attention of the casual observer and thus not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

As illustrated in Figures M-1/M-3b and M-1/M-3c, vegetation and terrain would screen much of the transmission line for Segment 5 of the Proposed Route. Segment 7 of the Proposed Route would be more visible but would still be screened by topography and vegetation in many areas. The simulation of KOP 907 illustrates this, showing three structures in the view. Distances of over a mile between viewing locations and the transmission line make the Project more difficult to distinguish with the added influence of backdropping terrain. Although the proposed transmission line would not dominate the view, it would draw the attention of the casual observer and thus not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.5.1.4 Associated Plan Amendment

It appears that the area was designated VRM Class II to protect the undisturbed nature of the scenic Deep Creek Mountains. If the Project were approved within the VRM Class II area, it would not meet the management objectives of a Class II, but would be located in a seldom seen portion of the area, and it would be beneficial to maintain the Class II Management Objectives to provide future protection of the visual resources found in this mountain range. It is recommended that if either of the Proposed Routes discussed here is selected, the Project be allowed as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification. This would provide the most protection of visual resources found in this mountain range.

5.5.2 AOI M-2 Snake River (Segment 5 – Proposed Route)

The Snake River AOI was originally identified as an area where the Project would likely not conform to BLM VRM requirements. This area is located on Segment 5 of the Proposed Route, approximately 1.5 miles east of Borah Substation. While the actual crossing of the VRM Class II parcel is across the Snake River, the remaining portion was of possible visual concern. It was subsequently determined by the Pocatello FO that no amendment was needed because the area of the VRM Class II parcel that would be crossed by the Proposed Route was inundated.

5.5.3 AOI M-3 Deep Creek East (Segment 5 and Segment 7 – Proposed Routes)

The Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7 leave Populus Substation and proceed northwest for about 15 miles, following existing transmission lines, before turning due west and crossing the Deep Creek Range. The routes cross VRM Class III lands to avoid the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. As the routes climb the east flank of the Deep Creek Mountains, the Segment 5 Proposed Route crosses about 2.8 miles of VRM Class III lands and the Segment 7 Proposed Route crosses approximately 2.9 miles of VRM Class III land. Based on the visual analysis, it is believed that the proposed transmission line in this area would not conform to the visual management goals due to sensitive viewers in the Arbon Valley to the east.

Figures 5.5-5 and 5.5-6 show the viewsheds of the Deep Creek East AOI, the Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7, and land managed for VRM Class III objectives. Figure 5.5-7 shows the AOI, routes, and amendment management recommendation. This AOI consists of a 6,636 acre parcel designated VRM Class.

5.5.3.1 Alternatives Considered

The VRM Class III area extends north to the Fort Hall Indian Reservation and about 2 miles to the south where it meets VRM Class II land. Therefore, there is no local re-route of this segment that would avoid the VRM Class III land. Alternatives 5A and 7A, located approximately 5 to 6 miles south of the Proposed Route, or Alternatives 5B and 7B, approximately 10 to 12 miles farther south, would avoid this AOI. However, because Alternatives 5A/5B and 7A/7B would cross more agricultural land than the Proposed Route there is extensive local government and citizen concern. Alternative 5C, also identified by BLM, diverges from the Proposed Route east of this AOI and follows an existing transmission line northwest through the Fort Hall Reservation, avoiding the VRM Class II and III management areas.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.5.3.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

Topography in the 15-mile-radius area around AOI M-3 comprises north-south oriented hills/mountains and valleys. The mountainous areas include the Deep Creek Mountains in the center of the study area, the Bannock Range along the eastern boundary, and the Sublette Range to the west. The Arbon Valley is located between the Deep Creek Range and the Bannock Range; Rockland Valley is located between the Deep Creek and Sublette Ranges in the western portion of the Study Area. Vegetation consists mainly of grasses, forbs, and cropland in the valleys; mountainous areas are forested. Manmade development includes local roads and highways (SR 37 and Arbon Valley Road). Agricultural lands are located in the valleys, as are small communities, such Rockland and Pauline. A 345-kV transmission corridor passes east to northwest through the area. Scenic views of the Deep Creek Range are important to the surrounding sensitive viewers, such as hikers at the trailhead designated KOP 920 and the scenic overlook at KOP 907. KOP 907 looks north towards the Bannock and Moonshine Peaks, which exhibit dominant pyramidal silhouetted shapes. Both of these pristine mountain views exhibit a high level of diversity in form, line, color, and texture as well as a lack of surrounding development and manmade features.

Attachment A, Figure M-1/M-3a shows the existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 907. This view includes both AOI M-1, to the west, and AOI M-3, to the east. It is mountainous with a mixture of open land, forest land, and rock outcrops with no apparent manmade modifications. In the immediate vicinity of this AOI, topography and vegetation limit the viewing area and potential viewers. There are more numerous viewing areas in the north-south valleys east of the Segment 5 and 7 Proposed Route AOI crossings, however these areas are located 3 to 15 miles away, reducing potential visibility and visual impact. Attachment B, Figure B-9 shows the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 920 toward the Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7.

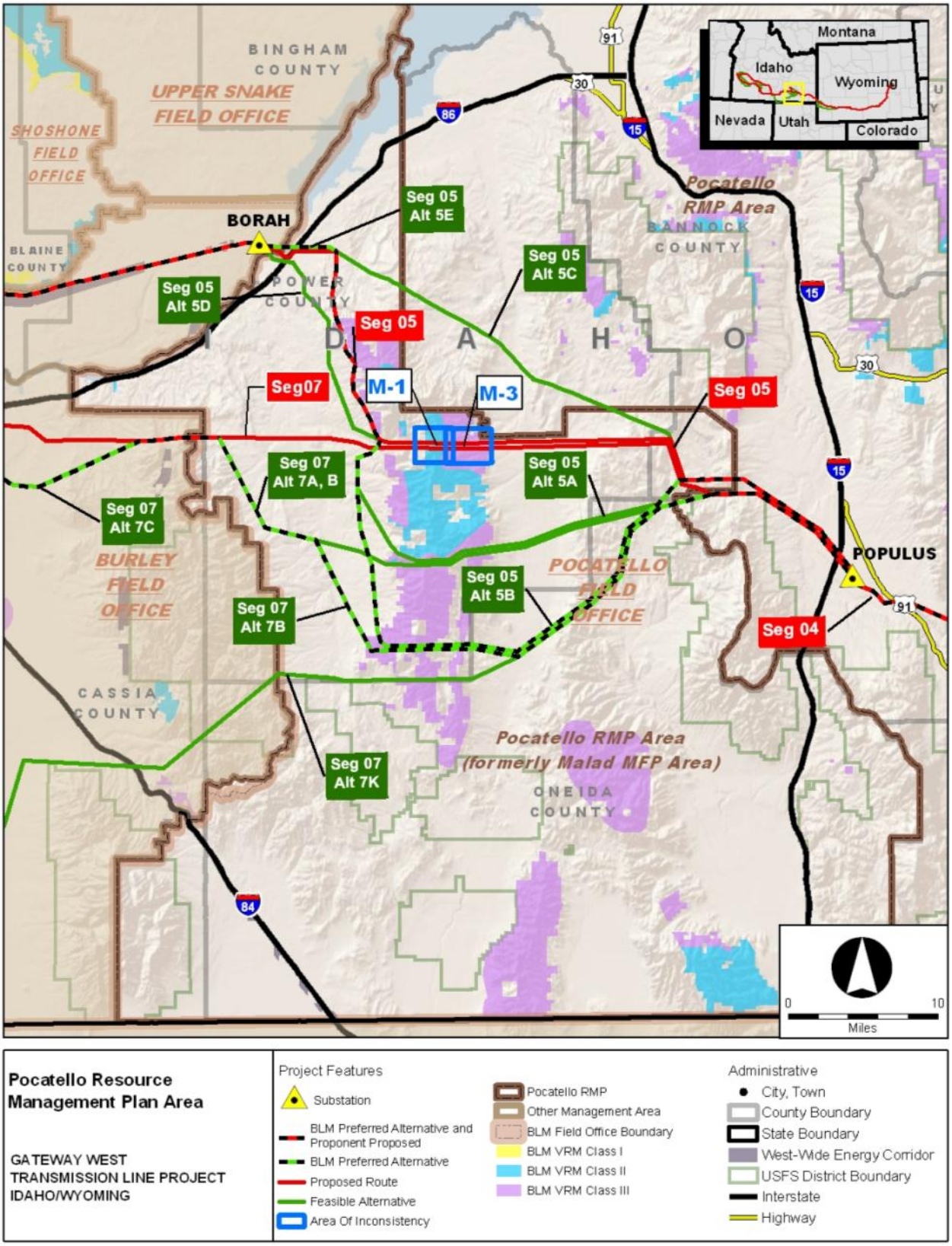
5.5.3.3 Conformance Analysis

Figures 5.5-5 and 5.5-6 show the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to establish the degree of consistency with the existing VRM class. Attachment A, Figures M-1/M-3b and M-1/M-3c are simulations showing the Proposed Routes for Segments 5 and 7 on the existing landscape.

From high points such as the scenic ridgeline viewed from KOP 907, it is apparent that screening and other mitigation efforts may be partially successful at lowering impacts to scenic resources. The pyramidal forms, meandering ridgelines, and dominant rugged vegetation would contrast with transmission structures, access roads, and ROW clearing. This contrast would draw the attention of the casual observer but would not dominate the view. While the Project would not dominate the view, it is assumed that Segment 7 (and possibly Segment 5) will not conform to VRM Class III objectives in this area, given the pristine nature of the surrounding landscape. It appears that VRM Class III objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect this scenic mountainous terrain.

5.5.3.4 Associated Plan Amendment

If the Project were approved within the VRM Class II area, it would not meet the management objectives of a Class II, but would be located in a seldom seen portion of the area, and it would be beneficial to maintain the Class II Management Objectives to provide future protection of the visual resources found in this mountain range. It is recommended that if either of the Proposed Routes is selected, that the Project be given one-time exception, allowing it as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification (see Figure 5.5-7). This would provide the most protection for adjacent visual resource management goals.



Pocatello Resource Management Plan Area

GATEWAY WEST
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
IDAHO/WYOMING

Project Features
- Substation
- BLM Preferred Alternative and Proponent Proposed
- BLM Preferred Alternative
- Proposed Route
- Feasible Alternative
- Area Of Inconsistency

- Pocatello RMP
- Other Management Area
- BLM Field Office Boundary
- BLM VRM Class I
- BLM VRM Class II
- BLM VRM Class III

Administrative
- City, Town
- County Boundary
- State Boundary
- West-Wide Energy Corridor
- USFS District Boundary
- Interstate
- Highway

File: R:\projects_2007\Idaho_Power\maps\Appendix_G\maps\FEIS_RMP_MFP_FS\Visual_Pocatello_Overview.mxd

Figure 5.5-1. Pocatello RMP Boundary Map

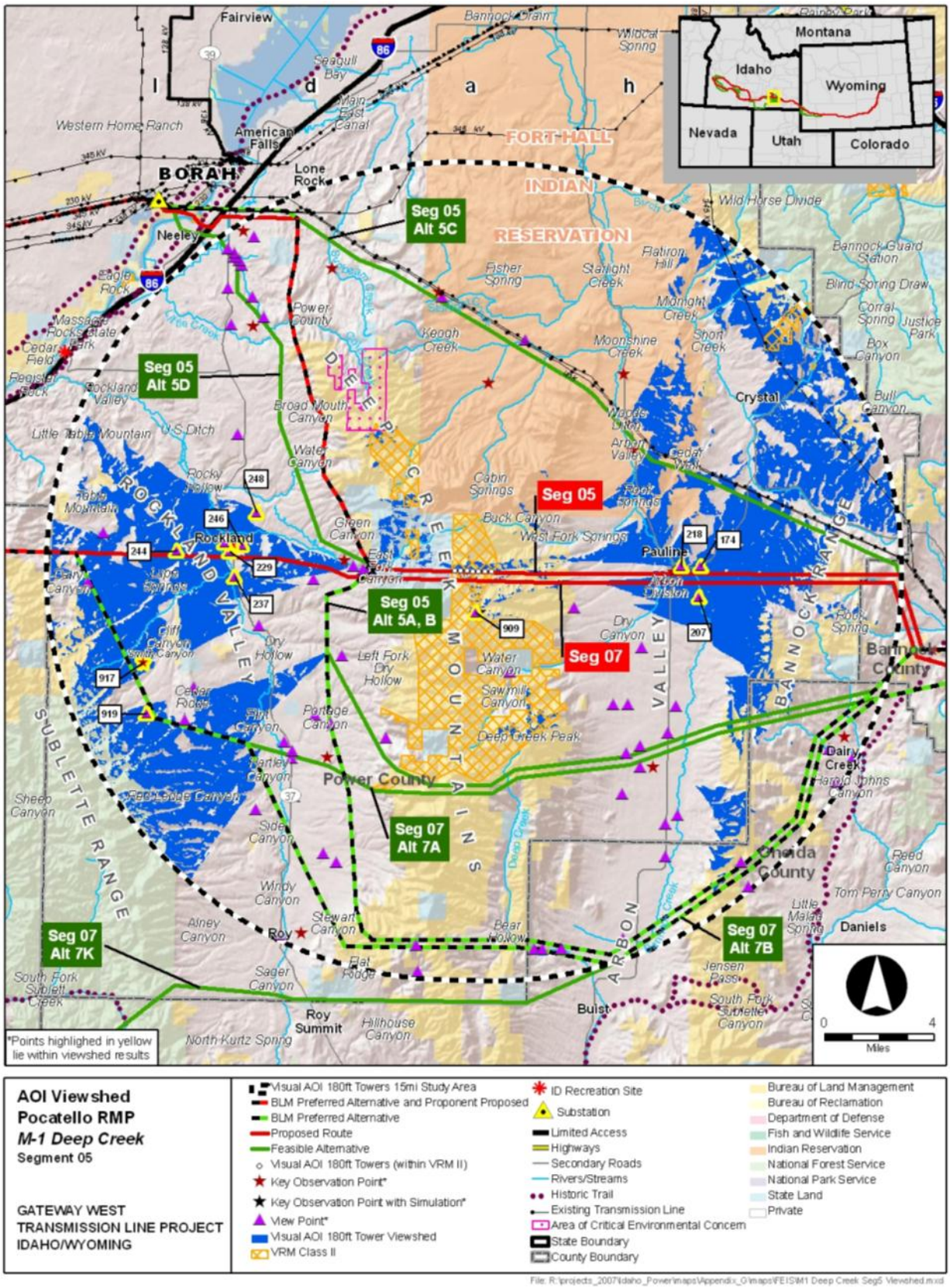


Figure 5.5-2. AOI M-1 Deep Creek AOI Visual Analysis (Segment 5)

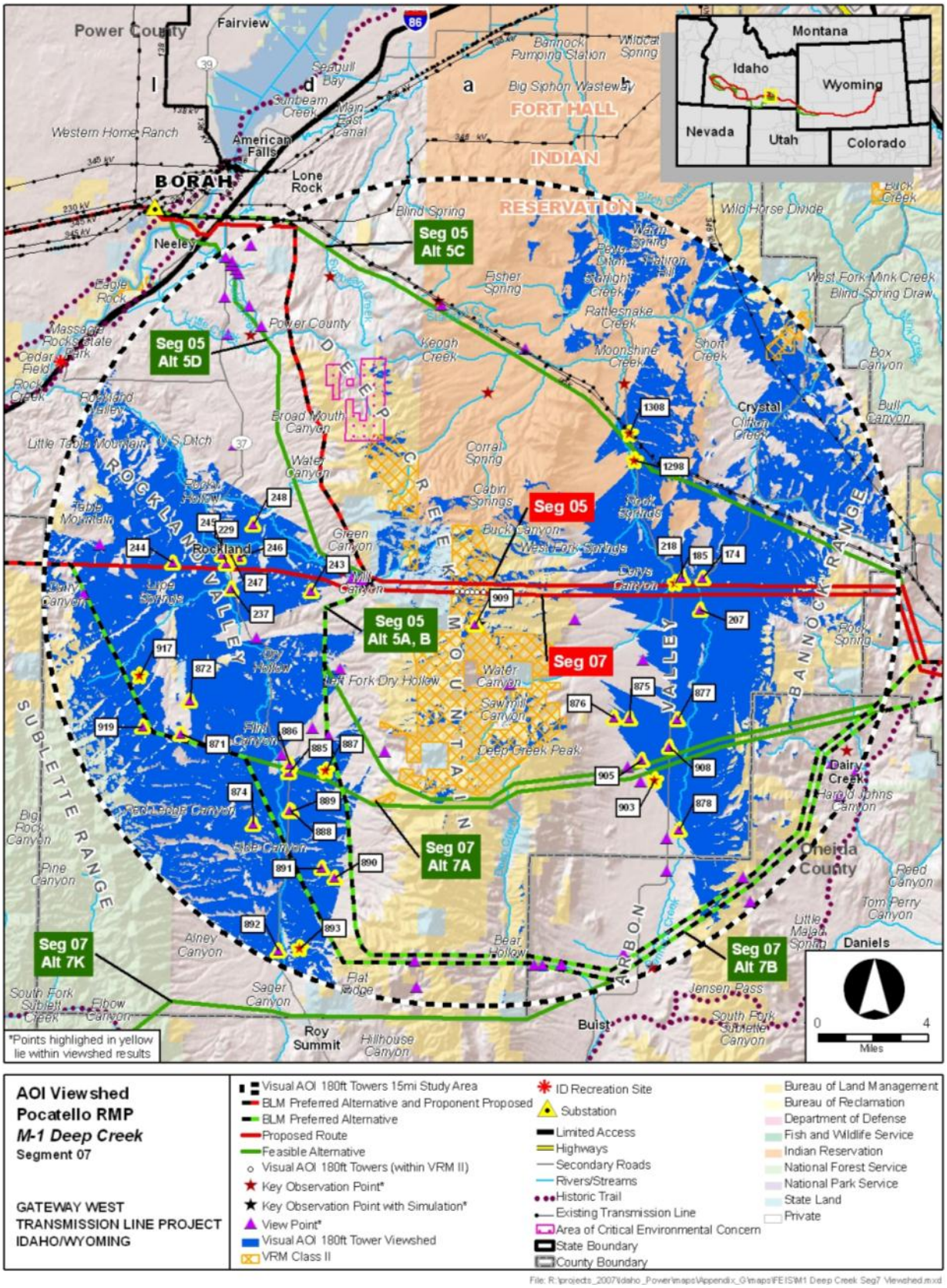


Figure 5.5-3. AOI M-1 Deep Creek AOI Visual Analysis (Segment 7)

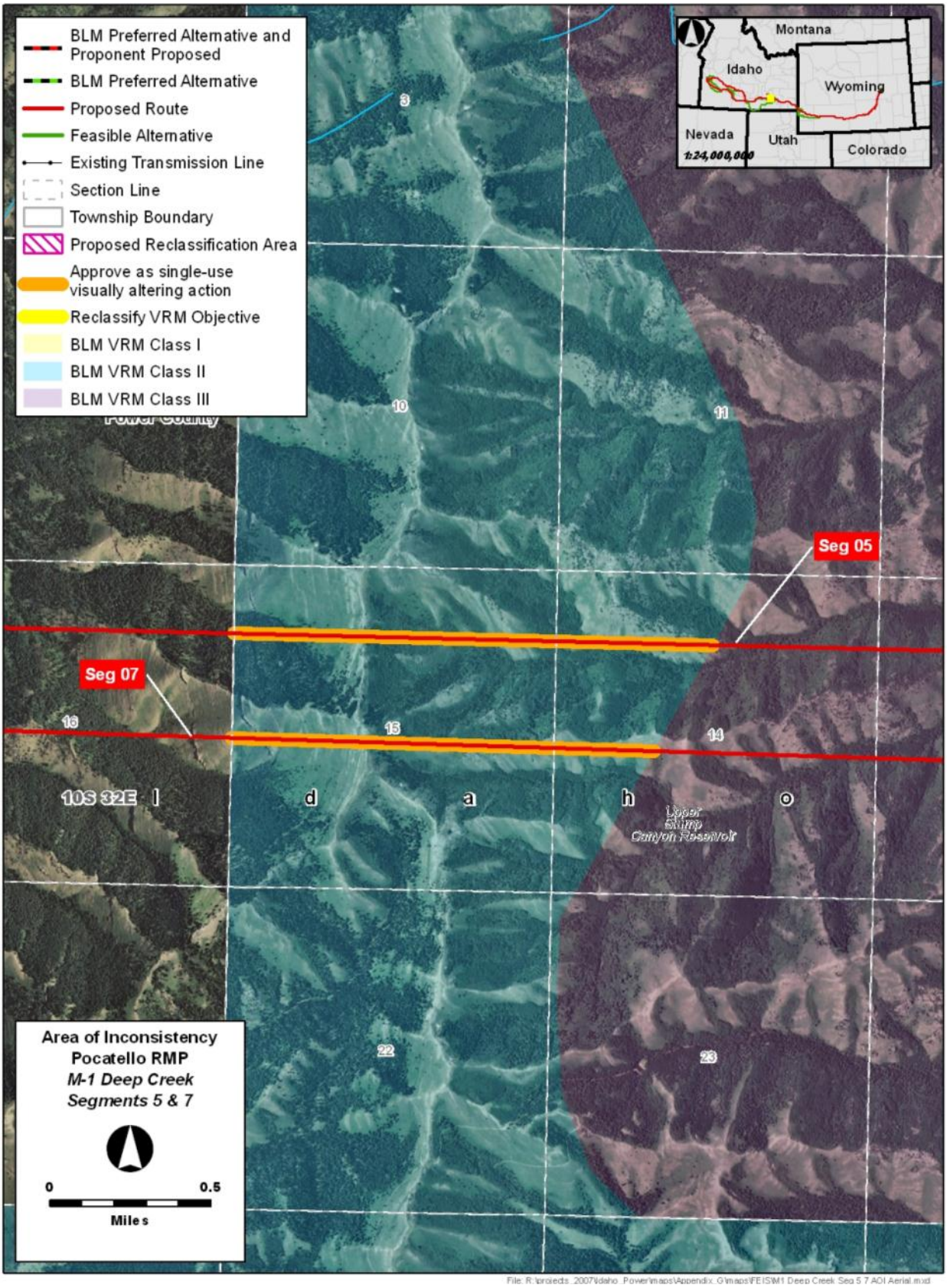


Figure 5.5-4. AOI M-1 Deep Creek AOI Detailed Map (Segments 5 and 7)

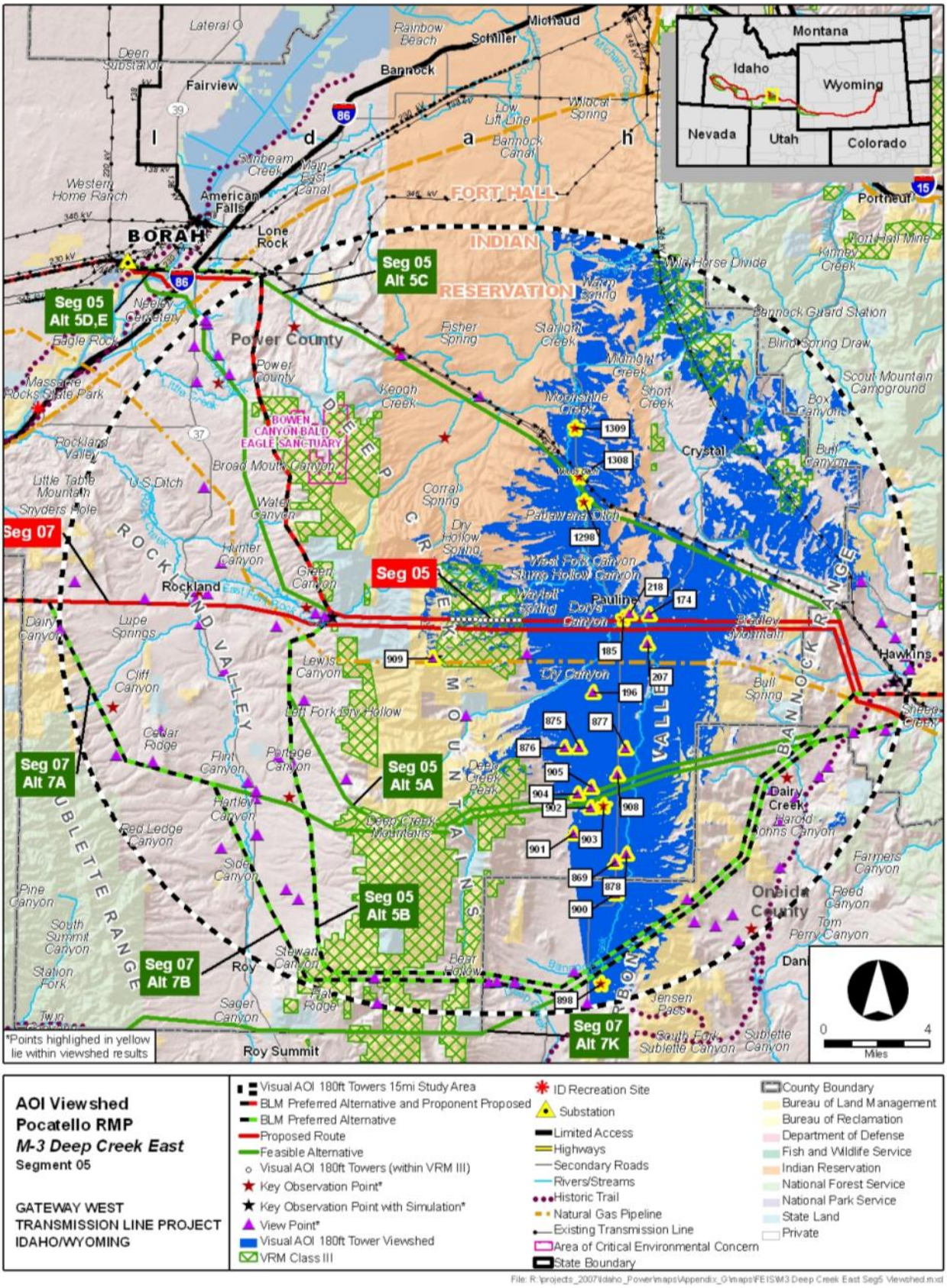


Figure 5.5-5. AOI M-3 Deep Creek East AOI Visual Analysis (Segment 5)

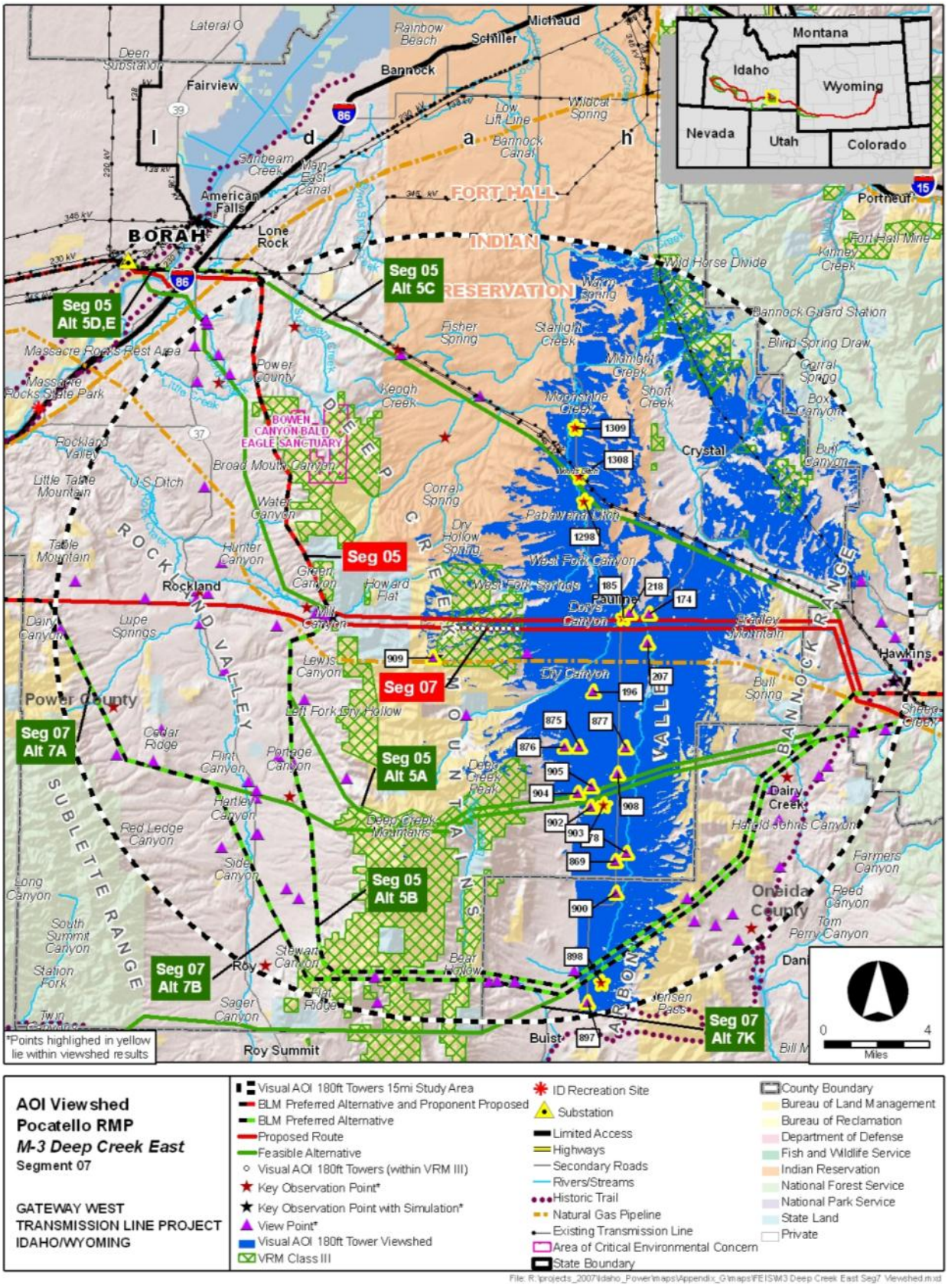


Figure 5.5-6. AOI M-3 Deep Creek East AOI Visual Analysis (Segment 7)

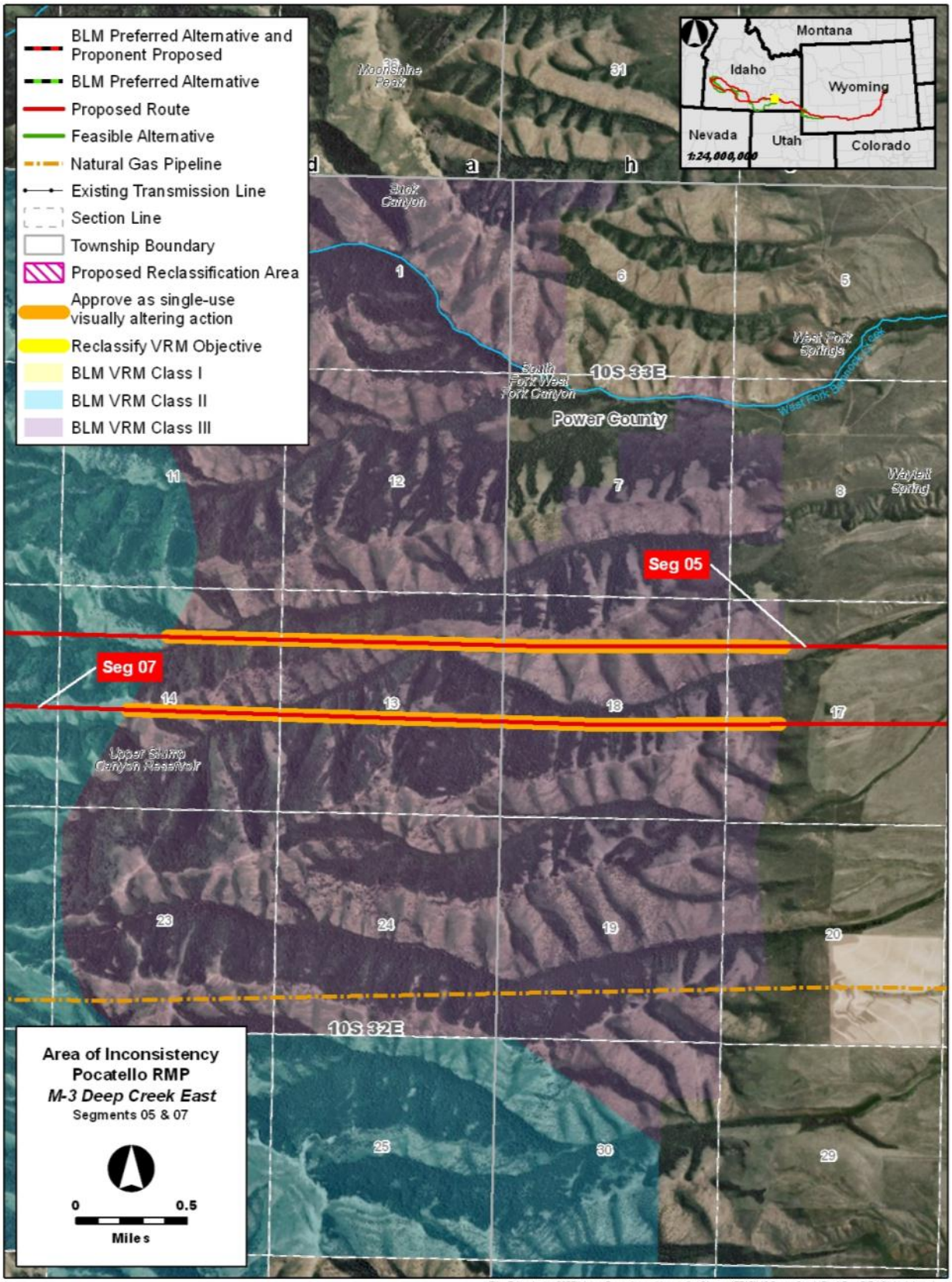


Figure 5.5-7. AOI M-3 Deep Creek East AOI Detailed Map (Segments 5 and 7)

5.6 Cassia RMP

Preferred Route: No VRM amendments to the Cassia RMP are proposed for the Preferred Route.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: There are three AOIs on alternative routes that would have associated amendments to change the VRM classification.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The Cassia RMP (BLM 1985a) provides direction for management of public lands in a planning area of approximately 1,629,472 acres to the south of the Snake River in south-central Idaho (see Figure 5.6-1), part of the Burley FO. Approximately 97 percent of the planning area is within Cassia County, with 2 percent in Oneida County and less than 1 percent in each of Twin Falls and Power Counties. Portions of Segments 7, 9 and 10 are located within the Cassia RMPPA. Two VRM Class II management areas are crossed by Route Alternatives. The Cassia RMP states that the "consideration of scenic values will be included in the analysis of all activities involving alteration of the natural character of the landscape. The degree of alteration allowed is determined through an inventory process which results in the classification of all public lands into one of five Visual Resource Management classes, each class allowing for a different degree of modification." Data from the inventory process are not available at this time but it can be assumed that the language from the RMP applies to the various VRM objectives assigned throughout the planning area. Because the AOIs are on alternatives of Segment 7, the discussion below focuses on that Segment.

Proposed Segment 7 consists of 118.2 miles of single-circuit 500-kV transmission line. It leaves Populus Substation and proceeds northwest, following existing transmission lines and Segment 5, before turning due west and proceeding through about 103 miles of mainly private irrigated agriculture to Cedar Hill Substation. Key siting issues are proximity to residences and agriculture including loss of prime farmland and CRP land, disruption to existing crops and surface irrigation patterns, interference with center pivot irrigation, and potential electrical effects on confined animal feeding operations. As a result of these concerns, a multi-county task force consisting of residents, county officials and state legislators, have recommended alternatives well south of the Proposed Route. These alternatives would primarily cross BLM or Forest Service land. Constraints in these southern alternatives include high quality forested land, historic trails, wetlands, steep slopes, crucial big game range, sage-grouse and raptor nests.

In all, there are eight feasible alternatives for Segment 7. Ten additional routes were reviewed, but not carried forward for detailed analysis. Alternatives 7A through 7G are short alternatives which diverge from the Proposed Route to avoid local features, such as dairies, raptor nests, areas of concentrated agriculture, and so on. Alternative 7K is an alternative route approximately 25 to 30 miles south of the Proposed Route. This alternative is 148.1 miles long. Alternatives 7H, 7I, and 7J are no longer being considered; therefore, the associated AOIs are no longer applicable and have been dropped from the analysis.

VRM objectives in the Cassia RMP could be affected by the Project in three areas depending on the route selected. Spring Canyon AOI (CA-3) is an isolated parcel

managed as VRM Class II crossed by the Alternative 7E. Alternative 7K would cross AOI CA-6, which includes the Goose Creek area with lands managed for VRM Classes II and III.

5.6.1 AOI CA-2 Cottonwood Creek AOI (Segment 7 – Alternative 7K)

The Cottonwood Creek AOI is located on the west end of Alternative 7K, about 5 miles northwest of Oakley, Idaho, and about 14 miles southeast of the Cedar Hill Substation. The route is predominantly on BLM-managed land. Local route adjustments occur in several locations to avoid agricultural fields with center pivot irrigation. The Cottonwood Creek AOI is one 2,496-acre VRM III parcel that would be crossed for approximately 4 miles by Alternative 7K. Due to proximity of the route to key observation points, including a residence, a historic trail, and an entrance to the Cottonwood Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), a visual analysis was conducted to evaluate the effects of a transmission line in this location. Figure 5.6-2 shows the viewshed of the Cottonwood Creek AOI, Alternative 7K, and the VRM management classifications. Figure 5.6-3 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation.

5.6.1.1 Alternatives Considered

Much of the BLM-managed land near the Cottonwood Creek AOI is managed as VRM Class III. The route location is constrained to the southwest by scenic mountainous areas of the Sawtooth NF and to the north by center pivot irrigated agricultural lands. Several alternative routes that avoid VRM areas were eliminated due to increased agricultural impact. The Proposed Route would avoid VRM lands at this location.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.6.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

Within the 15-mile radius study area, two landscape conditions predominate. In the southeast, east, and northeast, the foreground and middle ground are flat against a backdrop of the Albion Mountains. To the south and southwest there are many canyons, ridges, and steep slopes within the Sawtooth NF. The Snake River crosses the northernmost part of the 15-mile radius area. US 30 is the primary road and is located in the northern portion of the study area. There are a number of small communities including Burley to the north of the study area, Oakley in the southeast, and Albion to the east of the study area. In addition to the local roads, highways, and communities, there are sensitive viewing areas such as campgrounds and trails in the NF, the Pomerelle ski area, and Martaugh Lake County Park. The main access road to the Big Cottonwood Wildlife Management Area would be crossed by Alternative 7K.

Attachment A, Figure CA-2a shows existing landscape conditions in the immediate vicinity as viewed from KOP 1171 and Figure CA-2c shows existing landscape conditions in the immediate vicinity as viewed from KOP 1173. Attachment B, Figure B-10 shows the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 1174 toward Alternative 7K.

5.6.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.6-2 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used to establish the degree of consistency with the existing VRM class. Attachment A, Figures CA-2b and CA-2d simulate impacts to landscape conditions

showing Alternative 7K as viewed from KOP 1171 and KOP 1173, respectively. Scenic views of Golden Valley, adjacent to Cottonwood Creek, are important to sensitive viewers such as hikers on the trail at KOP 1173, WHMA visitors, and the residential viewers in the vicinity of KOPs 1171 and 1174. These valley and mountain views exhibit a diversity of form, line, color, and texture with few visible human-made features. From low valley vantage points, it is apparent that there would be some skylining with little potential vegetation and topographic screening. Structures for Alternative 7K would directly contrast with the various angular and pyramidal forms, meandering ridgelines, and strong horizon. These structures would be visible and dominant, thus not conforming to VRM Class III objectives. While not stated, It appears that that a VRM Class III objective has been assigned to this particular area to protect the viewshed of this scenic mountainous terrain and the broad almost flat terrain of the Golden Valley.

5.6.1.4 Associated Plan Amendment

With the transmission line in place, the VRM Class III area to the east of the transmission line would be more visually associated with the transmission structures which dominate the flat agricultural landscape. If Alternative 7K is approved, it is recommended that the area north/northeast of the transmission line, totaling 1,381 acres of AOI CA-2, be reclassified from VRM Class III to VRM Class IV (see Figure 5.6-3).

5.6.2 AOI CA-3 Spring Canyon (Segment 7 – Alternative 7E)

This AOI comprises an isolated 300-acre VRM Class II parcel located at the north end of the Albion Mountains, in the Declo Hills. A total of 0.3 mile of this parcel would be crossed by Alternative 7E. Figure 5.6-4 shows the viewshed of the Spring Canyon AOI and VRM management classification. Figure 5.6-5 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation.

5.6.2.1 Alternatives Considered

Alternative 7E (4.5 miles long) diverges from the 3.8-mile equivalent segment of the Proposed Route at point 7h, approximately 4 miles south of the community of Delco. It proceeds southeast for about 1 mile and then southwest for about 3 miles back to the Proposed Route. This alternative diverges slightly east from the Proposed Route to avoid two sage-grouse lek 0.65-mile buffers and stay east of a hang gliding launch location. The entire route would be Greenfield.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.6.2.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

Within the 15-mile radius study area around AOI CA-3, the northwest half is generally flat to rolling. The majority of this area, and the area along the Snake River, is occupied by farms and farmland. In contrast, the southeastern half of the area is mostly undeveloped and, to a large extent, mountainous (Albion and Cotterel Mountains). The exceptions to this being farms and farmland in the Raft River Valley and in the vicinity of Albion. Forests are found in the mountainous areas, especially within the Sawtooth NF. Interstate 84, US 30, and SRs 24, 25, 27, 77, and 81 cross the area and provide highway service to communities such as Burley, Rupert, Heyburn, and Albion.

Sensitive viewers include motorists, local residents, and visitors to the NF, campgrounds, trails, and other recreation areas and historic sites.

Attachment B, Figures B-11, B-12, and B-13 show views of the existing conditions south to southeast of KOPs 306, 310 (looking at Alternative 7E), and 311.

5.6.2.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.6-4 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used to assess the consistency of Alternative 7E with the existing VRM Class II. Sensitive viewers, such as the residents at KOPs 306, 310, and 311, have scenic views of Spring Canyon north of the Albion Mountains and Pine Knob looking toward the Alternative 7E alignment. These valley and mountain views exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture, with a few human-made features visible in the residential areas.

From high elevation vantage points, it is apparent that screening and other mitigation efforts would not be successful at sufficiently lowering impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The various angular and pyramidal forms, mountain silhouettes, meandering ridgelines, curvilinear divergent bands, and strong horizon would contrast directly with transmission structures and access roads for Alternative 7E. There would be areas where skylining of the powerline and towers would dominate the view of the casual viewers. As a result of these visual impacts, Alternative 7E would not conform to VRM Class II objectives. It is assumed that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect the hills and mountainous terrain adjacent to Spring Canyon.

5.6.2.4 Associated Plan Amendment

Micrositing may reduce the length across VRM Class II area but would not completely avoid the parcel. If this route is approved, it is recommended that 39 acres of AOI CA-3 be reclassified from VRM Class II to VRM Class III (see Figure 5.6-5). Alternative 7E would be constructed using appropriate mitigation measures and BMPs to lower potential impacts to visual resources and scenic qualities.

5.6.3 AOI CA-6 Goose Creek Area (Segment 7 – Alternative 7K)

This AOI comprises VRM Class II designated land adjacent to Goose Creek and a tributary. Alternative 7K would cross approximately 0.2 mile of VRM Class II land in this area. Figure 5.6-6 shows the viewshed of the Goose Creek Area AOI and VRM management classification. Figure 5.6-7 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation.

5.6.3.1 Alternatives Considered

Alternative7K (148.1 miles long) diverges from the 118.2-mile equivalent segment of the Proposed Route. The route crosses several raptor buffers, the California NHT, within the viewshed of City of Rocks National Reserve and the Goose Creek area. This alternative comes within 0.24 mile of the Utah border as well as bordering sections of the Sawtooth NF. Proposed Route 7 would avoid this AOI; however, substantial landowner opposition was raised to the Proposed Route in Segment 7 due to potential impacts to agricultural land crossed in Cassia and Power County. Alternative 7I was identified in the Draft EIS as the recommended route for a task force consisting of

representatives from Bannock, Oneida, Power, Cassia, and Twin Falls County governments and interested landowners with input received from local Idaho state legislators, and the states of Utah and Nevada. Following publication of the Draft EIS, the Counties and the BLM developed a shorter alternative to replace Alternative 7I. This route is designated as Alternative 7K. This alternative is 148.1 miles long, compared to 118.2 miles for the corresponding portion of the Proposed Route.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.6.3.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

Within the 15-mile radius study area around the Goose Creek AOI, the landscape is generally mountainous with canyons and gulches. The majority of this area, and the area adjacent to Goose Creek, is occupied by ranching operations, with cropland considered more scarce in this area. The landscape is typical of the Basin and Range Ecoregion which consists of alluvial fans, rolling plains, and sheer-walled canyons that are cut into extrusive rocks. Sagebrush grassland is common and scattered woodland grows on rocky uplands. Ranges are covered in mountain sagebrush, mountain brush, Idaho fescue, Douglas-fir, or aspen. Views from KOP 1516 (Attachment A, Figure CA-6a) represents the views of recreational users adjacent to Goose Creek south of the Lower Goose Creek Reservoir. The northwestern view is focused toward the rolling to rugged terrain adjacent to the Goose Creek Canyon. Framed and focal views of the rolling terrain are considered to have moderate scenic quality. Aesthetic landscape elements in the middleground and background increase the scenic quality, while muted vegetation hues and limited visible human-made alterations, such as the corral structures in the middleground, slightly detracts from the scenic quality. The parcel of BLM administered land is managed to conform with VRM Class II objectives.

The area north of KOP 1516 and the Goose Creek Reservoir is used for extensive crop production. Forests are found in the mountainous areas, especially within the Sawtooth NF. There are few major roadways other than Canyon Gulch Road in the vicinity of this crossing. Sensitive viewers include motorists, local residents, and visitors to the NF, as well as other recreation areas such as the Goose Creek Reservoir.

5.6.3.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.6-6 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used to assess the conformance of Alternative 7K with the existing VRM Class II. Attachment A, Figure CA-6a shows existing conditions as viewed from KOP 1516. Sensitive viewers, such as the recreational users at KOP 1516, have scenic views of Goose Creek Canyon. Framed views of rolling terrain create views with moderate scenic quality. Attachment A, Figure CA-6b shows the simulated visual impacts of Alternative 7K as viewed from KOP 1515. The Project would be highly visible with transmission structures present within the canyon. Some background scenery would occur but both towers and conductors would be partly skylined from the view.

The Project would be highly visible from the Goose Creek road and micrositing and screening would not lower the visual impact to the area. The transmission line would cross rolling, sparsely vegetated terrain with rocky outcrops and dramatic views.

5.6.3.4 Associated Plan Amendment

Because the Goose Creek Area cannot be avoided, and a transmission line in this area would not conform to the VRM Class II objectives, an amendment would be needed to cross this area with a new high-voltage transmission line. It is recommended that, if this route is approved, the Project be allowed as a single-use visually altering action without changing the VRM classification (see Figure 5.6-7).

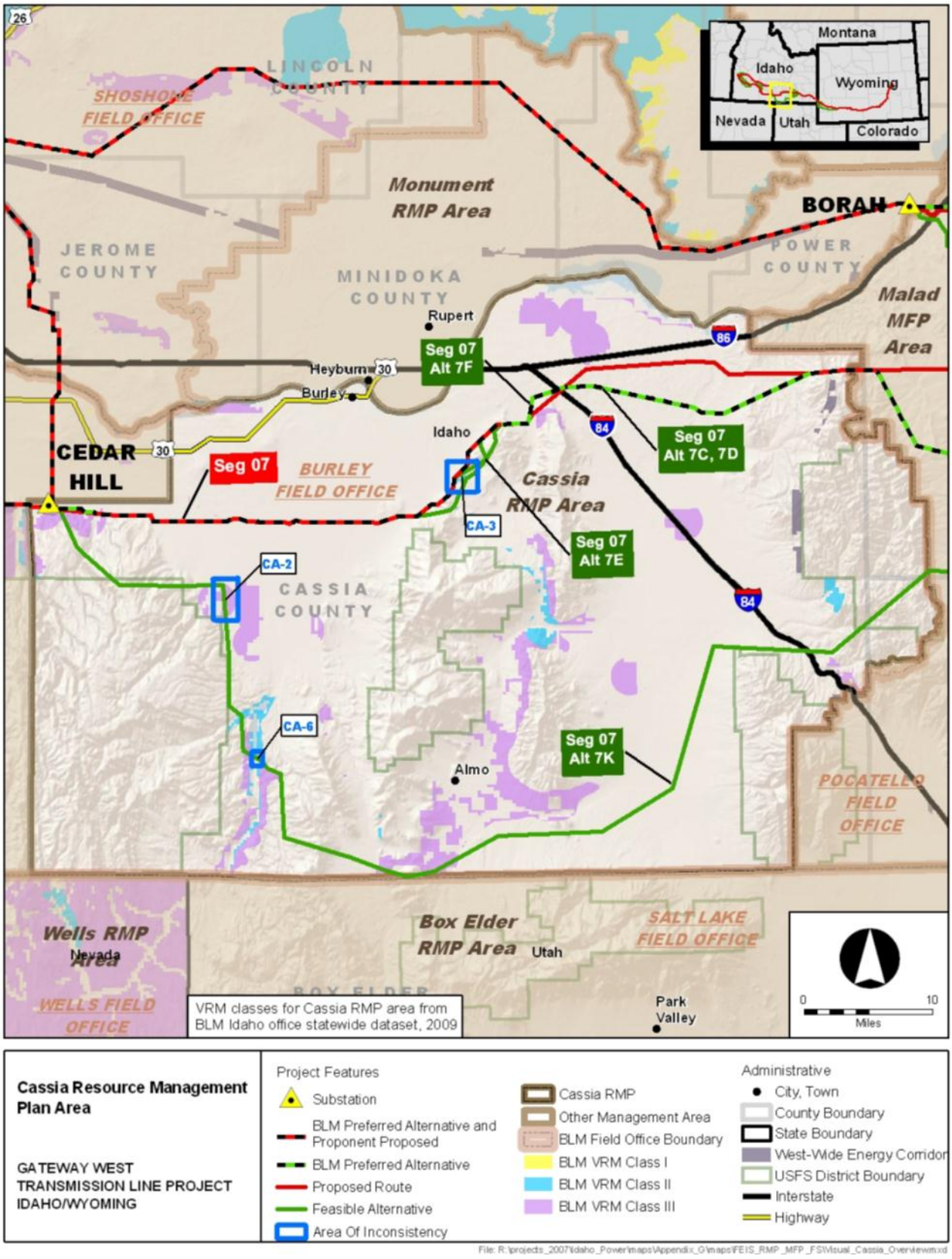


Figure 5.6-1. Cassia RMP Boundary Map

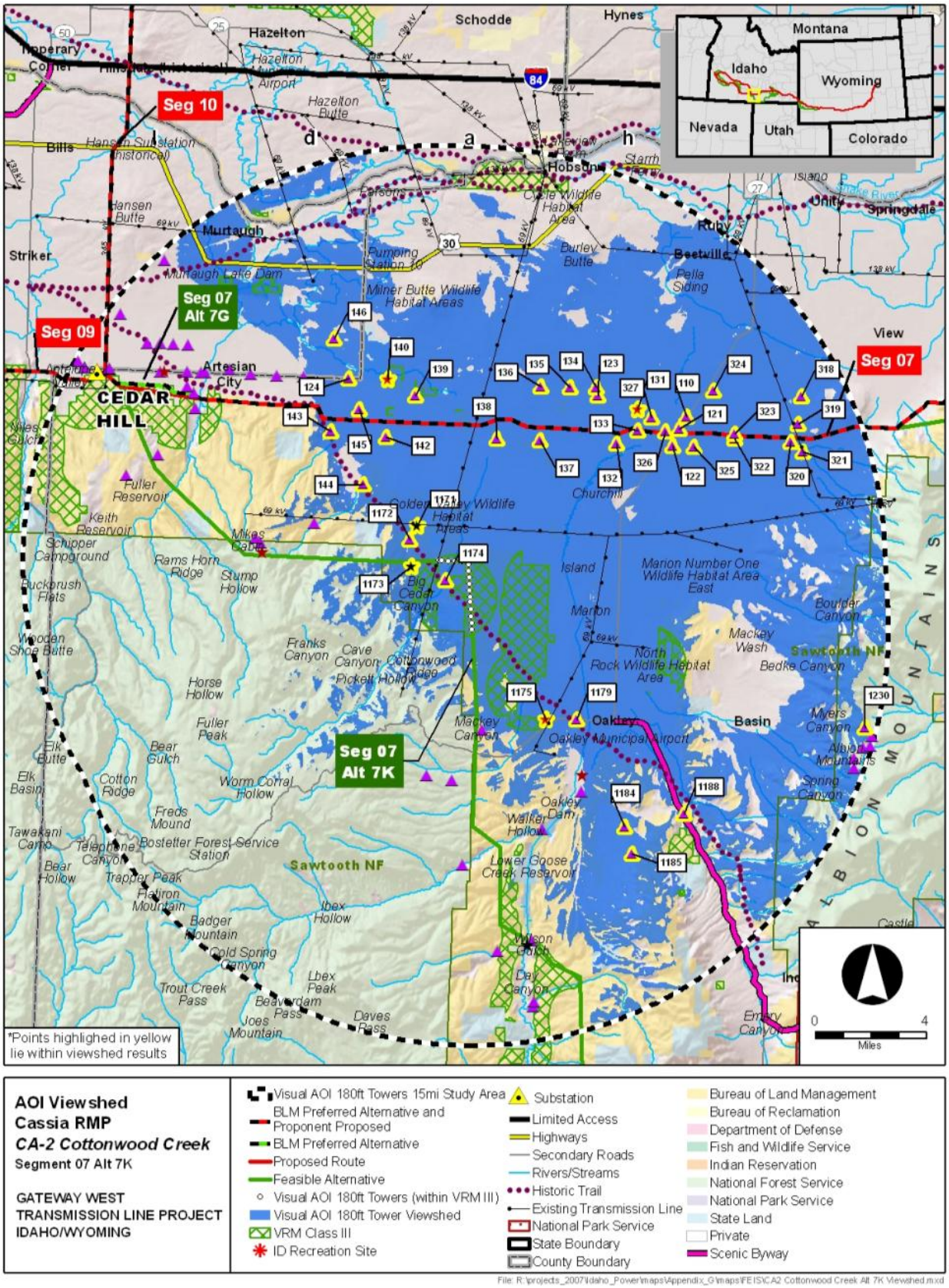


Figure 5.6-2. AOI CA-2 Cottonwood Creek Visual Analysis

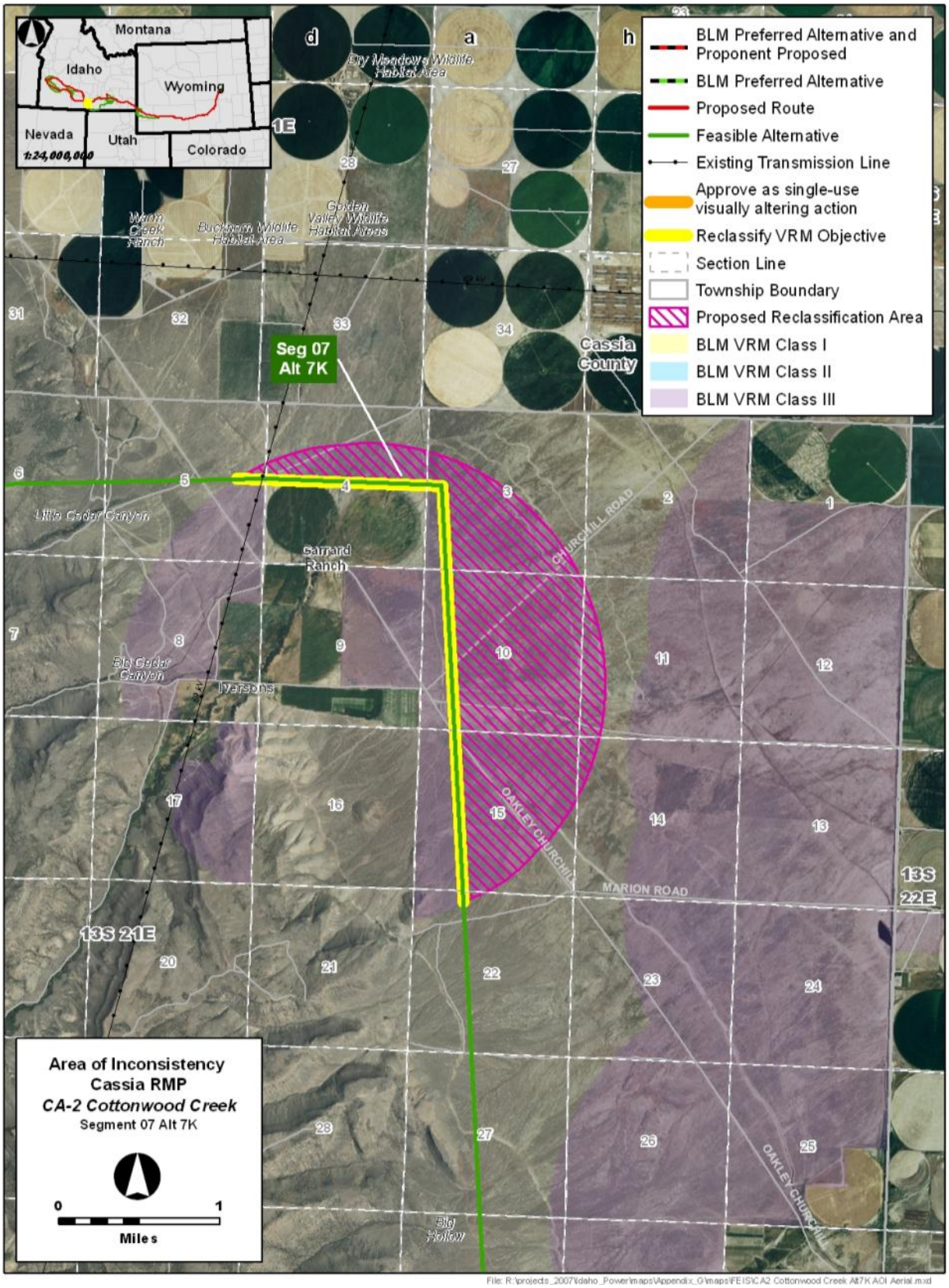


Figure 5.6-3. AOI CA-2 Cottonwood Creek Detailed Map

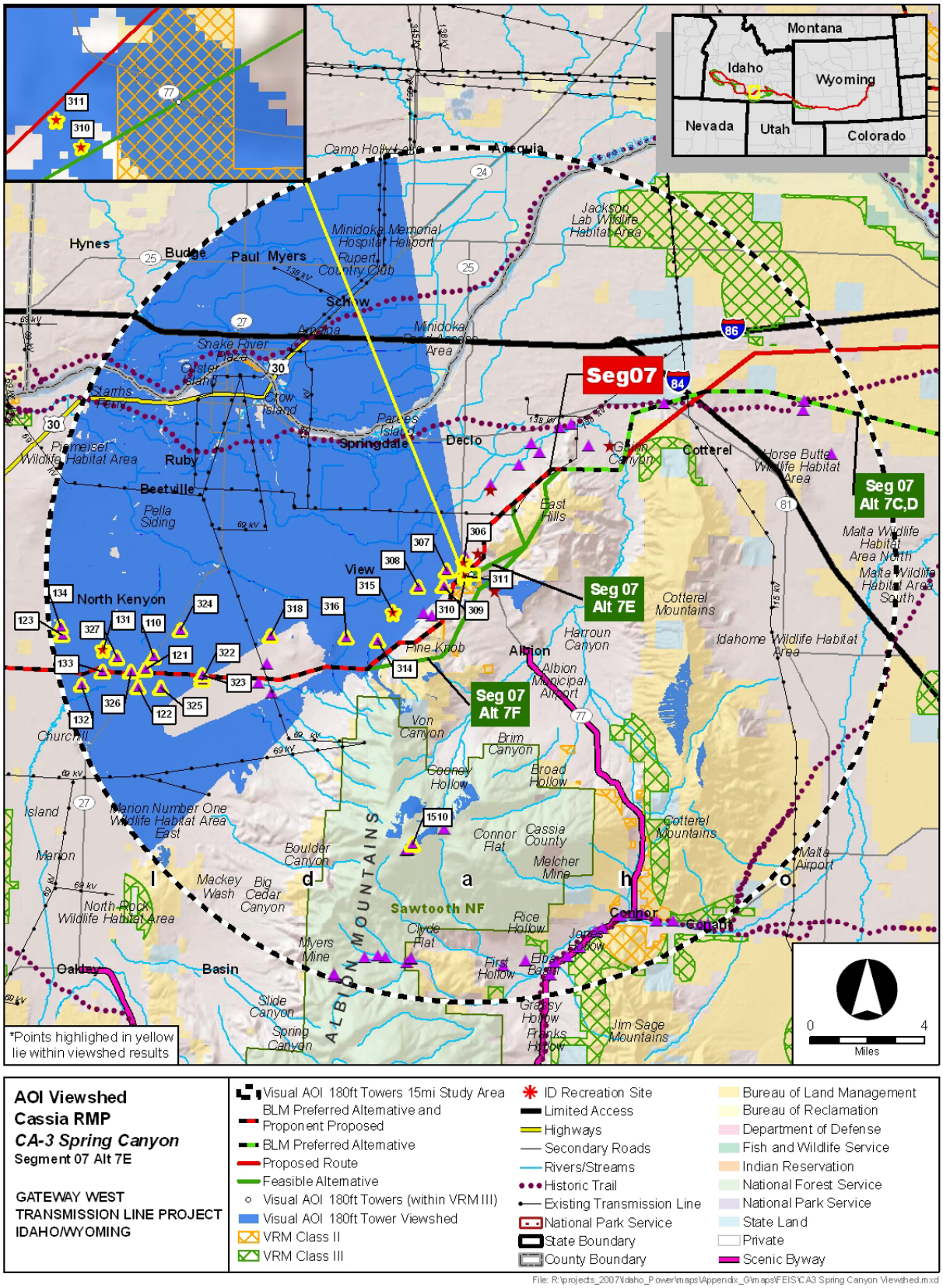


Figure 5.6-4. AOI CA-3 Spring Canyon Visual Analysis

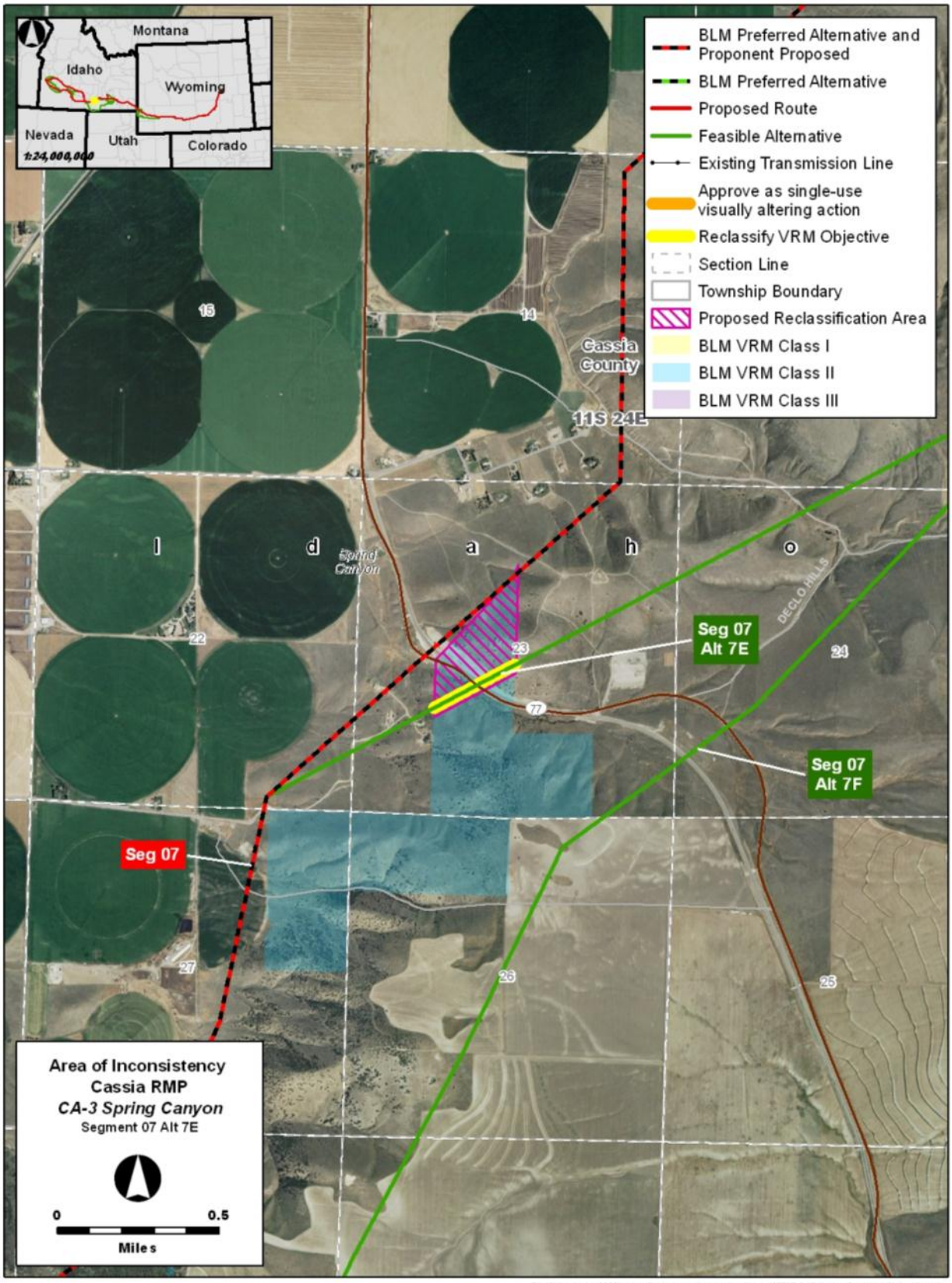


Figure 5.6-5. AOI CA-3 Spring Canyon Detailed Map

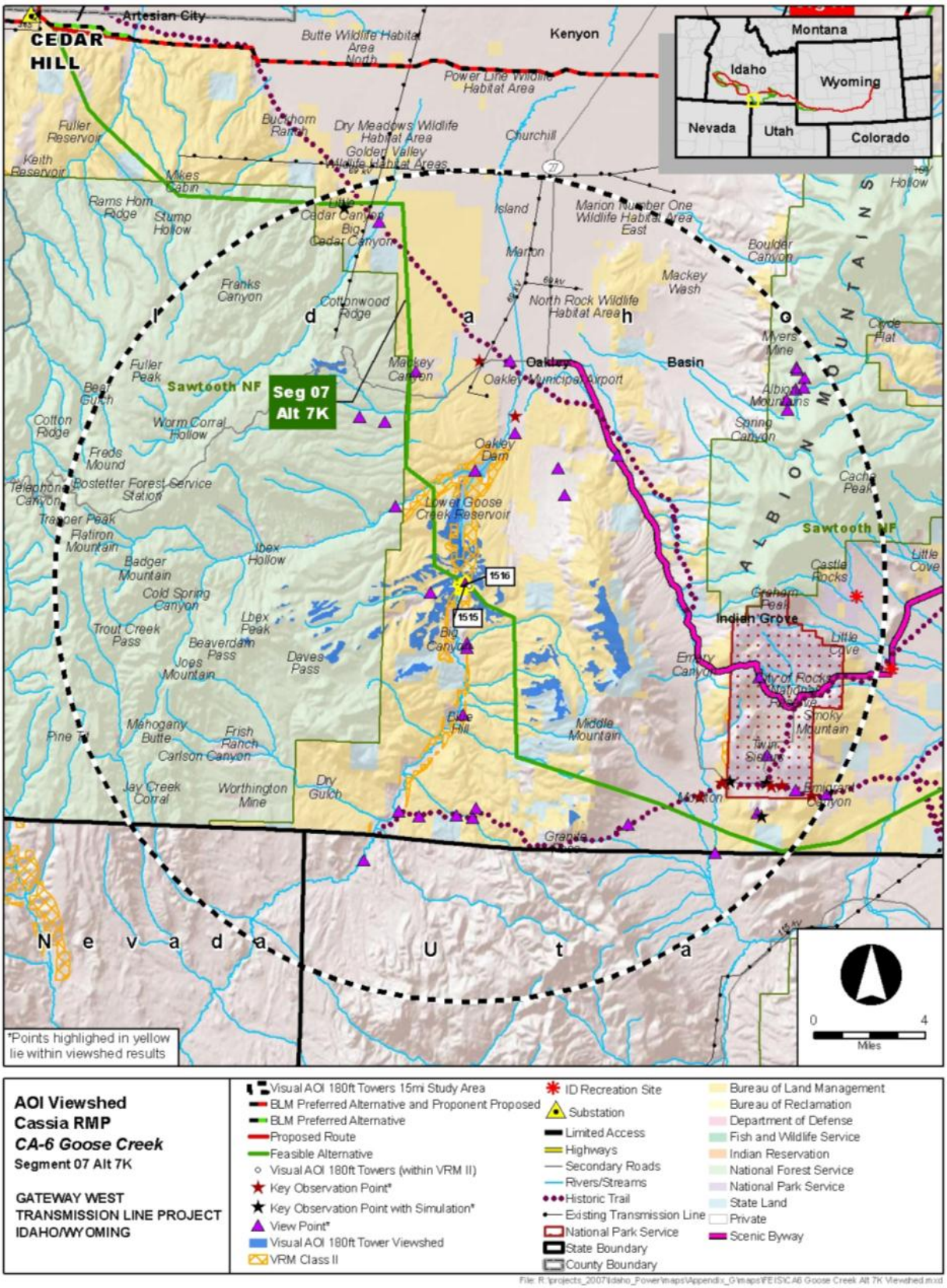


Figure 5.6-6. AOI CA-6 Goose Creek Area Visual Analysis

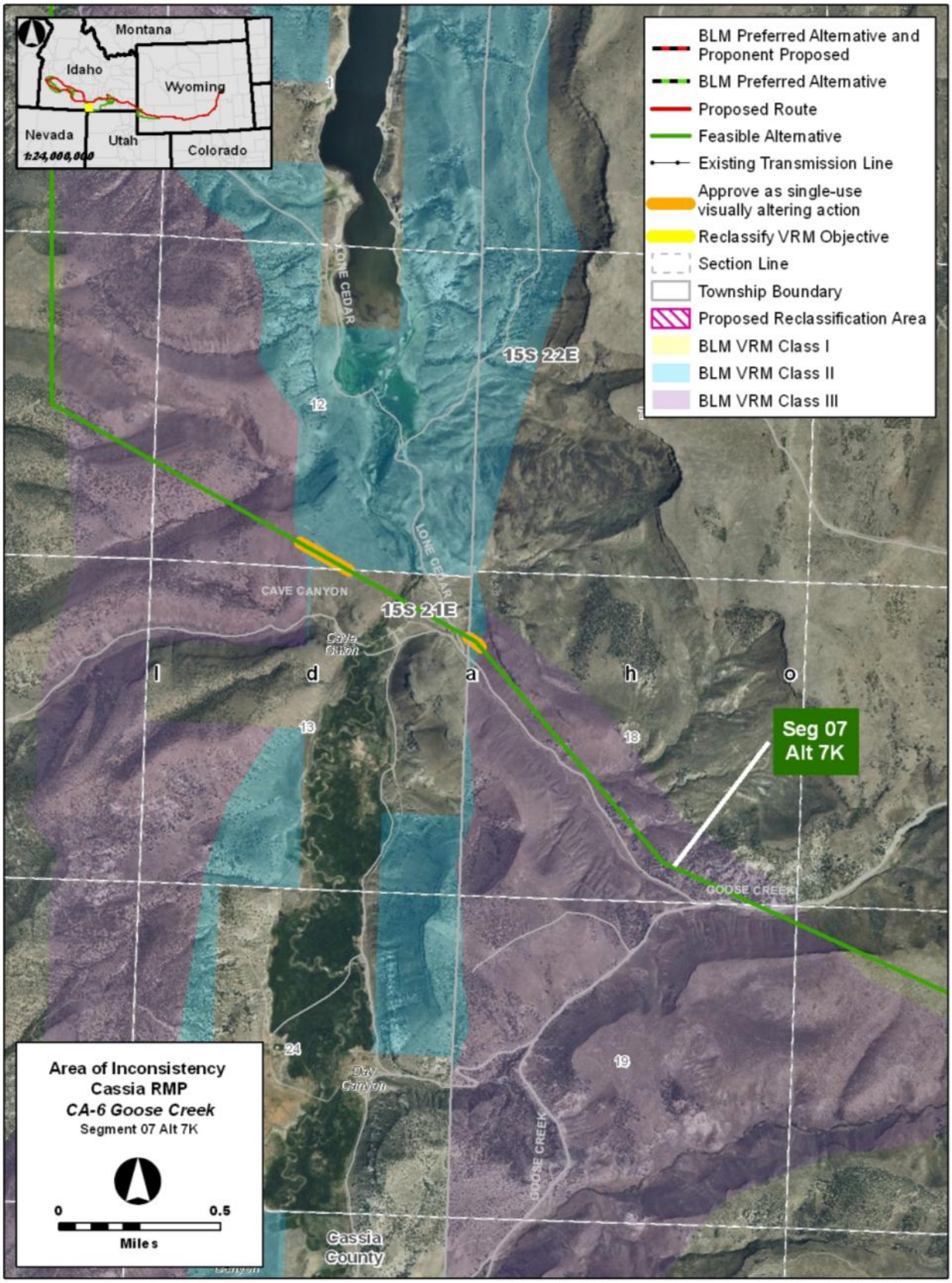


Figure 5.6-7. AOI CA-6 Goose Creek Area Detailed Map

5.7 Twin Falls MFP

Preferred Route: An amendment is proposed for AOI J-1/T-1. It would amend the Twin Falls MFP to allow the Project to cross the VRM Class I area in the Salmon Falls ACEC without changing the VRM classification.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: There are five additional AOIs on alternative routes for Segment 4. These AOIs would have associated amendments if they were selected.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The Twin Falls MFP (BLM 1982) provides direction for management of public land within its planning area under the jurisdiction of the Burley FO in south-central Idaho. The Twin Falls MFP planning area consists of approximately 809,000 acres in eastern Twin Falls County (see Figure 5.7-1). The Twin Falls MFP includes Objective L-4, which states “Confine future power transmission lines and oil and gas pipelines to designated corridor locations.

Objective VRM-1 states that the district is to “Manage all public lands in manner which will protect and maintain the existing visual qualities and provide for enhancement where consistent with management policies”. The Twin Falls MFP lists various VRM decisions starting with a high priority for the protection of Salmon Falls Creek. The VRM decisions are detailed as:

- VRM 1.1 – Manage Salmon Falls Canyon between the Salmon Falls Dam and Lilly Grade for natural ecological change in accordance with a VRM Class I designation. This designation would include only the area from rim to rim. Manage the canyon from Lilly Grade to Balanced Rock under a VRM Class II designation.
- VRM 1.2 – Designate 12,695 acres as VRM Class II. This class requires management activities to be designated and located to blend into the natural landscape and not to be visually apparent to the casual visitor. The following resource management guidelines shall apply:
- Range Management – Juniper and sagebrush removal must be made to simulate adjacent natural openings. Fences, water developments, etc., would require construction with mostly hand tools and be of natural materials. No red fence posts allowed.
  2) Structures – Structures must incorporate the natural lines, colors, and materials of the natural landscape, skylined structures would be prohibited.
  3) Roads – Required roads must be concealed by vegetation, follow natural landforms, and be seeded as soon as possible. Overland “roads” may be necessary in some areas to protect the scenic values. Cut and fill areas that exceed 5 feet will generally not be accepted unless the fill can be replaced and vegetation established in 2 years.
- VRM 1.3 – Designate 32,819 acres of VRM Class III. This class provides the management activities may be evident to the casual visitor; however, the activity

should remain subordinate to the visual strength and natural character of the landscape. The following resource management guidelines shall apply:

- Range management – Juniper and sage brush clearings shall simulate typical natural openings.
  2) Structures – Structures should incorporate the natural lines, colors and materials of the natural landscape. Skylined structures should be avoided, if possible.
  3) Roads – Roads should be partially concealed by vegetation, follow natural landforms, and be seeded as soon as possible.

Data from the visual resource inventory process are not available at this time but it can be assumed that the above language from the MFP should be applied to the various VRM objectives assigned throughout the planning area.

An amendment to the MFP was approved in 1989, designating the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC to protect natural and scenic values. The Proposed Route for Segment 9 would cross this area and therefore would not be in conformance with the management objectives.

Segment 9 of the Proposed Route is 162.2 miles long and connects the proposed Cedar Hill Substation with the Hemingway Substation. The line would be constructed as a single-circuit 500 kV line. The primary concerns for siting in the eastern portion of this segment were avoidance of irrigated farmland and dairy operations; scattered residential development; interference with the Jarbidge Military Operating Area; making use of the WWE corridor; and minimizing impacts to visual resources. In the western portion of the Proposed Route (within the Jarbidge and Owyhee FOs), following the WWE corridor was a primary objective. Other concerns included minimizing impact to Bruneau Dunes State Park and scenic qualities associated with the Bruneau River, avoiding conflicts with the Saylor Creek Air Force Range and Military Operating Area, and issues associated with crossing the SRBOP. Use of Public Land versus private land was an important issue for all portions of the route.

One VRM Class I II area in the Twin Falls MFP would be affected by this project. AOI TF-1 was identified as an AOI because it is managed as VRM Class I. This AOI is located within Salmon Falls Creek. The presence of the proposed transmission line in this location would not conform to the visual management objectives. This section of Salmon Falls Creek is an eligible Wild and Scenic River (WSR) segment; however, the Jarbidge FO has determined that this portion of the eligible river is Recreation eligible and that the transmission line crossing would not be in violation of managing for eligibility. The Rock Creek AOI is an isolated parcel of land managed for VRM Class II objectives in an area of an existing transmission line. In the Draft EIS, Alternatives 7I and 7J would cross this area; however, these alternatives are no longer being considered, resulting in the Project no longer crossing this area. Therefore, an amendment would no longer be needed.

5.7.1 AOI J-1/TF-1 Salmon Falls Creek (Segment 9 – Preferred [Proposed] Route9)

The Salmon Falls Creek AOI is located approximately 4 miles south of Castleford, Idaho, in Twin Falls County. The AOI overlaps both the Twin falls MFP and Jarbidge

RMP boundaries. The Proposed Route for Segment 9 proceeds west and north from the proposed Cedar Hill Substation, avoiding areas of irrigated agriculture. After crossing SR 93, the route proceeds west to eastern border of Salmon Falls Creek ACEC, then turns northwest to parallel the east side of Salmon Falls Creek adjacent to an existing 138-kV transmission line for about 4.4 miles before turning west again and crossing the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC north of Lilly Grade, just north of the Salmon Falls Creek WSA, and VRM Class I designates area, but still part of the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC and eligible WSR segment. WSR eligibility requires management that prevents activities that could result in the river being declared WSR-unsuitable. In the Draft EIS, the route crossed just south of this area in the VRM Class I designated area and within the WSA. A powerline crossing at that point would not conform to WSR management and therefore no amendment was proposed (see Appendix F-1, Section 3.7). The Proposed Route was revised to cross the river below the WSA. The BLM FO has stated that the Proposed Route for Segment 9 would now cross a Recreation portion of the river, adjacent to an existing single-phase low-voltage distribution line, just north of the Lilly Grade Road.

The portion of the AOI within the Twin Fall MFP is managed as Class II within the riparian area and is crossed for 0.14 mile. The original alignment for the Proposed Route crossed where the land was designated as VRM Class I. The revised route crosses just north of this VRM Class I designation. Figure 5.7-2 shows the viewshed of the Salmon Falls Creek AOI, Proposed Route, and VRM management classifications. Figure 5.7-3 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation.

5.7.1.1 Alternatives Considered

Several alternatives are analyzed in the EIS that avoid the sensitive resources affected by the Proposed Route. At the point where the Segment 9 of the Proposed Route crosses Salmon Falls Creek, Alternative 9B leaves the Proposed Route and continues northwest then north just east of Salmon Falls Creek. BLM portions of Alternative 9B follow the WWE Corridor to the northwest then north to within a few miles of the Snake River, before turning west and re-joining the Proposed Route several miles north of the Salmon Falls Creek AOI. If Alternative 9B is selected no VRM Class I managed lands would be affected near Salmon Falls. However, Alternative 9B intercepts VRM Class II further north, by the Snake River. Another alternative designated 9C would cross Salmon Falls Creek north of the eligible WSR segment Salmon Falls ACEC, in the vicinity of Balanced Rock County Park, as well as avoid land managed for Class I and II objectives. The Proposed Route was selected by the Proponents based on its preferred location by Twin Falls County due to concerns over residential and agricultural impacts from Alternative 9B.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.7.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The 15-mile-radius study area for the Salmon Falls Creek AOI is located in southern Idaho. Approximately 75 percent of the study area is in Twin Falls County, the remaining land in Owyhee County. The topography is mostly flat to rolling with much steeper slopes along the banks of Salmon Falls Creek and other drainages. Salmon

Falls Creek traverses the study area in a canyon from the southeast, north to its confluence with the Snake River at about mile 58.6 just north of the area. There are numerous farms and farmland in the northeastern part of this area with scattered farmland in other locations. The majority of the area is undeveloped. The small communities of Buhl and Filer are located along US 30, in the northeast quadrant. Attachment A, Figure J-1/TF-1a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1068. The land adjacent to the proposed alignment is very flat and grass covered. In such an area there is no topography or vegetation to screen views of the proposed line, thus skylining would occur. The steep topography along Salmon Falls Creek is not seen in the view from KOP 1068; however, it is discussed for KOP 1067 in the EIS. KOP 1067 would not have a direct view of the Preferred Route but it is representative of the existing landscape in the area and the views travelers would have both before and after seeing the Project.

Attachment A, Figure J-1/TF-1c shows the existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1065. This represents the views of recreational users crossing the canyon at Lilly Grade. The Salmon Falls Creek Canyon is an aesthetic landscape element in the foreground and middle ground and represents a focus point at this location. Open panoramic views of the rolling (plains) to rugged (canyon) terrain are considered to have moderate scenic quality due to the muted sagebrush grassland vegetation adjacent to the rocky faces of the canyon. The view is representative of the Dissected High Lava Plateau eco-region which has alluvial fans, rolling plains, and sheer-walled canyons that are cut into extrusive rocks. This parcel of land administered by the BLM is managed to conform to VRM Class II objectives.

Attachment B, Figure B-14 shows views of the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 1067.

5.7.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.7-2 shows the viewshed, KOPs and other features within the 15-mile radius study area. Attachment A, Figure J-1/TF-1b simulates landscape conditions showing for the proposed Route as viewed from KOP 1068 and Figure J-1/TF-1d simulates conditions as viewed from KOP 1065.

Sensitive views of the sagebrush steppe and rolling grasslands west of Twin Falls adjacent to Salmon Falls Creek are important to the surrounding sensitive viewers such as recreational drivers, represented by views from KOPs 1068 and 1067, as well as the numerous residences on the east side of the creek. The flat to rolling landscape views from KOP 1068 exhibit little diversity in form, line, color, or texture. There is very little development visible this far from Twin Falls, Idaho. From this broad open vantage point it is apparent that screening and other mitigation efforts would not be successful in lowering impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The flat plain and strong horizon line would be directly contrasted with the proposed transmission structures for the proposed transmission line would be visible and dominant. Views in the Salmon Falls Creek Canyon are also an important scenic resource and located in an interesting and diverse canyon landscape. It is important to note that VRM Class II and scenic ORV objectives in the MFP have been assigned from canyon rim to canyon rim to protect the viewshed of Salmon Falls Creek Canyon. Views from KOP 1065 represent the views of recreational users at the crossing of Lilly Grade Road and Salmon Falls Creek looking southeast toward rolling, undulating terrain of the Antelope Pocket. The

view is representative of the Dissected High Lava Plateau eco-region which has alluvial fans, rolling plains, and sheer-walled canyons that are cut into extrusive rocks. Open panoramic views of the rolling (plains) to rugged (canyon) terrain are considered to have moderate scenic quality due to the muted sagebrush grassland vegetation adjacent to the rocky faces of the canyon. The canyon for Salmon Falls Creek is an aesthetic landscape element in the foreground and middleground views, and is a focus point for the view. Through micrositing, it is likely that towers could be set back from the canyon rim such that the visual intrusion within the canyon would be confined to the conductors. The view from KOP 1067 would be typical of travels within the canyon and demonstrates the potential for micrositing to minimize visual impacts. Nevertheless, any intrusion would not conform to VRM Class II objectives. In addition, it would not conform to the management of the area according to the 1989 Salmon Falls ACEC amendment to the Twin Falls MFP, which prohibits powerline crossings and other such visual intrusions (see Appendix F-1).

5.7.1.4 Proposed Plan Amendment

There is a high degree of visual sensitivity in the crossing of Salmon Falls Creek due to its VRM Class II management objective, ACEC designation, and eligible WSR status. An amendment to the ACEC objectives and an amendment to the RMP VRM objectives would be needed to build this route. It is recommended that if the Preferred Route is selected, the Project be allowed to cross the ACEC as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification or ACEC management in the Twin Fall MFP managed portion of AOI J-1/TF-1. This would provide the most protection for adjacent management goals. If this route is selected it is recommended that the Proponents be required to microsite structures to minimize the visibility from within the Salmon Falls Creek canyon.

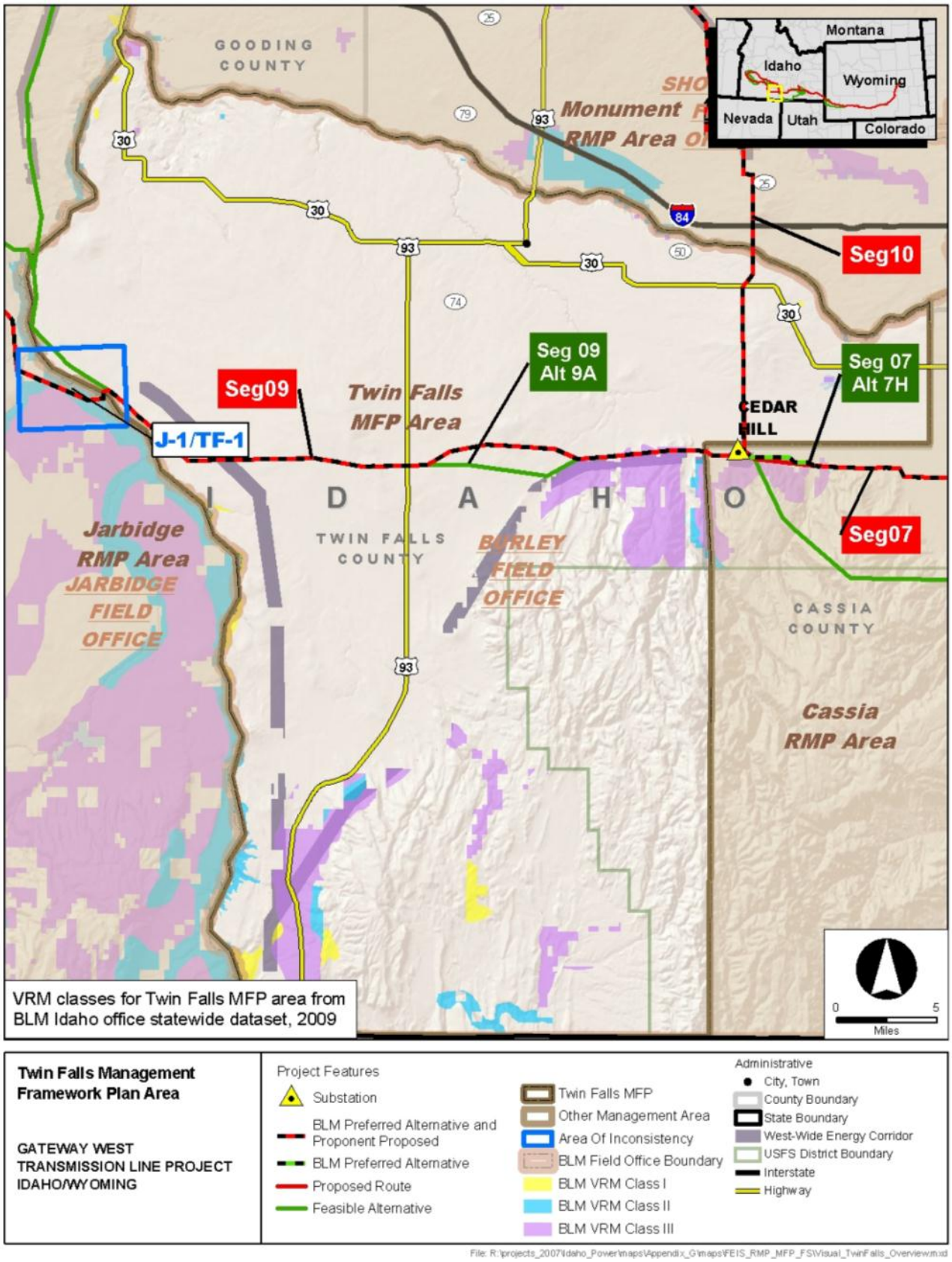


Figure 5.7-1. Twin Falls MFP Boundary Map

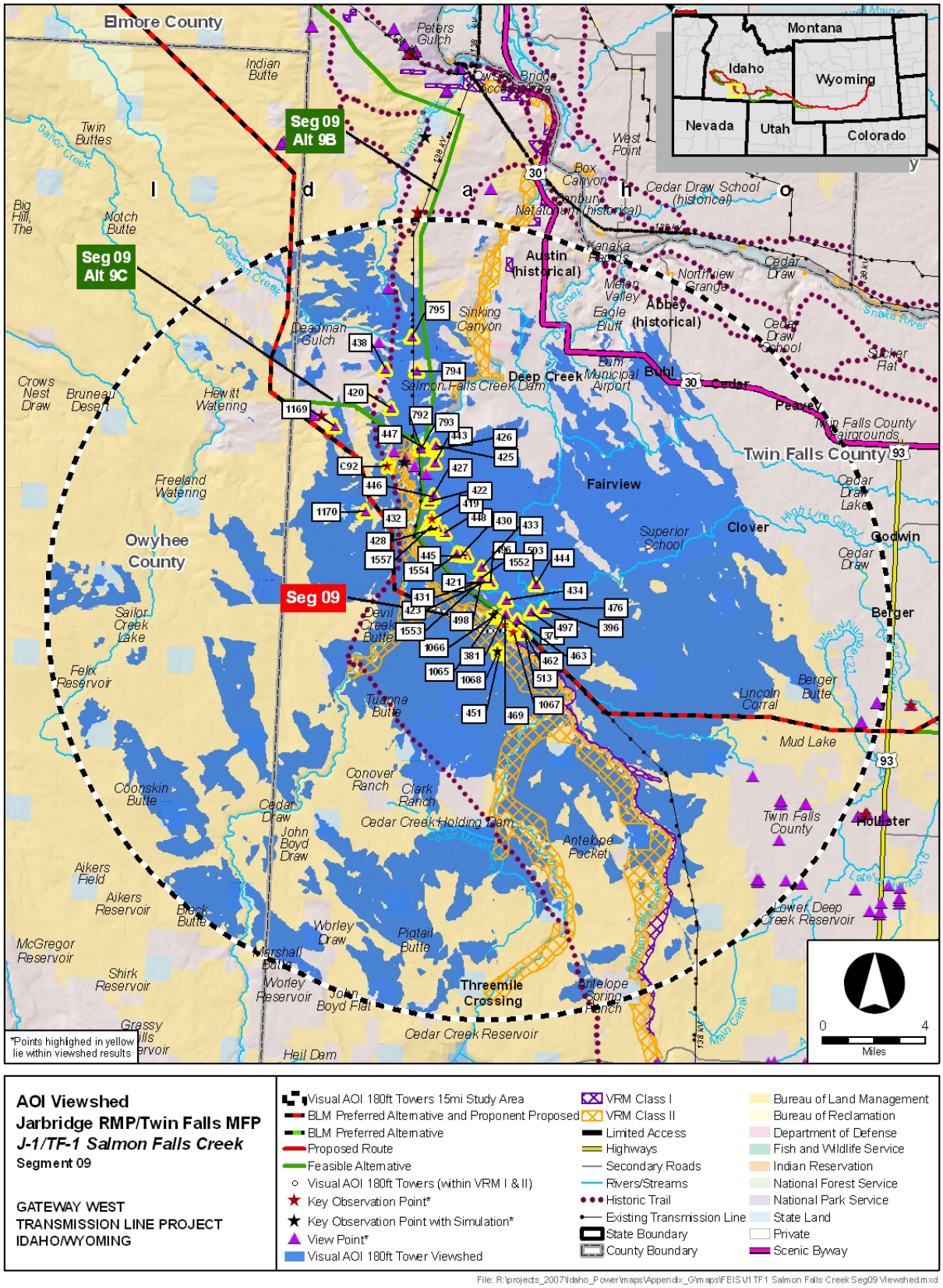


Figure 5.7-2. AOI J-1/TF-1 Salmon Falls Creek Visual Analysis

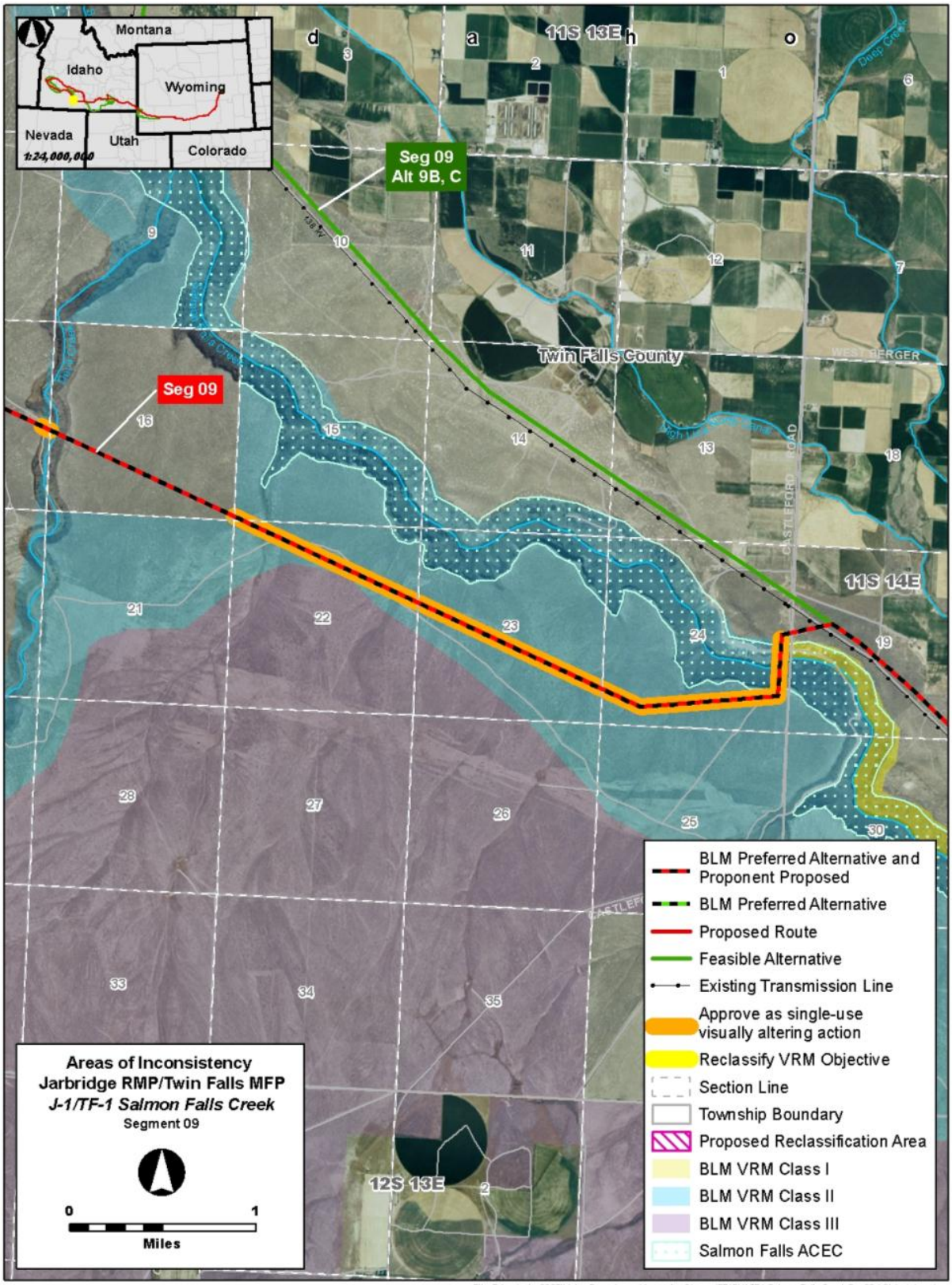


Figure 5.7-3. AOI J-1/TF-1 Salmon Falls Creek Detailed Map Showing the Proposed VRM Action for Amendments #6 and 7

5.8 Jarbidge RMP

Preferred Route: Three visual resource amendments are proposed to the Jarbidge RMP. An amendment is proposed for AOI J-1/T-1 that would allow the Project to cross the VRM Class II area in the Salmon Falls ACEC without changing the VRM classification. An amendment for AOI J-2 would change the VRM from Class II to Class III. An amendment for AOI J-5 would change the VRM from Class II to Class III.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: There are two additional AOIs on alternative routes for Segments 8 and 9. These AOIs would have associated amendments to change the VRM classification if they were selected.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The Jarbidge RMP (BLM 1987) and 1989 amendment for the establishment of the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC provide direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Jarbidge FO in south-central Idaho. The Resource Area includes 2,100,519 acres of land in south-central Idaho and northern Nevada. Within this area, 81 percent are public lands administered by BLM in Elmore, Owyhee, and Twin Falls Counties in Idaho and Elko County, Nevada (see Figure 5.8-1). The Jarbidge RMP states:

> *the visual or scenic values of the public lands will be considered whenever any physical actions are proposed on BLM lands. The degree of alterations to the natural landscape will be guided by the criteria established for the four Visual Resource Management Classes as outlined in BLM 8400.*

The Jarbidge RMP includes a map of VRM classified lands (Map 9). In addition, the RMP provides locations of utility lines and utility avoidance areas (Map 7). The Jarbidge RMP boundary is crossed by the proposed route and alternative routes for Segments 8 and 9. The existing land use plan is currently being revised. If a new plan is in effect prior to action on Gateway West, this visual analysis would be revised.

The Segment 8 Proposed Route would be 131.5 miles long and connect the Midpoint Substation to the Hemingway Substation with a single-circuit 500-kV line. The route location was selected to follow the WWE corridor or existing transmission lines and avoid agricultural lands, especially in the southeastern portions. The Proposed Route is within the WWE corridor for a portion of its total length. Constraints on federal land include historic trails, wetlands, steep slopes, and raptor nests. In addition to the Proposed Route, five Route Alternatives were considered that have varying impacts on military training ranges and the SRBOP. Initially, routing in the northwestern portion of Segment 8 focused primarily on avoiding the SRBOP and the Orchard Combat Training Center. Later siting studies identified opportunities to parallel the existing Summer Lake to Midpoint 500-kV transmission line through the SRBOP. Other siting constraints include existing and planned commercial and residential development, in the cities of Kuna and Melba.

Segment 9 of the Proposed Route would be a 162.2-mile-long 500-kV single-circuit line that would connect the proposed Cedar Hill Substation with the Hemingway Substation. Primary siting considerations in the eastern portion of this segment were avoidance of

irrigated farmland, dairy operations, and scattered residential development; avoiding interference with the Jarbidge Military Operating Area; making use of the WWE corridor; and minimizing impacts to visual resources. In the western portion, following the WWE corridor was a primary objective, with other concerns such as minimizing impact to Bruneau Dunes State Park and scenic qualities associated with the Bruneau River, avoiding conflicts with the Saylor Creek Air Force Range and Military Operating Area, and crossing the SRBOP. For the entire line segment, placement of the transmission line on Public Land versus private land was an important issue.

Five VRM Class I and II areas in the Jarbidge RMP would be affected by the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives. The presence of a transmission line in these landscapes would not meet VRM Class I or II objectives. As a result, BLM action would be necessary to modify the visual classifications and management to conform to the RMP. The AOIs are described in Sections 5.8.1 through 5.8.5, below.

5.8.1 AOI J-1/TF-1 Salmon Falls Creek (Segment 9 – Preferred [Proposed Route])

The Salmon Falls Creek AOI is located approximately 4 miles south of Castleford, Idaho, in Twin Falls County. The AOI overlaps both the Twin Falls MFP and Jarbidge RMP boundaries. The Preferred Route for Segment 9 proceeds from the proposed Cedar Hill Substation west and north avoiding areas of irrigated agriculture. After crossing SR 93, the route proceeds west until near the east side of Salmon Falls Creek, then turns northwest to parallel the east side of Salmon Falls Creek adjacent to an existing 138-kV transmission line for about 4.4 miles before turning west again and crossing the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC at Lily Grade just north of the Salmon Falls Creek WSA but still part of an ACEC and eligible WSR segment. WSR eligibility requires management that prevents activities that could result in the river being declared WSR-unsuitable. A powerline crossing at that point would not conform to WSR management and therefore no amendment was proposed in the Draft EIS (see Appendix F-1). The Proposed Route was revised to cross the river downstream of the WSA, adjacent to an existing single-phase low-voltage distribution line, just north of the Lilly Grade Road. The BLM FO has stated that the Proposed Route for Segment 9 would now cross a Recreation portion of the river. The portion of the AOI within the Twin Falls MFP is managed as Class II within the riparian area and is crossed for 0.6 mile and is discussed above, in Section 5.7.1. The portion of the AOI within the Jarbidge RMP is managed as Class II and is crossed at two locations for a total distance of 3.3 miles.

Figure 5.8-2 shows the viewshed of the Salmon Falls Creek AOI, Proposed Route, and location of VRM Class II management classifications. Figure 5.8-3 shows the viewshed and recommended amendment action for the AOI crossing.

5.8.1.1 Alternatives Considered

Several alternatives are analyzed in the Final EIS that avoid the sensitive resources affected by the Proposed Route. At the point where the Proposed Route crosses Salmon Falls Creek, Alternative 9B leaves the Proposed Route and continues northwest then north just east of Salmon Falls Creek. BLM portions of Alternative 9B follow the WWE corridor to the northwest then north to within a few miles of the Snake River,

before turning west and re-joining the Proposed Route several miles north of the Salmon Falls Creek AOI. Alternative 9B intercepts BLM-managed lands classified as VRM Class I associated with the Oregon Trail farther north, by the Snake River and would be within 1,000 feet of several residences and would impact agricultural land. Another alternative, Alternative 9C, would cross Salmon Falls Creek north of the WSR-eligible segment and Salmon Falls Creek ACEC, in the vicinity of Balanced Rock County Park and would be within 1,000 feet of residences and impact agricultural land, but would avoid land managed for Class I and II objectives. The Proponents state that they prefer the Proposed Route because of Twin Falls County's concerns over how Alternative 9B would impact residential and agricultural areas.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.8.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The study area for the Salmon Falls Creek AOI is located in southern Idaho, with approximately 75 percent of the land area in Twin Falls County and the remainder in Owyhee County. Generally the topography is flat to rolling, with much steeper slopes along the banks of Salmon Falls Creek and other drainages. Salmon Falls Creek traverses the study area from the southeast to north up to its confluence with the Snake River, just north of the study area. This area is in the Dissected High Lava Plateau ecoregion, which has alluvial fans, rolling plains, and sheer-walled canyons that are cut into extrusive rocks. Open panoramic views of the rolling (plains) to rugged (canyon) terrain are considered to have moderate scenic quality due to the muted sagebrush grassland vegetation adjacent to the rocky faces of the canyon. The canyon for Salmon Falls Creek is an aesthetic landscape element within the study area. There are considerable farms and farmland in northeastern part of this area and at several smaller scattered locations. The large majority of the area is undeveloped; however, there are communities like Buhl and Filer along US 30, the major road in the area located in the northeast quadrant.

The Preferred Route crosses areas of scenic quality Classes B and C; however, the entire AOI is on land with an overall rating of "low." The route would cross just north of the area classified as "Medium" in Salmon Falls Creek canyon. The VRI consists of many small polygons according to scenic quality and distance zones.
Attachment A, Figure J-1/TF-1a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1068. The land in close proximity to the alignment is very flat and grass covered. Although not seen in the view from KOP 1068, KOP 1067 in the EIS documents the steep topography along Salmon Falls Creek.

Attachment A, Figures J-1/TF-1c show the existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1065. This represents the views of recreational users crossing the canyon at Lilly Grade. The Salmon Falls Creek Canyon is an aesthetic landscape element in the foreground and middle ground and represents a focus point at this location. Open panoramic views of the rolling (plains) to rugged (canyon) terrain are considered to have moderate scenic quality due to the muted sagebrush grassland vegetation adjacent to the rocky faces of the canyon. The canyon for Salmon Falls Creek is an aesthetic landscape element in the foreground and middleground views that is a focus point for

the view. This parcel of land administered by the BLM is managed to conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.8.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.8-2 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area. Attachment A, Figure J-1/TF-1b simulates landscape conditions showing the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP 1068. The flat terrain at the top of the canyon provides no topography or vegetation to screen views of the proposed line and therefore skylining will occur. Attachment A, Figure J-1/TF-1d simulates landscape conditions showing Segment 9 of the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP 1065. Visibility and contrast levels of the Proposed Route would be high due to the short distance to the alignment and the lack of human-made alterations visible in the foreground, middleground, and background.

Sensitive views of the sagebrush steppe and rolling grasslands west of Twin Falls adjacent to Salmon Falls Creek are important to the surrounding sensitive viewers such as recreational drivers at KOPs 1068 and 1067 as well as the numerous residences on the east side of the creek. The flat to rolling landscape views from KOP 1065 exhibit little diversity in form, line, color, or texture as well as few human-made features visible this far from Twin Falls, Idaho. Views in the Salmon Falls Creek Canyon are interesting and diverse but are not apparent from KOP 1068. From this broad open vantage point it is apparent that screening and other mitigation efforts would not be successful in lowering impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The flat plain and strong horizon would be directly contrasted with the transmission structures for the proposed transmission line, which would be visible and dominant. Views of recreational users crossing Salmon Falls Creek at Lilly Grade are represented by KOP 1065. Views from KOP 1065 represent the views of recreational users at the crossing of Lilly Grade Road and Salmon Falls Creek looking southeast toward rolling, undulating terrain of the Antelope Pocket. Impacts on viewers from KOP 1065 and in the surrounding area would be high due to contrast levels and distance of the Project from the viewer.

VRM Class II objectives in the Jarbidge RMP have been assigned from canyon rim to canyon rim to protect the viewshed. Through micrositing, it is likely that towers could be set back from the canyon rim such that the visual intrusion within the canyon would be confined to the conductors. Nevertheless, any intrusion would not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.8.1.4 Proposed Plan Amendment

An amendment would be needed if the Proposed Route is selected because of the visual sensitivity of crossing Salmon Falls Creek due to its VRM Class II management objective, ACEC designation, and WSR-eligible status. If management regulations would permit an amendment to this area, it is recommended that the Project be allowed as a visually altering action without changing the VRM classification in the Jarbidge RMP portion of AOI J-1/TF-1. Figure 5.8-3 shows the location of the Salmon Falls Creek AOI, Proposed Route, and amendment management recommendation that would apply if this segment of Salmon Falls Creek is determined to be unsuitable for WSR designation.

This would provide the most protection for adjacent management goals. If this route is selected, it is recommended that the Proponents be required to microsite structures to minimize the visibility from within the canyon.

5.8.2 AOI J-2 Saylor Creek (Segment 9 – Preferred [Proposed] Route)

The Preferred Route for Segment 9 enters the SRBOP east of the Saylor Creek AOI (milepost 88.0). The route proceeds to the west, passing through the northern edge of the Saylor Creek Air Force Range restricted area and to the south of Bruneau Dunes State Park. The Jarbidge RMP designates the area between Saylor Creek Air Force Range and Bruneau Dunes State Park as an area of utility avoidance. However, consultation between representatives of the BLM, U.S. Air Force, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Proponents has determined that the location of the Proposed Route within the restricted Military Operating Area and just to the south of Bruneau Dunes State Park is acceptable. From this point, the Proposed Route proceeds generally southwest across the Bruneau River Valley. Constraints in this portion of Segment 9 include minimizing the distance across the SRBOP and Saylor Creek Air Force Range, and avoiding Bruneau Dunes State Park.

The Saylor Creek AOI is located about 4 miles south of the Snake River, approximately 18 miles south of Mountain Home, Owyhee County, Idaho. The AOI is less than 1 mile west of the Elmore County/Owyhee County boundary. As the route proceeds west, constrained on the south by the Saylor Creek Range Air Force restricted area and on the north by Bruneau Dunes State Park, it crosses approximately 1.7 miles of VRM Class II area located in a low interval of hills within the WWE corridor. Figure 5.8-4 shows the viewshed of the Saylor Creek AOI, the location of the Proposed Route, and VRM management classifications. Figure 5.8-5 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation.

5.8.2.1 Alternatives Considered

The Saylor Creek AOI is located in a portion of the Project without a feasible alternative. There are no alternatives to Segment 9 of the Proposed Route that would avoid the Saylor Creek AOI. The route is fixed in its current location due to the short distance between the Saylor Creek Air Force Range and Bruneau Dunes State Park. Farther south, the Bruneau Canyon and continuous VRM Class I Management Areas extend south into Nevada. The location of this route is further restricted to the north by the Snake River. An important routing consideration is that the Proposed Route in this location is within the WWE corridor.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.8.2.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The major water feature within the15-mile-radius area of Saylor Creek AOI is the Snake River, which passes east to west through the northern half of this area. Topography is mostly flat to rolling. More severe topography exists along the river and other drainages, especially north of Glenns Ferry. There are extensive areas of farmland and farms along the Snake River in the northwest, southeast (Deadman Flat), and other scattered locations. Interstate 84 is the major highway in the vicinity of this AOI and

traverses the area from northwest to southeast. Development in the area, such as Hammett and Glenns Ferry, is found primarily along Interstate 84. There are a number of recreation facilities along the Snake River, such as Three Island Crossing State Park. Numerous transmission lines occur in the northeast. KOPs 372 and 389 represent sensitive residential viewers along the Snake River Plain. The existing views from these residences are mostly of agricultural lands with few human-made elements; however; the view from KOP 816 has distinguishing canyon features. Views of this steep topography can be seen from KOP 816.

The VRI categorizes this area as having low viewer sensitivity with a scenic quality of Class C in a seldom seen distance zone.

Attachment A, Figure J-2a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 372. The land is flat to gently sloping and grass-covered. There is no topography or vegetation to screen views. There is steep topography along a canyon designated VRM Class II outside of the view from KOP 372. Attachment B, Figures B-15 and B-16 show the existing conditions as viewed from KOPs 389 and 816.

5.8.2.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.8-4 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to assess the consistency of the proposed transmission line facilities with the existing VRM Class II area. Figure 5.8-5 shows the AOI, route, and amendment management recommendation. Attachment A, Figure J-2b simulates landscape conditions showing for the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP 372. There is no topography or vegetation to screen views of the proposed line and skylining would be unavoidable.

KOP 816 exhibits diversity in form, line, color, and texture that would result in moderate levels of contrast with the proposed transmission facilities along Segment 9. The views from KOP 816 are interrupted by a wind farm in the middleground to background viewing distance zone. Views of the Snake River are not apparent from these particular KOPs. From more elevated viewing locations, it is apparent that screening and other mitigation efforts would not mitigate impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The alignment would need to span the canyon, making it highly visible to sensitive viewers and drawing the attention of the casual observer from over a mile away, which would not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.8.2.4 Proposed Plan Amendment

The Proposed Route would cross lands managed for VRM Class II objectives within a WWE corridor. The VRM Class II designation is not consistent with an area designated as the WWE corridor; therefore, it is recommended that, if this route is selected, the area within the WWE Corridor be designated VRM Class III (approximately 667 acres). It is further recommended that the Proponents be required to microsite structures to minimize the visibility from within the canyon.

5.8.3 AOI BOP-1/J-3 South Oregon Trail (Segment 9 – Alternative 9D/9G)

The South Oregon Trail AOI is located north and south of the Snake River, beginning at the C.J. Strike Reservoir dam. This AOI overlaps both the SRBOP and Jarbidge RMP boundaries. Alternatives 9D and 9G share the same alignment in this area. Alternative

9D/9G leaves the Proposed Route near Bruneau, Idaho, heading northwest for about 6 miles before intercepting the C.J. Strike Reservoir, formed at the junction of the Bruneau River and the Snake River. Land surrounding the reservoir has been designated as VRM Class II due to its scenic qualities and close proximity to the Oregon NHT. Alternative 9D/9G turns west, paralleling the Oregon NHT and crossing the Narrows portion of the Bruneau Arm of C.J. Strike Reservoir. Alternative 9D/9G continues west on the south side of the reservoir crossing back to the north side of the Snake River approximately one-half mile downstream from C.J. Strike Dam. Except for minor detours to avoid agricultural land, the route continues west from the dam then turns to the northwest, diverging into two different routes before crossing the SRBOP before and rejoining the Proposed Route east of Hemingway Substation. Although not located within a WWE corridor, Alternative 9D follows existing transmission lines for approximately 37 miles.

The portion of the AOI within the Jarbidge RMP crosses 0.3 mile of BLM-administered land managed for VRM Class II objectives. Figure 5.8-6 shows the viewshed of the South Oregon Trail AOI, Alternative 9D, and VRM management classifications. Figure 5.8-7 shows the AOI, routes, and amendment management recommendation.

5.8.3.1 Alternatives Considered

Three alternative routes in the western portion of Segment 9 are analyzed in the EIS as a means of connecting the Cedar Hill and Hemingway Substations. The Proposed Route is largely within the WWE corridor but crosses more private land than the alternatives. Alternative 9D was identified by the Owyhee County task force and recommended by Owyhee County to avoid private land and maximize the use of public land. Alternative 9E was also identified by the task force but is less preferred than Alternative 9D. Alternative 9F follows the same route as 9D north of CJ Strike Reservoir, taking a southern route for the first part of the route in order to avoid the Cove non-motorized zone. Alternative 9G follows the same route as alternative 9D through this AOI. Alternative 9H follows the same route as 9F through this area and diverges from the joint route south of where 9D crosses the SRBOP. No VRM Class I or Class II areas are crossed by this portion of the Proposed Route or Alternative 9E.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.8.3.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The Snake River is the major water feature in the 15-mile-radius area surrounding the South Oregon Trail AOI. The river crosses the middle of the area from west to east and leaves the study area in the vicinity of Indian Cove. C.J. Strike Reservoir is located at the northern end of the Bruneau Valley in the center of the area. The topography is generally flat to rolling with numerous drainages. Although much of the area is undeveloped, there are large areas of farms and farmland along the Snake River, south of Mountain Home, and in other locations such as the Bruneau Valley and Twentymile Flat. SR 78 is the major road and generally follows the Snake River east to west. SR 51 extends north to south though the area. There are a number of communities along the local highways and Snake River including Grandview and Bruneau. Mountain

Home Air Force Base is located in the northeast portion of the study area. Numerous transmission lines cross this area. In addition to the highways and communities, other potential viewing areas include recreation areas such as Bruneau Dunes State Park, the SRBOP, and historic sites and trails. KOP 1155 shows views of the Snake River from Oregon NHT visitor's center. KOP 1154 shows views of existing transmission lines at the C.J. Strike Reservoir.

Attachment A, Figure AOI BOP-1/J-3a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1156. The area has a rolling topography that slopes toward the reservoir. An existing wood pole H-frame transmission line is evident in the view. More distant views toward the north are characterized by water and bluffs.

Attachment A, Figure AOI BOP-1/J-3c shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP C117. This KOP is located on a segment of the Oregon NHT – South Alternate, where it consists of an undisturbed set of swales. A transmission line with wooden, H-frame support structures is visible approximately 100 feet west of the trail at this location, and an additional transmission line with wooden, single-pole supports is visible approximately 150 feet west of the trail. The landscape consists of flat land to rolling hills with grass and sagebrush dominating the vegetation.

Attachment B, Figure B-17 shows an alternate view of the existing conditions from KOP 1156. Figures B-18 and B-19 show views of the existing conditions from KOPs 1155 and 1154, respectively.

5.8.3.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.8-6 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area. Attachment A, Figure BOP-1/J-3b simulates landscape conditions showing for Alternative 9D/9G as viewed from KOP 1156. Attachment A, Figure BOP-1/J-3d simulates the landscape conditions with Alternative 9D as viewed from KOP C117. Due to topography, only portions of Alternative 9D would be visible from this location. The Project is located to the south of this KOP, away from existing impacts to the cultural landscape. Due to the proximity of the KOP and the introduction of new elements in a new area of the resource's viewshed, the VCR for this KOP is assessed as moderate to strong. The proposed Project elements would dominate the setting to the south; therefore, there would be an adverse impact to the resource at this location.

Scenic views of the C.J. Strike Reservoir and the surrounding Snake River Plain are available to sensitive recreational viewers at nearby locations including KOPs 1154 and 1156, and visitors to the Oregon NHT (KOP 1155). The views of the undulating to rocky terrain from these viewpoints exhibit diversity in form, line, and texture with numerous human-made features such as high voltage transmission lines and a dam. From these KOPs it is apparent that Alternative 9D/9G of the proposed Project would be visible in the foreground and middle ground, sometimes skylined and at other times backdropped. It would often be seen in conjunction with the existing wood pole H-frame line. Screening and other mitigation efforts would be moderately successful at lowering impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The undulating and rugged terrain with mottled and diverse vegetation and expansive waters of the reservoir would be moderately contrasted by an additional set of structures. These additions would draw the attention of the casual observer in certain portions of the area; represent a deviation

from the natural form, line, color, and texture of the surrounding landscape; and thus would not conform to VRM Class II objectives. The Boise District office has stated that the alignment to the east and north of the river within the VRM Class II area would be buffered by topography and thus would not attract the attention of the casual observer. It appears that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect the Oregon NHT corridor and adjacent landscapes.

5.8.3.4 Associated Plan Amendment

A high-voltage transmission line would not conform to the VRM Class II management goals for those VRM Class II areas west of the Snake River. It is recommended that, if Alternative 9D is selected, 1,203.6 acres of VRM Class II area associated with the route be reclassified to VRM Class III for the Jarbidge RMP portion of AOI BOP-1/J-3 (see Figure 5.8-7).

5.8.4 AOI J-4 Oregon Trail (Segment 8 – Alternative 8A, Alternative 9B)

The Oregon Trail AOI is located approximately 13 miles east and slightly north of Hagerman, Idaho. Alternatives 8A and 9B pass through the Oregon Trail AOI. These alternatives pass less than 1 mile from each other. Both alternatives were identified as potential routes because they follow the WWE corridor for much of their lengths.

From the Snake River, Alternative 8A proceeds to the west, following the WWE corridor and existing transmission lines for about 8 miles, before turning northwest, crossing the Snake River again, and joining the Segment 8 Proposed Route. Four parcels totaling 6.4 miles of VRM Class I–managed area is crossed by Alternative 8A both north and south of the river crossing. Several segments of the Oregon NHT crisscross through this area along the river. The town of Glenns Ferry, located just west of the Segment 8A river crossing, was an important river crossing point for travelers on the Oregon NHT. Many historic trail segments converge on the Snake River in this area. The Three Mile Island State Park, which commemorates the historic river crossing, is located at Glenns Ferry and is within the vicinity of Alternative 8A. Figures 5.8-8 and 5.8-10 show the viewshed of the South Oregon Trail AOI, the location of Alternative 8A and Alternative 9B, and the VRM management classifications. Figures 5.8-9 and 5.8-11 show the AOI, routes, and amendment management recommendations.

Alternative 9B proceeds from the southeast toward the northwest until it approaches the Snake River just south of Alternative 8A, where it turns west to join the Segment 9 Proposed Route about 5 miles west of the AOI. Alternative 9B crosses Deer Gulch, a 1.4-mile length of VRM Class I land, south of the Snake River. Figure 5.8-10 shows the location of Alternative 9B and the corresponding AOI.

5.8.4.1 Alternatives Considered

Proposed Segment 8 does not cross the Snake River and would not affect the Oregon Trail AOI or other VRM Class I–managed areas in the vicinity of the Snake River. There is no local change that could be made to Alternative 8A that would keep it in the WWE corridor without also crossing VRM Class I or Class II Management Areas. The presence of many historic trail segments converging at the Glenns Ferry Crossing would make it very difficult to avoid visual impacts to historic trails.

Segment 9B is sited within a WWE corridor and crosses 1.6 miles of VRM Class I land. It would be feasible to move the alignment south to avoid the Class I area but that would be inconsistent with maximizing use of the WWE corridor.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.8.4.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The Snake River is the major water feature in the 15-mile area surrounding the Oregon Trail AOI. It crosses the area from east to west in a circuitous path and leaves the study area in the vicinity of Hagerman WHMA. The flat to rolling topography on both sides of the river is cut by numerous drainages; many with steep, canyon-like walls. The northern part of the area is occupied by steep terrain of the Mount Bennett Hills. A large part of the study area is undeveloped; however there is some agriculture along the Snake River and in other locations such as Indian Cove, Deadman Flat, and Black Mesa. Interstate 84 passes southeast and then east through the study area. A number of communities including Hammett, Glenns Ferry, King Hill, Bliss, and Hagerman occur along local highways and the Snake River. Numerous transmission lines cross this area northwest to southeast. Potentially sensitive viewing includes highways, communities, historic sites and trails, and recreation areas such as Three Island Crossing State Park, and Hagerman WHMA.

The VRI for this AOI categorizes the area as having high viewer sensitivity with a Scenic Quality of Class C in the background and seldom seen distance zones for Alternative 8A. For Alternative 9B, the VRI categorizes that area crossed as having low viewer sensitivity with a Scenic Quality of Class C in the background and seldom seen distance zones. KOP C106 is located adjacent to a trail marker for the Oregon NHT near Bell Rapids Road, approximately 1.3 miles southwest of Alternative 8A, 0.8 mile north of Alternative 9B, and 4.4 miles northeast of the Proposed Route in Segment 9. The resource at this location consists of a swale with visible ruts and meets the qualifications for a Class 1 trail segment (see Section 3.3 of the Final EIS for more detail on cultural quality classifications). The Kelton Road is coincident with the Oregon NHT in this area. The setting contains wooden, H-frame, and lattice transmission lines approximately 0.25 to 0.5 mile to the north. The setting is affected to the north but is retained in all other directions. This portion of the trail retains all other relevant aspects of integrity and is considered a contributing element to the resource's NRHP eligibility. Scenic views affected by Alternative 8A include Rosevear Gulch and Black Mesa south of Glenns Ferry, which are important to residential and recreational viewers (KOPs 788, 789, 813, and C108). These sensitive viewers are residents as well as recreational viewers on the Oregon NHT. Scenic views affected by Alternative 9B include Big Pilgrim Gulch and Twenty Mile Butte, south of the Snake River. These views are important to recreational viewers and visitors to the Oregon NHT represented by KOPs C95, C106, 811, and 814.

Attachment A, Figure J-4a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP C106 (8A). The landscape is flat to hilly grassland.

Attachment A, Figure J-4c shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP C106 (9B). There is very little variation between the foreground, middleground, and background. The trail swales are visible in the panoramic image as well as a gravel road.

Attachment B, Figures B-20 to B-23 show the existing conditions from KOPs 788, 789, 813, and C108 looking toward Alternative 8A. Figures B-24 through B-26 show the existing conditions from KOPs C95, 811, and 814 looking toward Alternative 9B.

5.8.4.3 Conformance Analysis

Figures 5.8-8 (8A) and 5.8-10 (9B) show the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area. Attachment A, Figure J-4b simulates landscape conditions for Alternative 8A as viewed from KOP C106 (8A). Attachment A, Figure J-4d simulates landscape conditions for Alternative 9B as viewed from KOP C106 (9B).

The undulating terrain viewed from KOPs 788, 789, 813, and C108 exhibits diversity in form, line, and texture with residential developments and human-made features such as transmission lines in view. From these vantage points it is apparent that Alternative 8A of the proposed Project would be skylined in some instances and partially screened or backdropped in other locations. All of these views include existing human-made developments and, at such distances, would represent a low level of contrast. Views from KOP C108 exhibit somewhat pristine viewing conditions and a higher level of variety in form, line, and texture other than an existing wood-pole H-frame transmission line in the foreground and middleground. The addition of a set of taller lattice transmission structures would increase the contrast with the existing landscape, which would draw more attention from a casual observer and thus not conform to VRM Class I objectives.

The views of undulating to rocky terrain from KOPs C106 and 811 display some diversity in form, line, and texture with very few human-made features. KOP 814 has a more pristine view except for a high-voltage steel lattice structure. From these KOPs it is apparent that Alternative 9B would be moderately visible and that screening and other mitigation efforts would not sufficiently lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The additional set of structures and access roads would draw the attention of the casual observer and thus not conform to VRM Class I objectives.

5.8.4.4 Associated Plan Amendments

It is recommended that if Alternative 8A is selected, the area managed with VRM Class I objectives, impacted by the transmission line, be reclassified to VRM Class III to allow to project to conform to the RMP's VRM Class objectives.

It is recommended that if Alternative 9B is selected, the area managed for VRM Class I objectives that would be impacted by the transmission line, be reclassified to VRM Class III to conform to the RMP's VRM Class objectives.

5.8.5 AOI J-5 North Oregon Trail (Segment 8 – Preferred [Proposed] Route)

The North Oregon Trail AOI is located about 4 miles north of Glenns Ferry, Idaho. From Midpoint Substation, the Segment 8 Proposed Route proceeds to the west-northwest following existing transmission lines. As the route approaches King Hill Creek, approximately 3.2 miles of VRM Class I land is crossed, just south of Blair Trail Reservoir. Visually sensitive features in this area include views of Bennett Mountain to the north, Kings Crown to the east, and several Oregon NHT segments. Figure 5.8-12 shows the viewshed of the North Oregon Trail AOI, the location of the Proposed Route

and Alternatives, historic trails and VRM management classifications. Figure 5.8-13 shows the AOI and amendment management recommendations.

5.8.5.1 Alternatives Considered

There are no alternatives in this vicinity that would completely avoid VRM Class I and II land, due to the presence of scenic local features, historic trails, and the Snake River Canyon. The Snake River prevents the Proposed Route from being sited in a more southerly location. Several Segment 8 alternatives were reviewed in locations north of the Proposed Route; however, none of these alternatives were selected due to even greater impacts to sensitive visual resources, steep terrain, and SRMAs and ACECs. The nearest feasible alternative is Alternative 8A, described in Section 5.8.5.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.8.5.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The Snake River is the major water feature in the 15-mile-radius area surrounding the North Oregon Trail AOI. It crosses the southern half of the area from east to west and leaves the study area just east of the community of Mountain Home. The flat to rolling topography on both sides of the river is cut by numerous drainages, many with steep canyon like walls. The northern part of the area is occupied by steep terrain of the Bennett Hills. Although much of the area is undeveloped, there are large areas of farms and farmland along the Snake River and in other locations such as Indian Cove, Deadman Flat, Black Mesa, and Pasadena Valley. Interstate 84 crosses southeast and then east through the study area. Communities such as Hammett, Glenns Ferry, and King Hill are located along local highways and the Snake River. Numerous transmission lines cross northwest to southeast through this area. Potential viewing areas include highways, communities, historic sites and trails, and recreation areas such as Three Island Crossing State Park. Scenic views of Kings Crown along the foothills of Bennett Mountain are represented by KOPs C108, 1209, and 1210. KOPs 1209 and 1210 represent local residents whereas KOP C108 represents recreational viewers on the Oregon NHT.

Attachment A, Figure J-5a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1350. The land in close proximity to the alignment is very flat and grass-covered. In such an area there is no topography or vegetation to screen views of the proposed line and thus skylining would occur.

Attachment A, Figure J-5c shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP C83. This KOP is located on a segment of the North Alternate Oregon Trail near the site of the Canyon Creek Stage Station where the trail intersects King Hill Road. The KOP is approximately 1.1 miles west of King Hill Creek and 2.7 miles northwest of the Snake River. The KOP is 0.5 mile south of the Preferred/Proposed Route in Segment 8. The resource at this location consists of a moderately deep swale. The setting contains a wooden, H-frame transmission line less than 0.25 mile to the north and modern ranching properties are visible approximately 2 miles to the east.

Attachment B, Figures B-23, B-27, and B-28 show the existing conditions as viewed from KOPs C108, 1209, and 1210, respectively.

5.8.5.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.8-12 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area. Attachment A, Figure J-5b simulates landscape conditions showing for the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP 1350. Attachment A, Figure J-5d simulates landscape conditions showing for the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP C83. The Project's design shares some similarities with existing structures in the area but would introduce new elements that are of different form, material, and texture. Due to these factors, the KOP's proximity to the route, and the potential for the elements to blend into the backdrop, the VCR for this KOP is assessed as weak to moderate. The Preferred/Proposed Project elements may draw the attention of the casual observer; therefore, there would be an adverse impact to the resource at this location.

The views of the undulating terrain adjacent to KOPs C108, 1209, and 1210 exhibit some diversity in form, line, and texture and include numerous human-made features. KOP C108 has a view of a high-voltage transmission line. KOPs 1209 and 1210 have views of numerous high-voltage transmission lines and a wind farm. From these KOPs, Segment 8 of the proposed Project would be moderately visible due to presence of existing transmission lines and structures. Screening and other mitigation efforts would not lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area.

The additional set of transmission structures and access roads would be in contrast with the landscape topography, would draw the attention of the casual observer, and would represent a deviation from the natural form, line, color, and texture, which would not conform to VRM Class I objectives.

5.8.5.4 Proposed Plan Amendment

An amendment is proposed if the Preferred Route for Segment 8 is selected. The amendment would reclassify the area that would be impacted by the transmission line, now managed to conform to VRM Class I objectives, to be managed under VRM Class III objectives (see Figure 5.8-13).

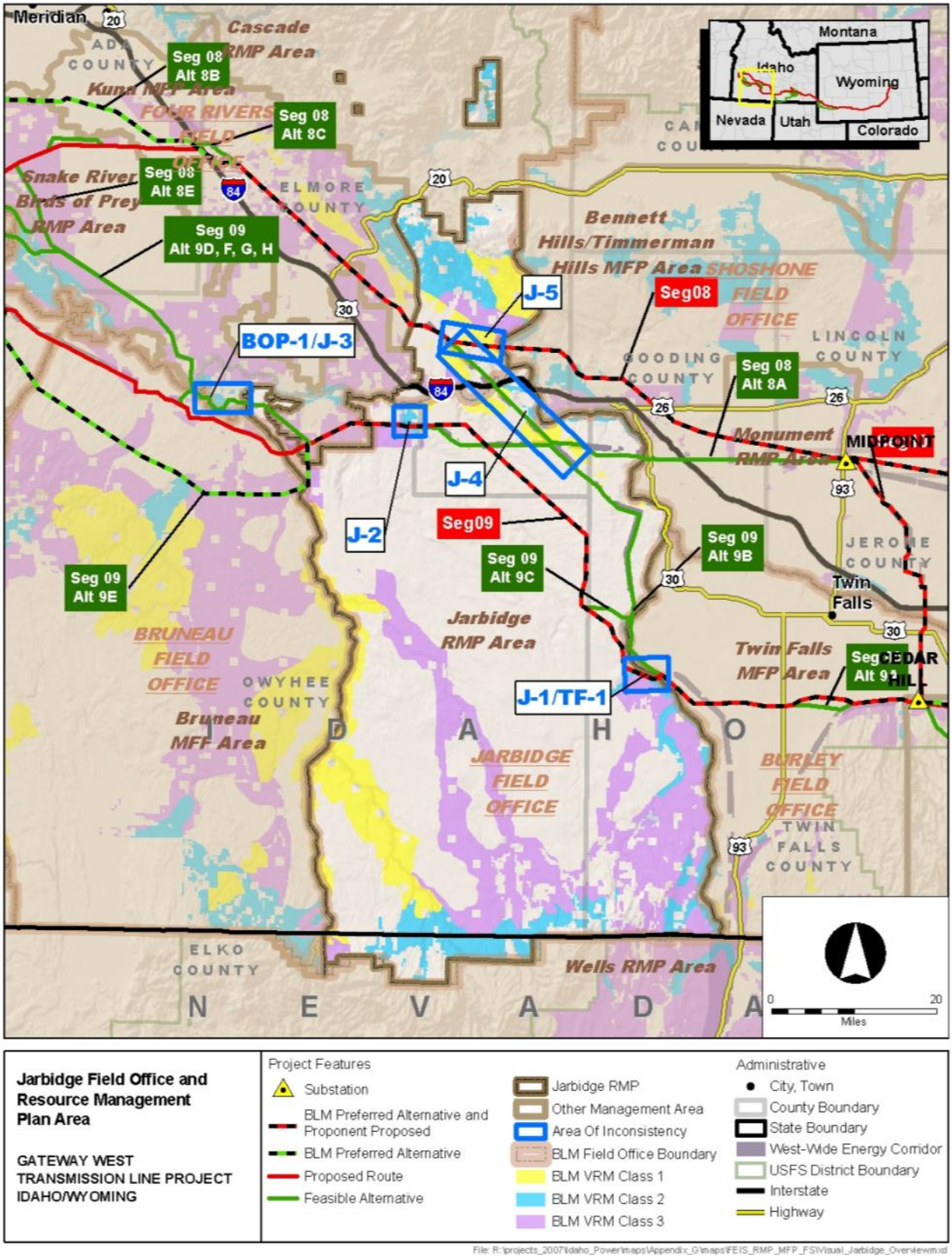


Figure 5.8-1. Jarbidge RMP Boundary Map

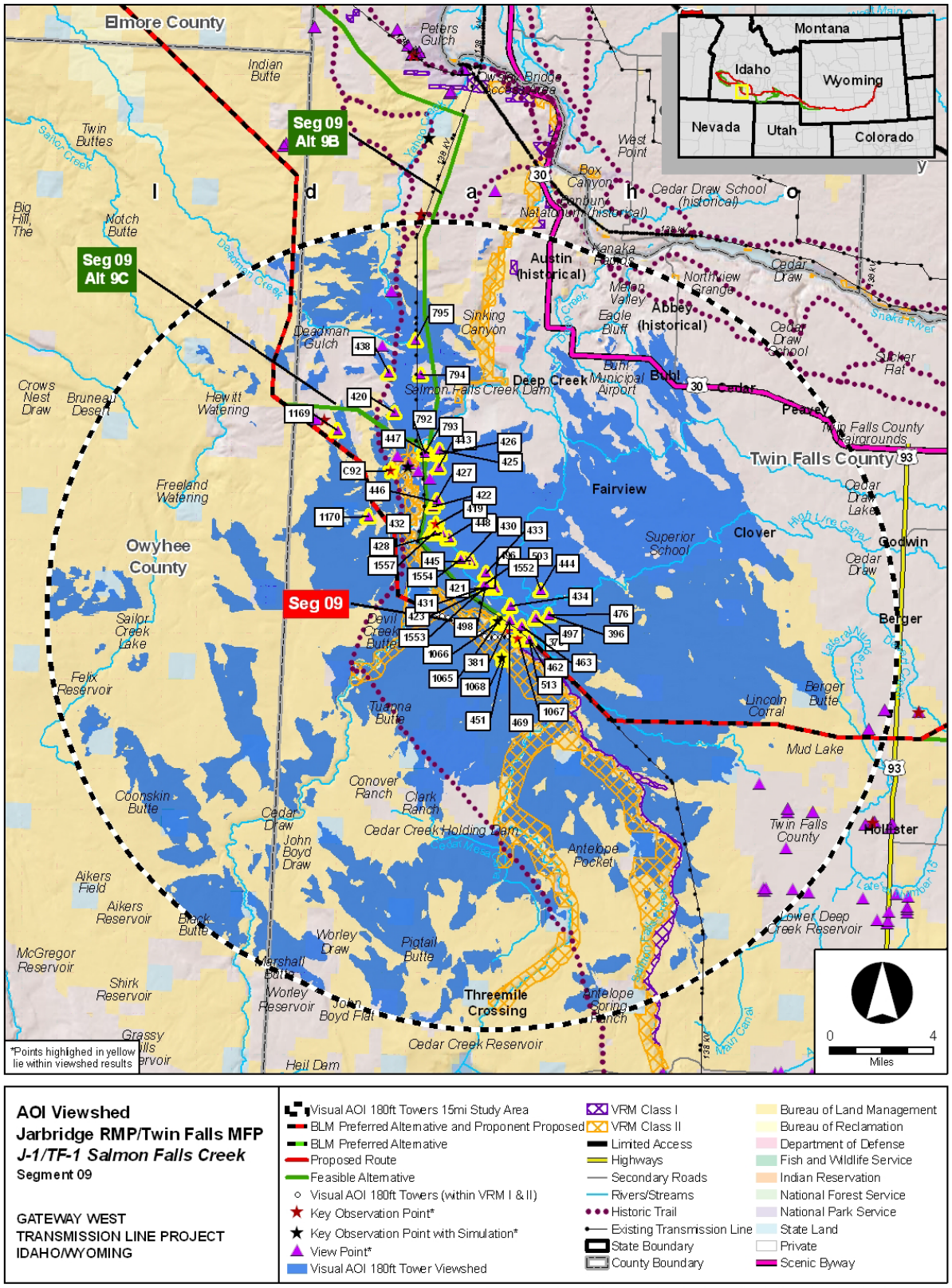


Figure 5.8-2. AOI J-1/TF-1 Salmon Falls Creek AOI Visual Analysis

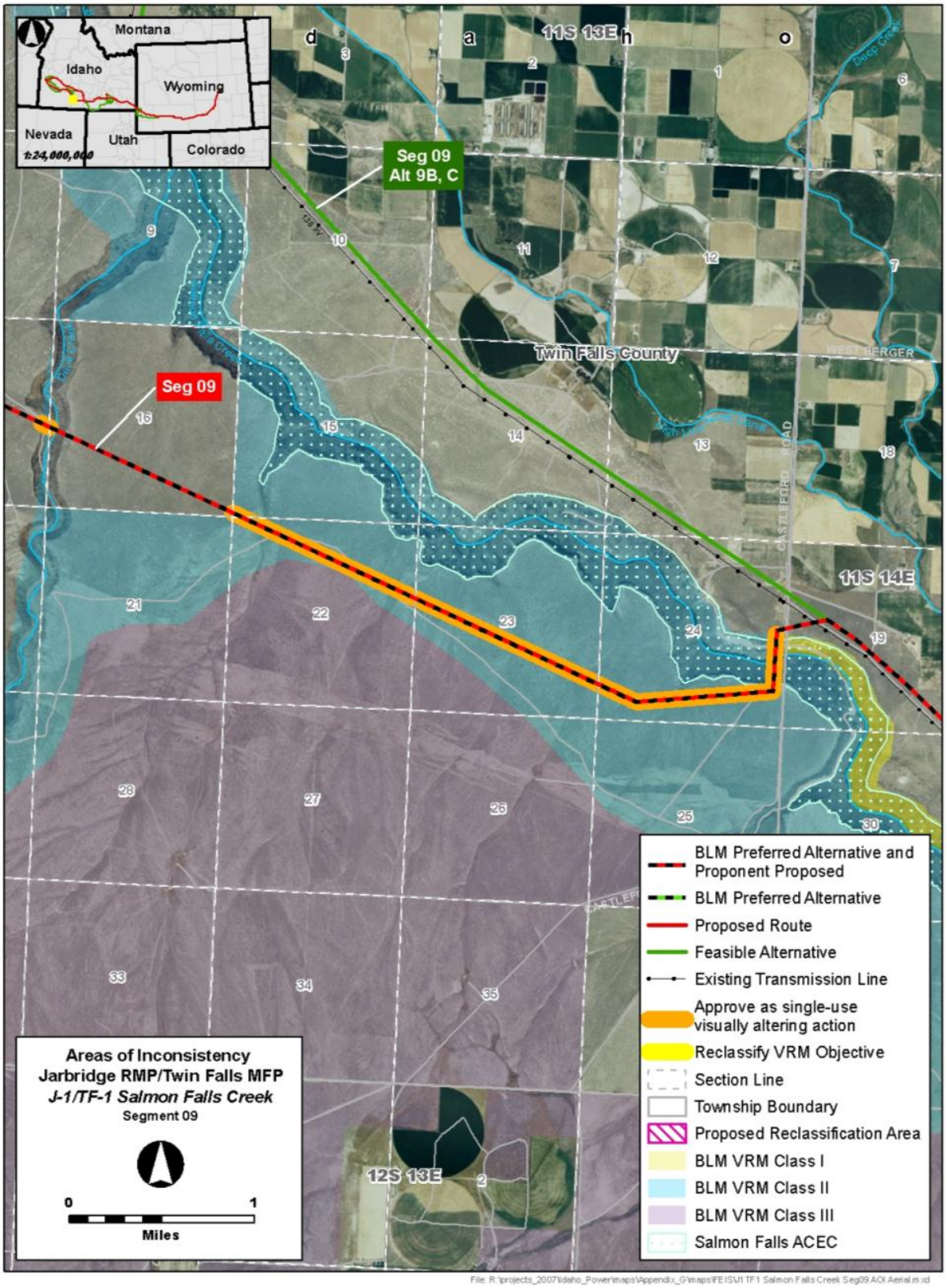


Figure 5.8-3. AOI J-1/TF-1 Salmon Falls Creek AOI Detailed Map Showing the Proposed VRM Action for Amendments #9 and 10

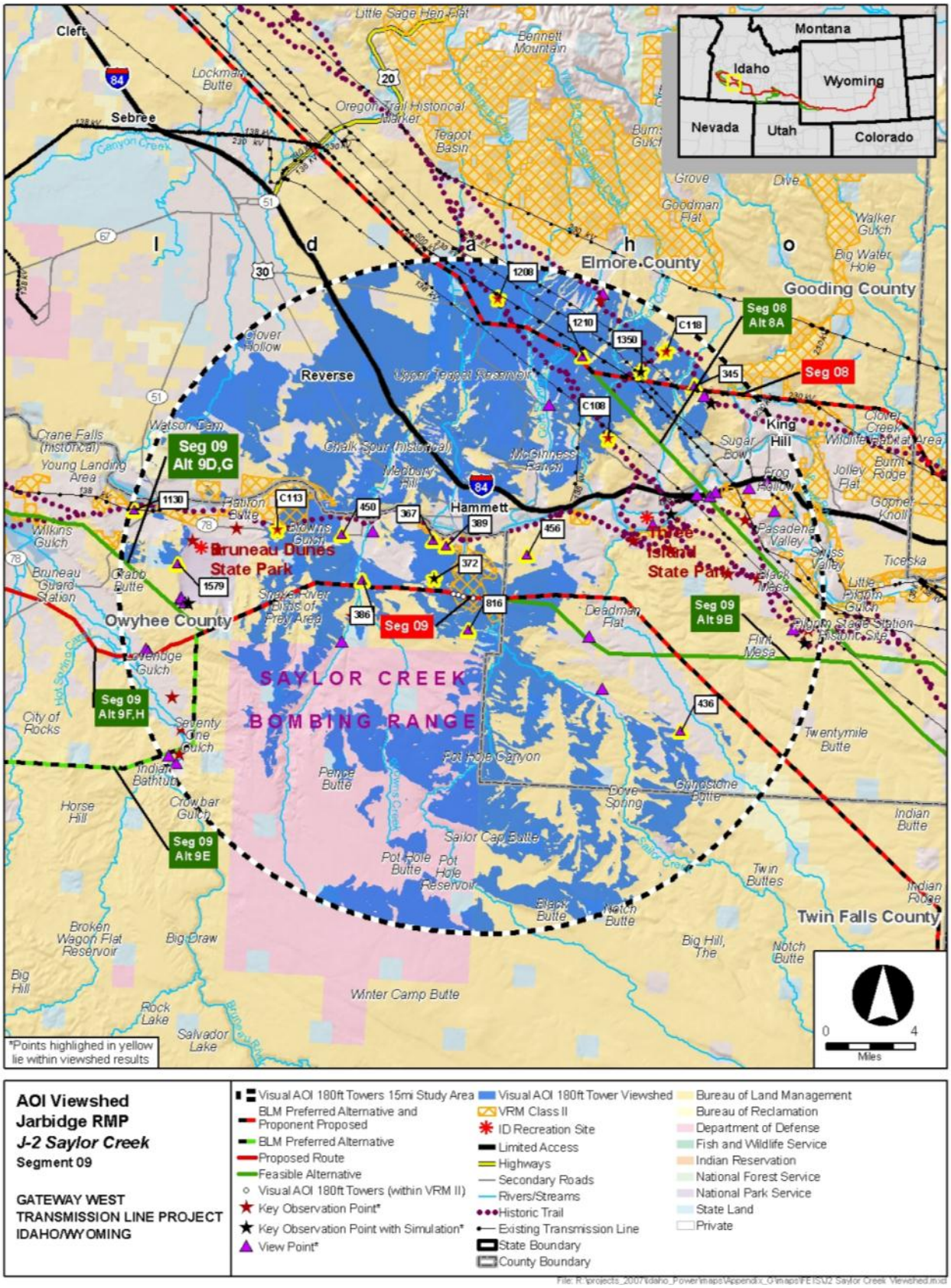


Figure 5.8-4. AOI J-2 Saylor Creek AOI Visual Analysis

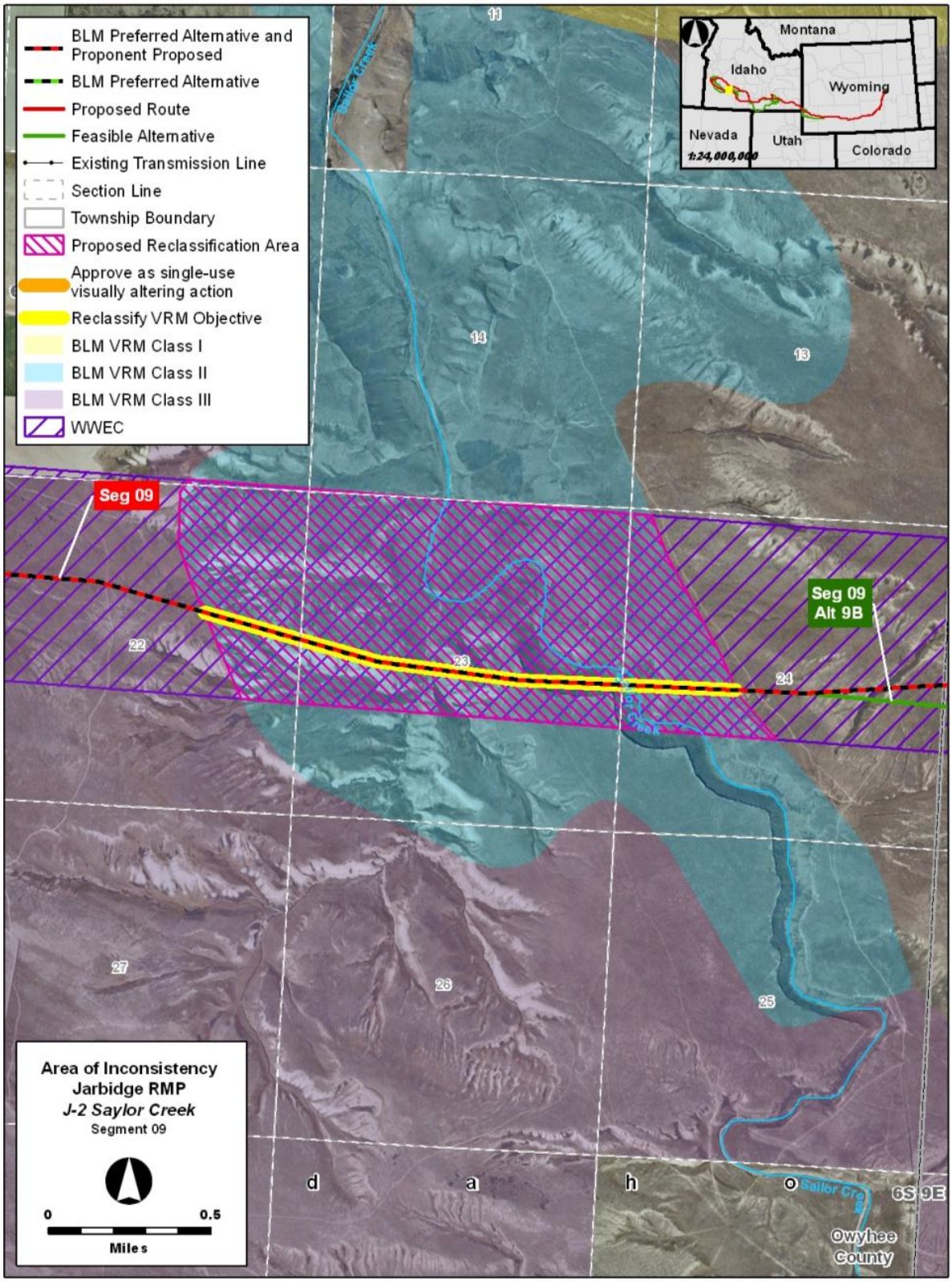


Figure 5.8-5. AOI J-2 Saylor Creek AOI Detailed Map Showing the Proposed VRM Action for Amendment #13

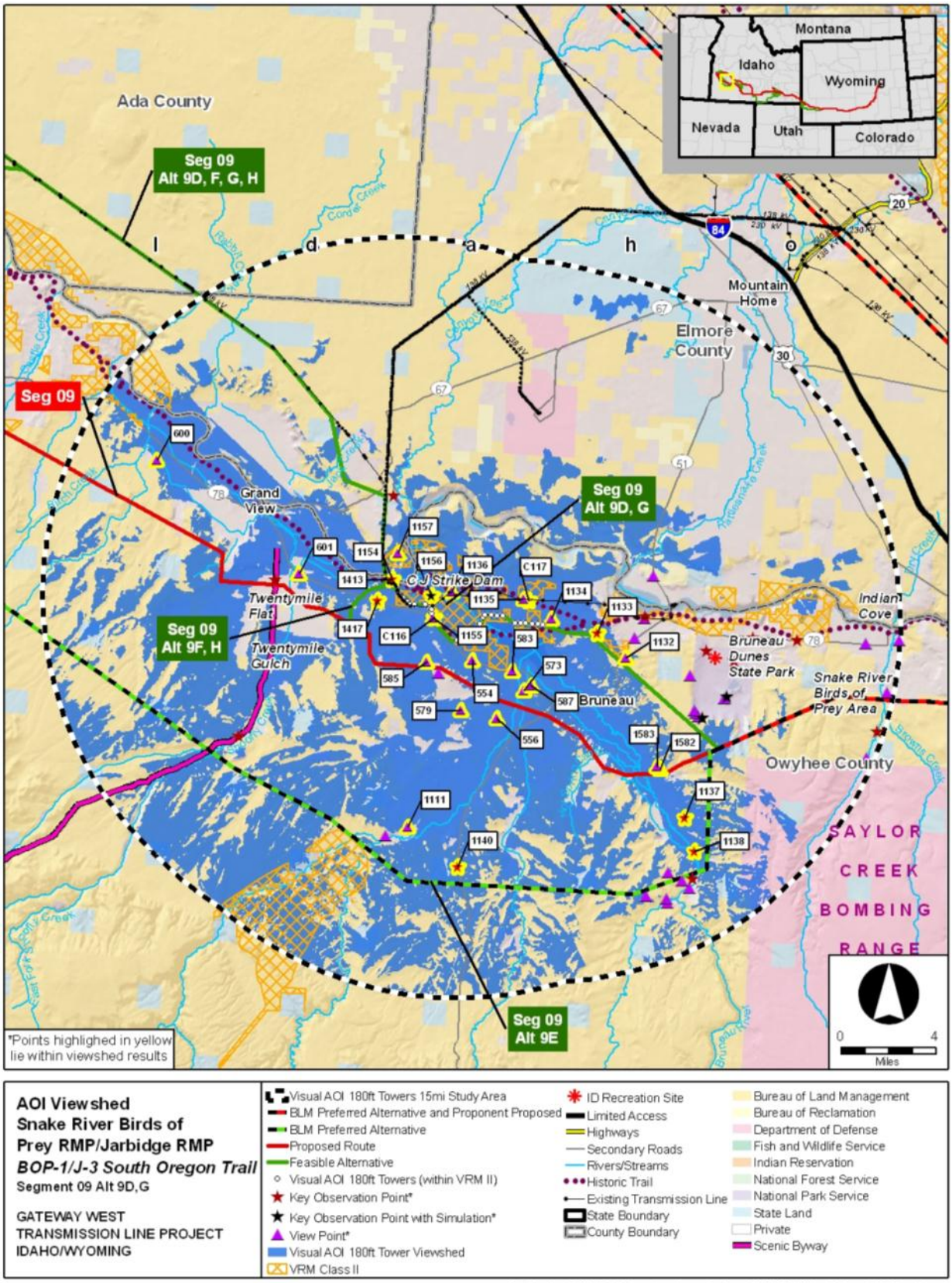
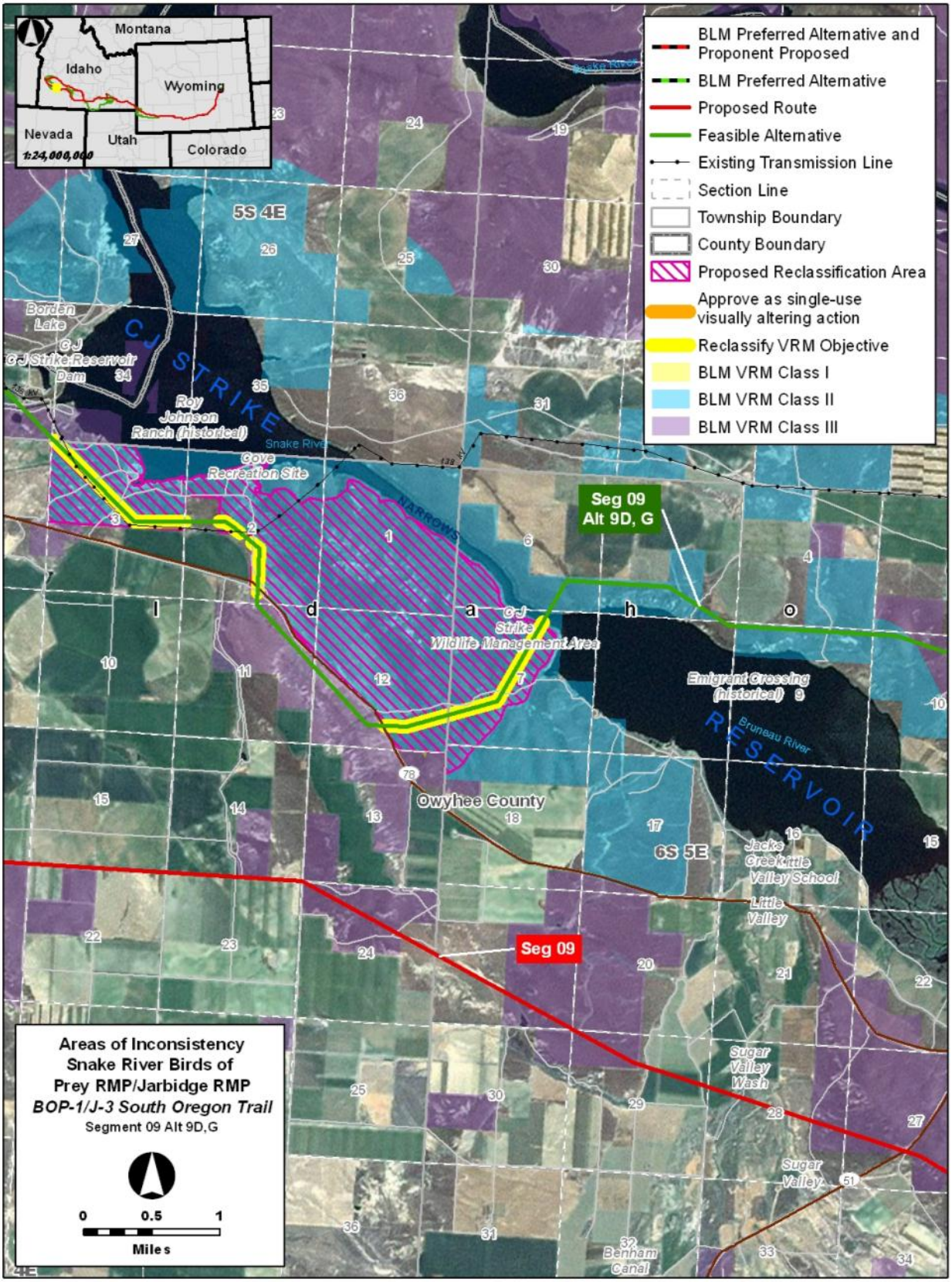


Figure 5.8-6. AOI BOP-1/J-3 South Oregon Trail AOI Visual Analysis



File: R:\projects_2007\Idaho_Power\maps\Appendix_G\maps\FEIS\BOP1J3 South Oregon Trail AOI Aerial.mxd

Figure 5.8-7. AOI BOP-1/J-3 South Oregon Trail AOI Detailed Map

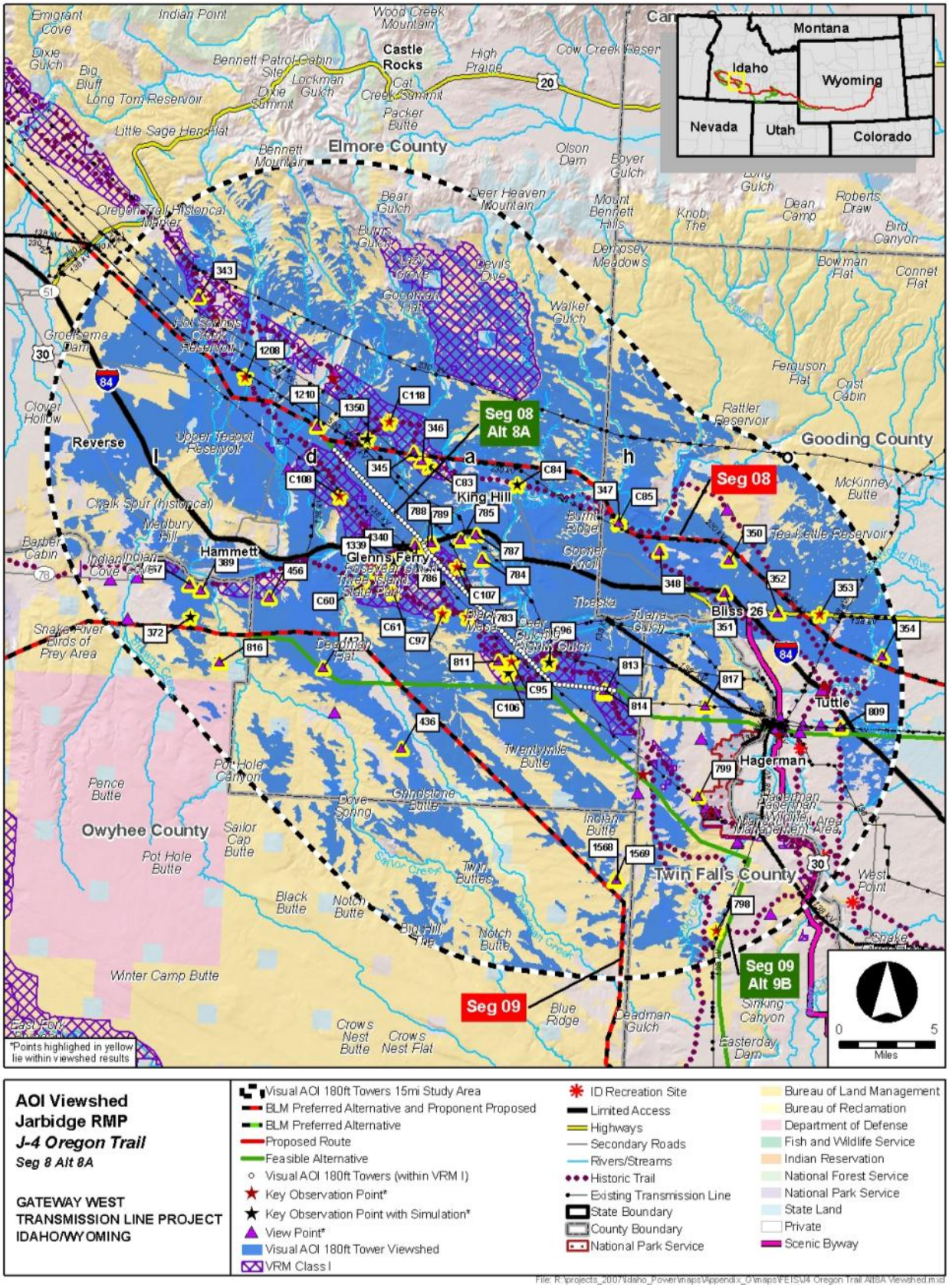


Figure 5.8-8. AOI J-4 Oregon Trail AOI Visual Analysis (Alternative 8A)

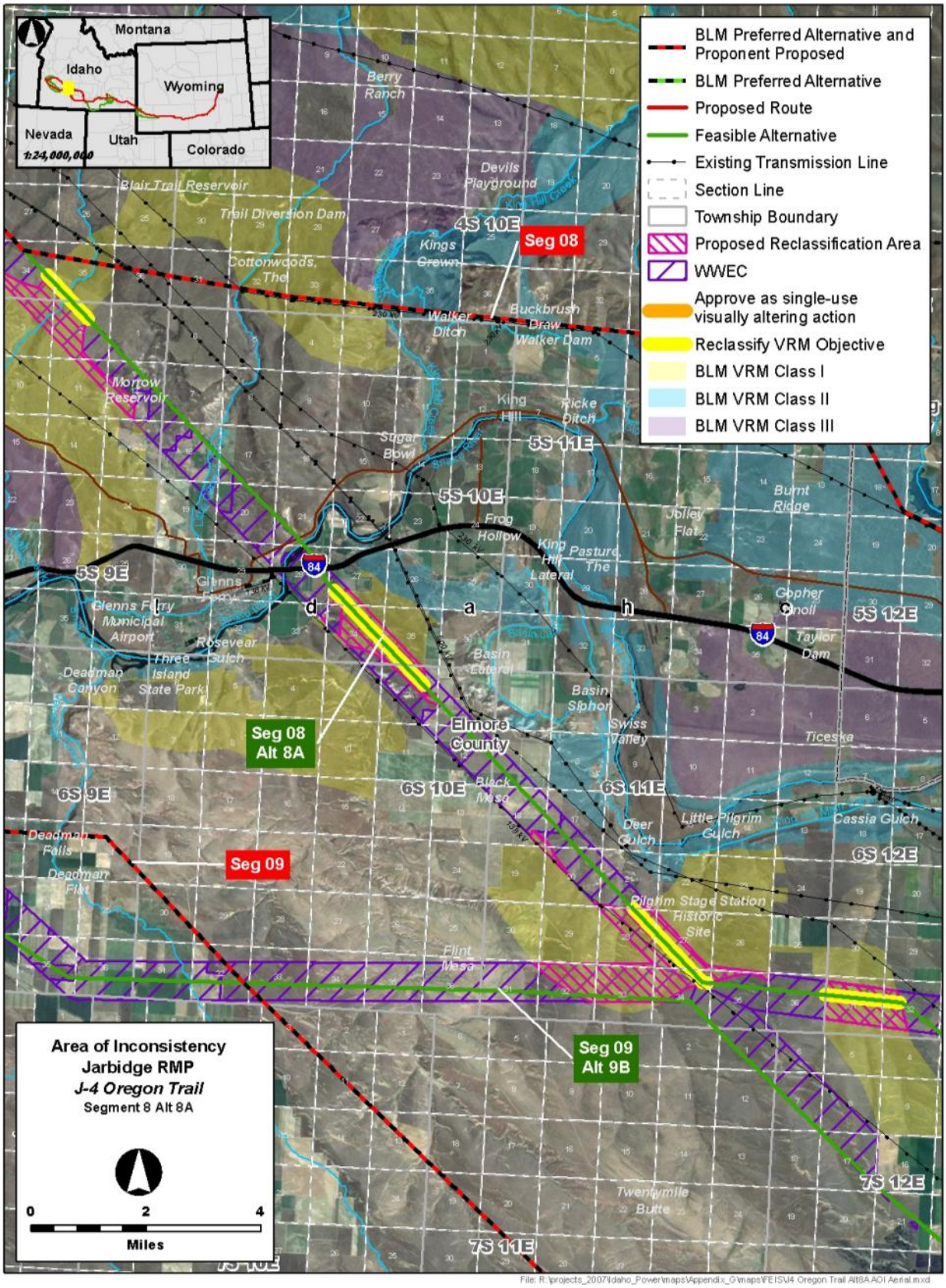


Figure 5.8-9. AOI J-4 Oregon Trail AOI Detailed Map (Alternative 8A)

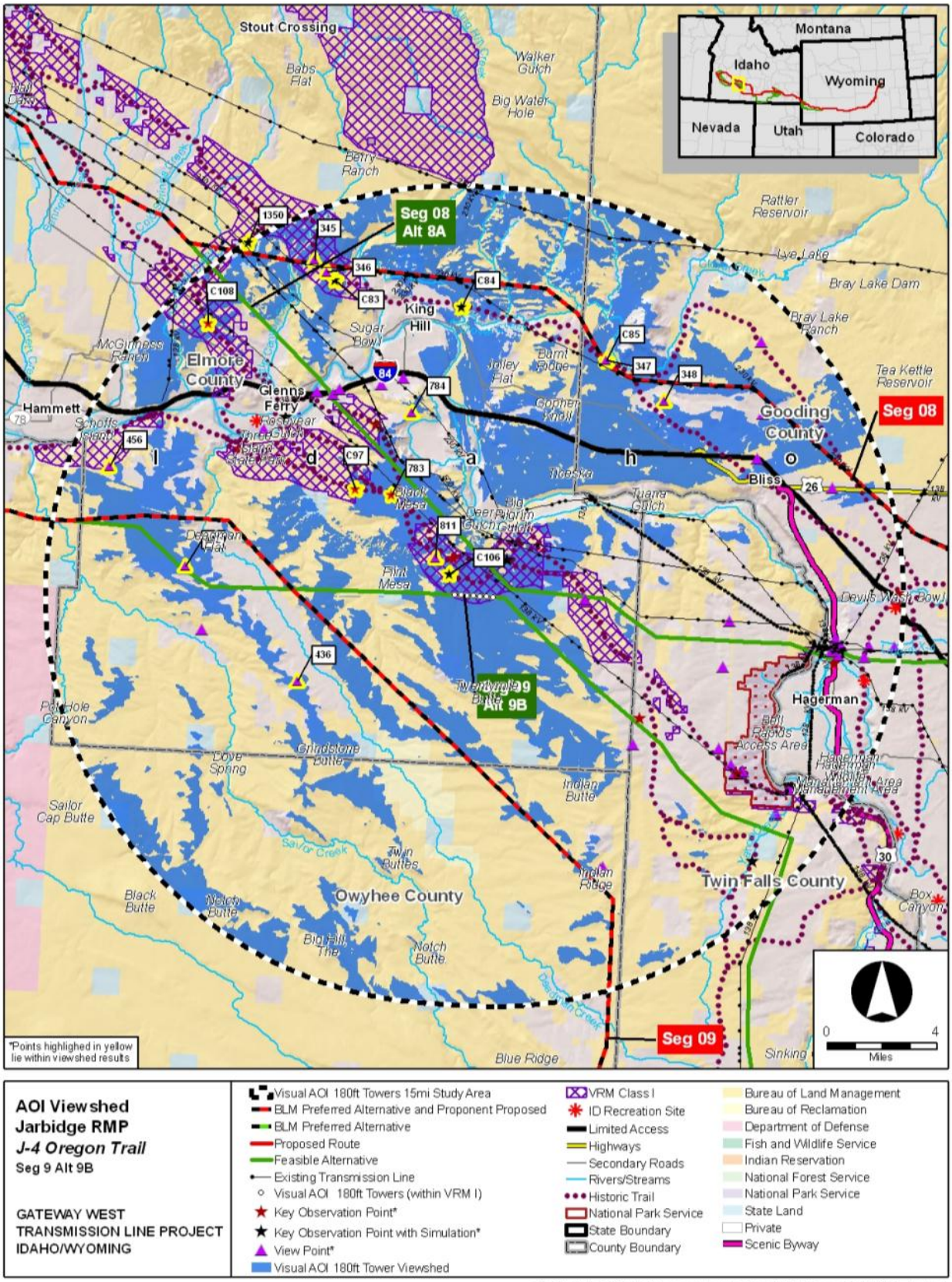


Figure 5.8-10. AOI J-4 Oregon Trail AOI Visual Analysis (Alternative 9B)

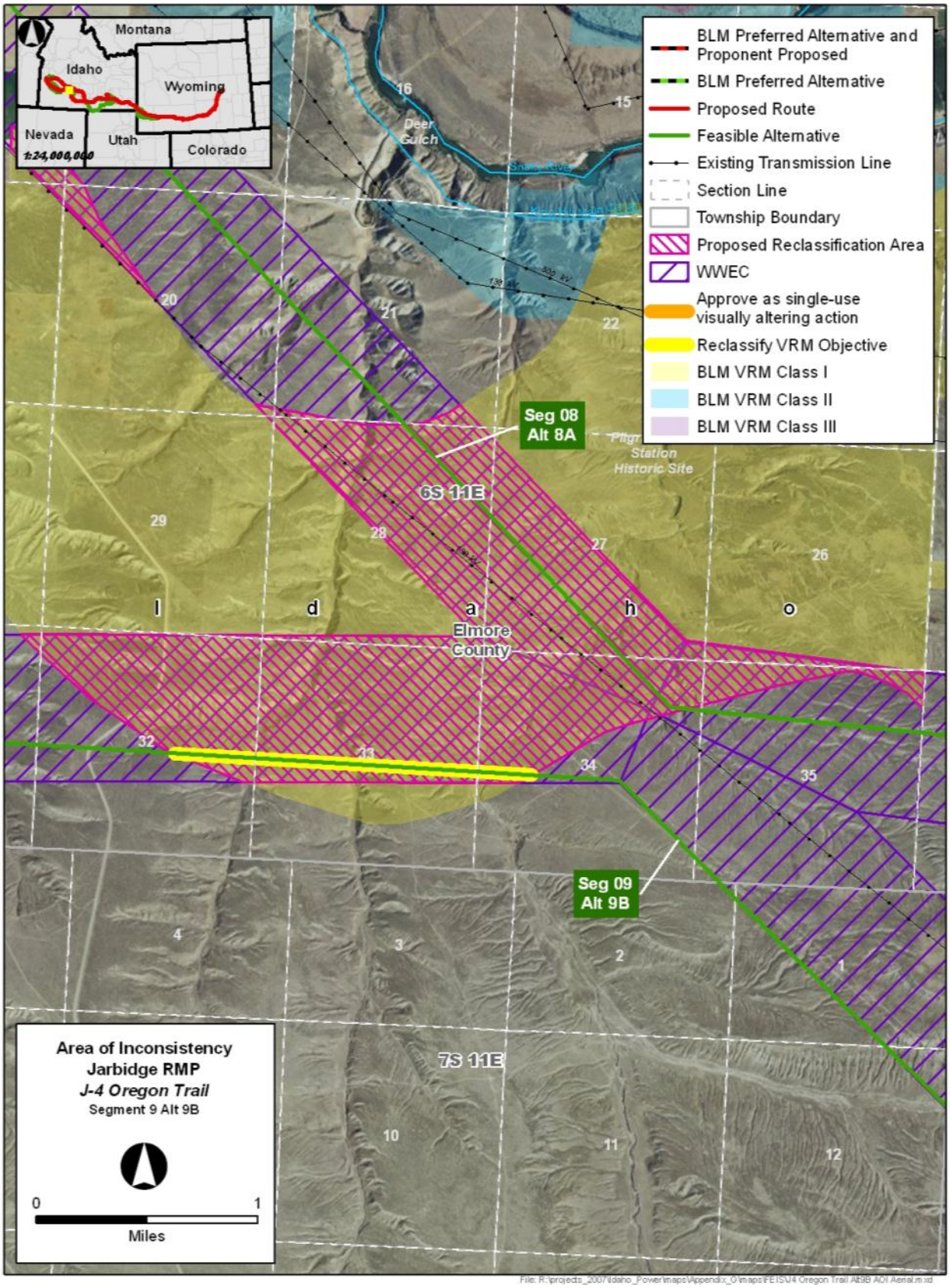


Figure 5.8-11. AOI J-4 Oregon Trail AOI Detailed Map (Alternative 9B)

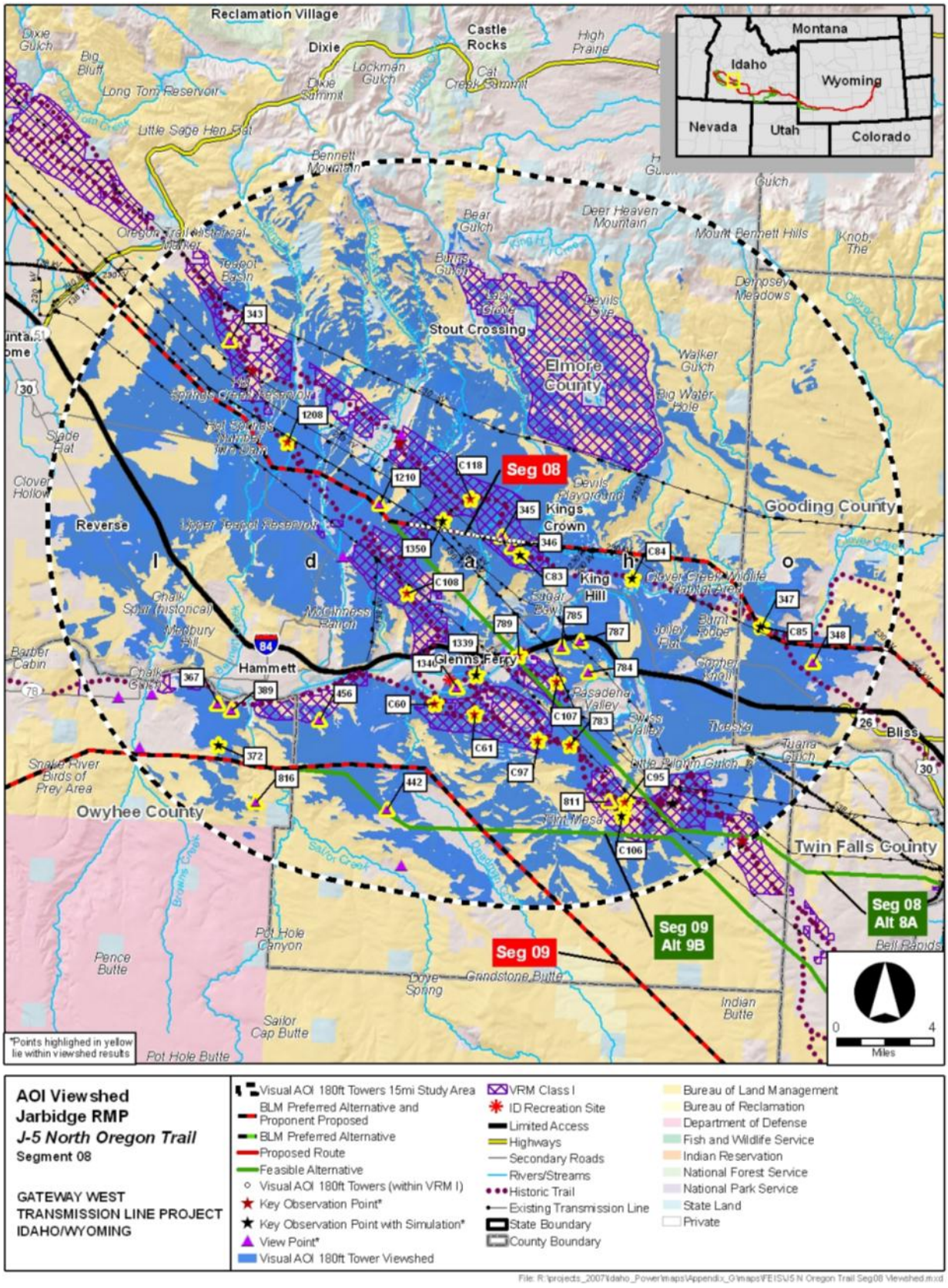


Figure 5.8-12. AOI J-5 North Oregon Trail AOI Visual Analysis

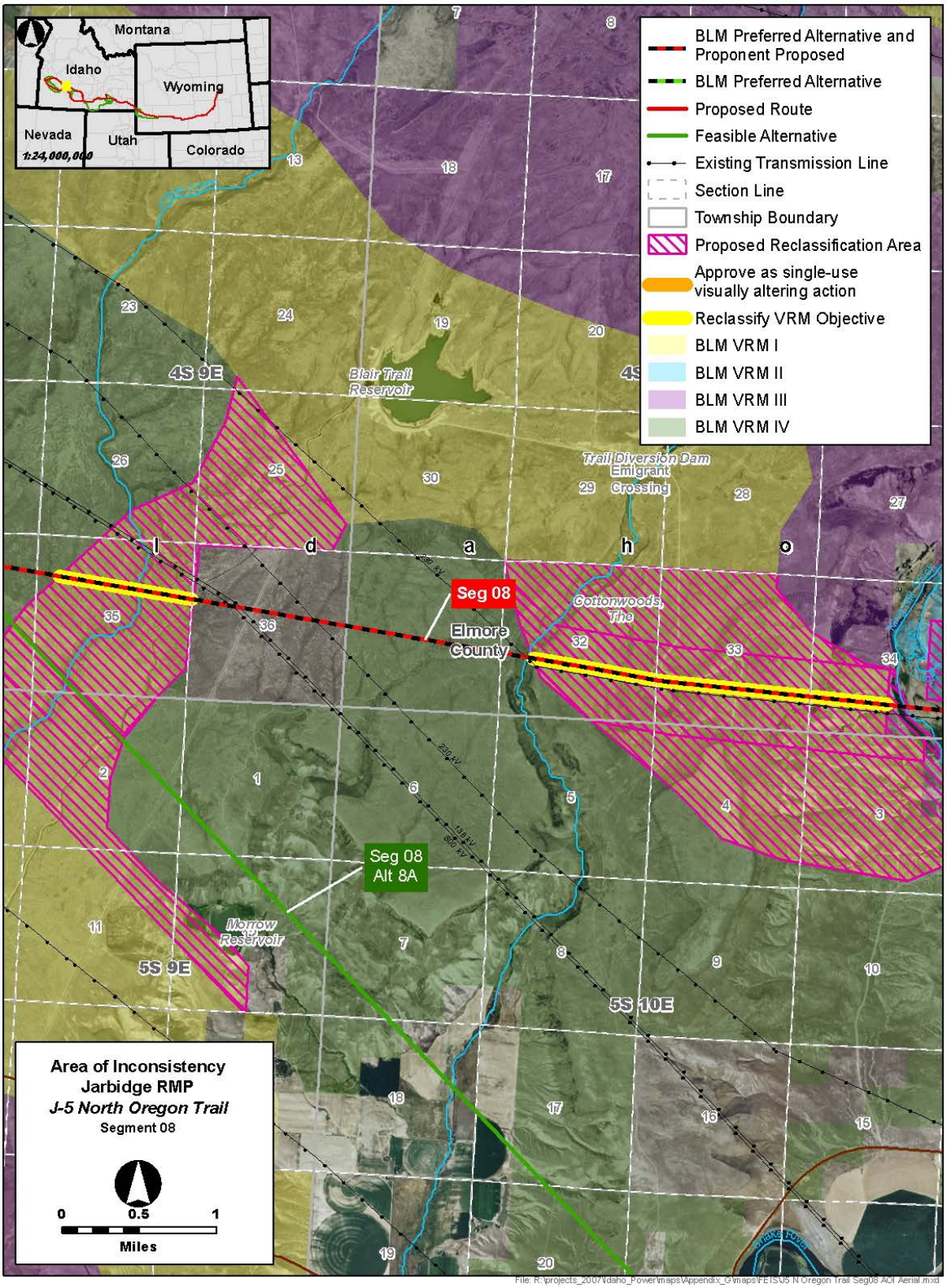


Figure 5.8-13. AOI J-5 North Oregon Trail AOI Detailed Map Showing the Proposed VRM Action for Amendment #12

5.9 SRBOP RMP

Preferred Route: There are no visual resource amendments for the Preferred Route.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: There are three additional AOIs on alternative routes for Segments 8 and 9. These AOIs would have associated amendments to change the VRM classification if they were selected.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The SRBOP RMP (BLM 2008b) provides guidance for the public lands and resources within the SRBOP that are managed as a part of the BLM Four Rivers FO. The SRBOP contains approximately 483,700 acres of Public Land extending 81 miles along the Snake River in the Idaho counties of Ada, Canyon, Elmore, and Owyhee (see Figure 5.9-1). The SRBOP includes the 138,000-acre Orchard Combat Training Center,[4] used by the Idaho Army National Guard for military training since 1953. The RMP provides for protection of the Oregon NHT as a VRM Class II management area. The RMP further provides direction to "manage the areas along the Oregon Trail and the Snake River Canyon as VRM Class II, the Army National Guard Orchard Training Area (OTA) as VRM Class IV, and remaining areas as Class III. This RMP will provide reasonable protection of the Oregon Trail and flexibility in managing the remainder of the NCA."

Portions of the proposed and alternative routes for Segments 8 and 9 would cross the SRBOP RMP management area. The Proposed Route for Segment 8 is 131.5 miles long and would connect the Midpoint Substation to the Hemingway Substation with a single-circuit 500-kV line. This route would follow the WWE corridor for 38.1 miles out of its total 131.5-mile length and follows existing transmission lines for almost its entire length. In addition to the Proposed Route, five Route Alternatives were considered with varying impacts on the SRBOP. Initially, routing in the northwestern portion of Segment 8 focused on avoiding the SRBOP and the Orchard Combat Training Center. Later siting studies identified opportunities to parallel the existing Summer Lake – Midpoint 500-kV transmission line through the SRBOP. An additional alternative was developed for Segment 8, in order to avoid the Halverson Bar Non-motorized Area in a National Register Historic District. Alternative 8E follows the Proposed Route until just east of the Snake River, where it follows and existing transmission line south to the 9D Sinker Butte crossing, sharing the same alignment as 9D from that point until it connect to Segment 8 of the Proposed Route, north of Alternative 9D. Other constraints considered in siting included commercial and residential development, both existing and planned, east, west, and north of the SRBOP in the cities of Kuna and Melba; pivot irrigation; historic trails; wetlands; steep slopes; and raptor nests.

The Proposed Route for Segment 9 is a 162.2-mile-long 500-kV single-circuit line that would connect the proposed Cedar Hill Substation with the Hemingway Substation. Primary siting considerations in the eastern portion of this segment were avoidance of irrigated farmland, dairy operations, and scattered residential development; avoidance of interference with the Jarbidge Military Operating Area; making use of the WWE

[4] Formerly named the Orchard Training Area.

corridor; and minimizing impacts to visual resources. In the western portion of Segment 9, the area closest to the SRBOP, following the WWE corridor was a primary objective. Other concerns included minimizing impact to Bruneau Dunes State Park and scenic qualities associated with the Bruneau River, avoiding conflicts with the Saylor Creek Air Force Range and Military Operating Area, and crossing the SRBOP. For the entire line segment, placement of the transmission line on public land versus private land was an important issue with local stakeholders. In addition to the Proposed Route, eight Route Alternatives were considered.

Alternative 9D is an alternative route identified by the Owyhee County Taskforce. Three additional alternatives were developed that incorporate much of the 9D alignment. Alternative 9F was developed to avoid the Cove Non-motorized Area south of C.J. Strike Reservoir. This alternative follows the Proposed Route until just west of the reservoir, at which point it crosses north and joins with the 9D alignment for the rest of its route. Alternative 9G follows the same alignment as 9D until approximately 4 miles south of the Snake River crossing at Sinker Butte. At this point, 9G crosses the Snake River and takes a more southern route through VRM Class II areas before joining with the Proposed Route at the same location as Alternative 9D. Alternative 9H has the same alignment as Alternative 9F until approximately 4 miles south of the Snake River crossing at Sinker Butte, at which point it then follows the same alignment as Alternative 9G. All four Alternatives would cross the SRBOP in areas that are not compatible with VRM Class II management objectives.

Three VRM Class II management areas are crossed by Segment 8 of the Proposed Route and Alternatives 8E, 9D, 9F, 9G, and 9H. The presence of a transmission line in these landscapes would not meet VRM Class II management objectives. To construct the proposed transmission line and/or the alternative route, BLM action would be necessary to either modify visual classifications or allow the Project without changing the VRM class in order for the Project to be in conformance with the RMP. However, allowing the Project in the SRBOP would not meet the intent of the enabling legislation of the SRBOP. The AOIs are described below in Sections 5.9.1 through 5.9.3.

5.9.1 AOI BOP-1/J-3 South Oregon Trail (Segment 9 – Alternative 9D/9G)

The South Oregon Trail AOI is located north and south of the Snake River, beginning at the C.J. Strike Reservoir dam. This AOI overlaps both the SRBOP and Jarbidge RMP boundaries. Alternative 9D leaves the Proposed Route near Bruneau, Idaho, heading northwest for about 6 miles before intercepting the C.J. Strike Reservoir, at the junction of the Bruneau River and the Snake River. Land surrounding the reservoir has been designated as VRM Class II due to its scenic qualities and close proximity to the Oregon NHT. Alternative 9D turns west, paralleling the Oregon NHT, and crossing the Narrows portion of the Bruneau Arm of C.J. Strike Reservoir. The route then continues west on the south side of the reservoir, crossing back to the north side of the Snake River approximately 0.5 mile downstream from the C.J. Strike Reservoir dam. Except for minor detours to avoid agricultural land, the route continues west from the dam then turns to the northwest, crossing the SRBOP before re-joining the Proposed Route east of Hemingway Substation. Although not located within a WWE corridor, Alternative 9D generally follows existing transmission lines.

The portion of the AOI within the SRBOP RMP crosses a 330-acre parcel for 1.2 miles and a 3,859-acre parcel for 4.8 miles of land managed for VRM Class II objectives. Figure 5.9-2 shows the viewshed of the South Oregon Trail AOI, Alternative 9D, and VRM management classifications. Figure 5.9-3 shows the AOI and amendment management recommendations.

5.9.1.1 Alternatives Considered

The Proposed Route and eight alternative routes in the western portion of Segment 9 are analyzed in the Final EIS as a means of connecting the Cedar Hill and Hemingway Substations. The Proposed Route is largely within the WWE corridor but crosses more private land than some alternatives. Alternative 9D was identified by the Owyhee County Task Force and recommended by Owyhee County as its preferred route to avoid private land and maximize the use of public land. The specific alignment has been developed through consultation between the County Task Force, BLM representatives, and the Proponents. This alternative substantially deviates from the designated WWE corridor and would cross 47.9 miles of the SRBOP. Alternatives 9F, 9G, and 9H are variations on Alternative 9D. Alternatives 9F and 9H would avoid the Cove Non-motorized Area south of C.J. Strike Reservoir by following the Proposed Route farther west and cutting north to join with the 9D alignment west of the reservoir. Alternatives 9G and 9H would cross the Snake River approximately 4 miles south of 9D/9F and cross through approximately 15 miles of the SRBOP in a more southerly route. This alignment crosses much more VRM Class II areas than the other alternatives; however, it was developed in order to provide an alternate route in Segment 9 in case Alternative 8E was selected. Alternative 9E was also identified by the taskforce and would be south of the SRBOP planning area for the majority of its alignment. This alternative has been adjusted from the initial alignment proposed in the Draft EIS in order to avoid sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat. No VRM Class I or Class II areas are crossed by this portion of the Proposed Route or Alternative 9E.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.9.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The Snake River is the major water feature in the 15-mile-radius area surrounding the South Oregon Trail AOI. The river crosses the middle of the area from west to east and leaves the study area in the vicinity of Indian Cove. C.J. Strike Reservoir is located at the northern end of the Bruneau Valley in the center of the area. The topography is generally flat to rolling with numerous drainages. Although much of the area is undeveloped, there are large areas of farms and farmland along the Snake River, south of Mountain Home, and the Bruneau Valley and Twentymile Flat. SR 78 is the major road and generally follows the Snake River east to west. SR 51 extends north to south though the area. Communities, such as Grandview and Bruneau, are located along local highways and the Snake River. Mountain Home Air Force Base is located in the northeast portion of the study area. Numerous transmission lines cross this area. Potential viewing areas include highways, communities, historic sites and trails, and recreation areas such as Bruneau Dunes State Park.

Attachment A, Figure BOP-1/J-3a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 1156. The area consists of rolling terrain that slopes toward the reservoir. An existing wood pole H-frame transmission line is evident in the view. More distant views toward the north are characterized by water and bluffs.

Attachment A, Figure BOP-1/J-3c shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP C117. This KOP is located on a segment of the Oregon NHT – South Alternate, where it consists of an undisturbed set of swales. A transmission line with wooden, H-frame support structures is visible approximately 100 feet west of the trail at this location, and an additional transmission line with wooden, single-pole supports is visible approximately 150 feet west of the trail. The landscape consists of flat land to rolling hills with grass and sagebrush dominating the vegetation.

5.9.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.9-2 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area. Attachment A, Figure BOP-1/J-3b simulates the landscape conditions showing for Alternative 9D as viewed from KOP 1156. Attachment A, Figure BOP-1/J-3d simulates the landscape conditions with Alternative 9D as viewed from KOP C117. Due to topography, only portions of Alternative 9D would be visible from this location. The Project is located to the south of this KOP, away from existing impacts to the cultural landscape. Due to the proximity of the KOP and the introduction of new elements in a new area of the resource's viewshed, the VCR for this KOP is assessed as moderate to strong. The proposed Project elements would dominate the setting to the south; therefore, there would be an adverse impact to the resource at this location.

Scenic views of the C.J. Strike Reservoir and the surrounding Snake River Plain are available to sensitive recreational viewers at nearby locations including KOPs 1154 and 1156 and visitors to the Oregon NHT (KOP 1155). The views of the undulating to rocky terrain from these viewpoints exhibit diversity in form, line, and texture. Developments, such as high-voltage transmission lines and a dam, are in view as well. From these KOPs, it is apparent that Alternative 9D would be visible in the foreground and middle ground, sometimes skylined and at other times backdropped. The Project would often be seen in conjunction with an existing wood pole H-frame line. Screening and other mitigation efforts would be only moderately successful at lowering impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The undulating and rugged terrain with mottled and diverse vegetation and the expansive waters of the reservoir would be moderately contrasted by an additional set of structures. These additions would draw the attention of the casual observer and represent a deviation from the natural form, line, color, and texture of the surrounding landscape; and therefore would not conform to VRM Class II objectives. It would appear that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area to protect the Oregon NHT corridor and adjacent landscapes.

5.9.1.4 Associated Plan Amendment

A 500-kV transmission line would not be compatible with VRM Class II objectives; therefore, the VRM Class II areas associated with the Oregon NHT and Snake River Canyon scenic areas that would be crossed by the transmission line, where the line

would not conform to VRM Class II objectives, would be reclassified to be managed with VRM Class III objectives (see Figure 5.9-3).

5.9.2 AOI BOP-2 Sinker Butte (Segment 9 and Segment 8 – Alternative 9D/9F and Alternative 8E; Segment 9 – Alternative 9G/9H)

The Sinker Butte AOI is located about 20 miles south of Kuna, Idaho, on the western portion of Alternatives 9D/9F/8E and Alternatives 9G/9H. Alternative 9D was identified by the Owyhee County Taskforce and recommended by Owyhee County for detailed analysis. Alternative 9F was developed to avoid the Cove Non-motorized Area, and 8E to avoid the Halverson Bar Non-motorized Area. Alternatives 9G and 9H are variations of 9D and 9F, developed as an alternative alignment to the 9D/9F/8E route. The primary County siting criteria were avoidance of private land and maximizing the use of public land. The majority of Alternative 9D (about 48 miles) is within the SRBOP. In the vicinity of Sinker Butte, Alternative 9D crosses Swan Falls Reservoir about 1 mile south of Swan Falls Dam. In this section of the Sinker Butte AOI, the route crosses one 16,759-acre parcel for a distance of approximately 1.1 miles of land managed for VRM Class II objectives to protect scenic views of the Snake River and the area around the Oregon NHT. Alternative 8E crosses the Snake River at this point and joins the 9D/9F alignment in this area. Also within this AOI is the southern portion of the VRM Class II area crossed by Alternatives 9G/9H. The RMP designates that both the Oregon NHT and the Snake River Canyon should be managed as VRM Class II. Figure 5.9-4 shows the location of the Sinker Butte AOI, the location of Alternatives 9D/9F/8E, and the associated VRM Class II lands. Figure 5.9-5 shows the location of the AOI area for Alternatives 9G/9H and the associated VRM Class II lands.

5.9.2.1 Alternatives Considered

Siting considerations for the part of the AOI crossed by 9D/9F/8E are the same as for the South Oregon Trail AOI described in Section 5.9.1 above. In addition, the BLM, Owyhee Task Force, and Proponents focused on the specific crossing of the Snake River north of the Swan Falls Dam and closer to an existing transmission line crossing. The selected alignment results in crossing land managed for VRM Class II objectives that could not be avoided. Alternatives 9G and 9H avoid this part of the AOI by crossing at a more southern location; however, this route crosses significantly more VRM II managed areas; the eastern half of which is included in AOI BOP-2. The Proposed Routes for Segment 8 and 9 and Alternatives 8B and 9E would avoid the VRM Class II lands surrounding Sinker Butte AOI.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.9.2.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The 15-mile-radius area surrounding the 9D/9F/8E crossing of Sinker Butte AOI is bisected from northwest to southeast by the Snake River and its many buttes (see Figure 5.9-4). North and east of the river, the topography is mostly flat, while to the south and west, it is more rolling and rises up to the Owyhee Mountains. Most of the area is undeveloped; however, there are large irrigated agricultural areas with many farms in the area where Ada, Canyon, and Owyhee Counties come together near

Murphy and at other scattered locations. SR 78 passes northwest to southeast on the west side of the Snake River. SR 45, located on the east side of the river, intersects SR 78 at Walters Ferry. There are a number of small communities such as Murphy and Melba and much of the area on both sides of the river is part of the SRBOP. Sensitive viewers include motorists, local residents, and visitors to the SRBOP, historic trails, and historic sites. Scenic views along the Snake River adjacent to Sinker Butte, such as those represented by KOPs 1115 and 1352, are important to sensitive residential viewers.

Figure 5.9-5 shows the 15-mile radius area for the part of the AOI that would be crossed by Alternatives 9G/9H. Due to proximity to Alternatives 9D/9F/8E, many of the study area features and landscape conditions are the same. The localized area crossed by this portion of the AOI differs, however, in that after crossing the Snake River, the route travels through the SRBOP where the landscape is flat to undulating, interrupted by buttes and rock features. The route would parallel the Oregon NHT for much of its length within the AOI.

Attachment A, Figure BOP-2a illustrates the landscape in the area as viewed from KOP 1352. As seen from this highway location in the foreground, the topography is flat with a mesa in the middleground and mountains in the background. Man-made modifications include agricultural operations and the highway.

Attachment B, Figure B-29 shows the existing conditions as viewed from KOP 1115.

5.9.2.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.9-4 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to establish the degree of consistency of the proposed transmission line with the existing VRM Class II land crossed for Alternatives 9D/9F/8E. Attachment A, Figure BOP-2b simulates landscape conditions showing for the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP 1352.

As viewed from KOPs 1115 and 1352, the landscape around AOI BOP-2 exhibits little diversity in form, line, color, and texture. Views of the Snake River are not apparent from this KOP. The proposed structures and access roads would result in low to moderate contrast with the undulating to flat terrain with blocky mesas and uniform vegetation and would not draw the attention of the casual observer from locations such as KOP 1352 over a mile away from the line. In this particular area, the distance of the Project from the viewer is an important factor impacting contrast levels but would still not meet VRM Class II objectives. If Alternative 9D/9F or Proposed Route 8E is selected, structures should be microsited to minimize the visibility from the VRM Class II area. A 500-kV powerline would not be compatible with VRM Class II objectives. If this route is selected, it is recommended that the VRM Class II areas associated with the Snake River Canyon and Sinker Butte scenic areas that would be crossed by the alternative be reclassified to be managed with VRM Class III objectives. Figure 5.9-5 shows the viewshed, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to establish the degree of consistency of the proposed transmission line with the existing VRM Class II land crossed for Alternatives 9G/9H. Proximity to Alternatives 9D/9F/8E results in similar features being present in the landscape; however, the viewshed shows differing areas of effect.

5.9.2.4 Associated Plan Amendment

Due to proximity of the Oregon NHT, there is a potential for a fairly high visual impact from this route and therefore it would not conform to the VRM Class II objectives. If this route is selected, it is recommended that an area 250 feet from the centerline of the transmission line be reclassified to VRM Class III, after taking into account the 0.5 mile buffer needed around the NHT. Micrositing should be used to lessen visual impacts.

5.9.3 AOI BOP-3 Guffey Butte (Segment 8 – Proposed Route, Segment 8 – Alternative 8E, Segment 9 – Alternative 9D/9F, and Segment 9 – Alternative 9G/9H)

The Guffey Butte AOI is located about 10 miles east of Hemingway Substation where several proposed and alternative routes for Segments 8 and 9 come together. The Proposed Route for Segment 8 and Alternative 9D cross the Guffey Butte AOI. This AOI crosses an 11,517-acre parcel of VRM Class II lands. As these routes come together in the vicinity of the Snake River, the Segment 8 Proposed Route would cross this VRM Class II parcel for approximately 4.2 miles while Alternative 8E would cross this area for 1.1 miles before joining up with the Proposed route (for a total of 3.9 miles crossed in this AOI). Alternatives 9D/9F would cross the same parcel for 3.7 miles, while Alternatives 9G/9H would cross this area for approximately 5.3 miles. Figures 5.9-7 through 5.9-10 show the viewsheds for Proposed Route Segment 8, Alternative 8E, Alternatives 9D/9F, and Alternative 9G/9H. Figure 5.9-11 shows the location of the Guffey Butte AOI, the Segment 8 Proposed Route, Alternative 8E, Alternatives 9D/9F, Alternatives 9G/9H, and the VRM Class II lands with amendment management recommendations.

5.9.3.1 Alternatives Considered

The alignments for both the Segment 8 Proposed Route and Alternatives 9D/9F were developed, in part, through collaboration of the Owyhee County Task Force, BLM, and the Proponents. The Segment 8 Proposed Route constraints included areas of increasing development north of the Snake River, Celebration Park, and visual impact closer to the Snake River. Alternative 8B would avoid crossing any lands managed for VRM objectives within the SRBOP. For Alternative 9D, the primary County siting criteria have been avoidance of private land and maximizing of the use of public land. Alternative 8E was proposed by BLM to avoid the Halverson Bar Non-motorized Area in a National Register Historic District, while Alternative 9F was developed by the BLM to avoid crossing the Cove Non-motorized Area south of C.J. Strike Reservoir. Alternatives 9G and 9H were developed to provide an alternate alignment for Segment 9 alternatives in case Alternative 8E is selected. Alternative 9G would follow the same alignment as 9D through the Cove Non-motorized Area, while Alternative 9H would follow the same alignment as 9F through that area. Alternatives 9G/9H would cross the most land managed for VRM Class II objectives. Crossing of land managed for VRM objectives would be avoided by selecting the Segment 9 Proposed Route or Alternative 9E.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.9.3.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The 15-mile-radius area surrounding the Guffey Butte AOI is bisected from northwest to southeast by the Snake River. North and east of the river, the topography is mostly flat and, while to the south and west, it is more rolling and rises up to the Owyhee Mountains. Most of the area is undeveloped; however, there are large irrigated agricultural areas with many farms in the area where Ada, Canyon, and Owyhee Counties come together near Murphy and at other scattered locations. SR 78 passes northwest-southeast through the area on the west side of the Snake River. SR 45, which is located in the northwestern part of the study area, intersects SR 78 at Walters Ferry. There are a number of small communities such as Murphy and Melba and much of the area on both sides of the river is part of the SRBOP.

The portion of the AOI crossed by Alternative 9G/9H is south of the Proposed Route and Alternative 9D/9F. This route would cross undulating terrain containing buttes and other rock features. The alignment would cross just north of the town of Murphy as well as land near Murphy Rim. Due to proximity, much of the study area is the same as for the 9D/9F alignment. KOP C90 (9D/9F) is looking north towards the alignments for Alternative 9D/9F. The foreground and middleground are flat with buttes and undulating landforms in the background. KOP C90 (9G/9H) is looking south towards the alignment for Alternative 9G/9H. The foreground and middleground are flat with buttes and undulating landforms in the background.

Attachment A, Figure BOP-3a illustrates the existing landscape as viewed from KOP 561 with flat to rolling terrain in the foreground and middleground and mountains in the background. Developments include a small community, distribution lines, and a dirt road.

Attachment A, Figure BOP-3d illustrates the existing landscape as viewed from KOP C90. This KOP is located on a segment of the Oregon NHT – South Alternate route within the SRBOP. The South Alternate forks approximately 0.5 mile to the southeast. The eastern branch follows Rabbit Creek to the northeast. KOP C90 is located on the west branch 1 mile north-northeast of the town of Murphy. Murphy Gulch is 0.5 mile to the east. This portion of the trail continues north following the route of State Highway 75. The KOP is approximately 2 miles south of the Proposed Route in Segment 8, 1 mile northwest of the Proposed Route in Segment 9, 0.5 mile south of Alternatives 9D and 9F, 2.3 miles northeast of the revised Alternative 9E (which is part of the Preferred Route), and 0.1 mile north of Alternatives 9G and 9H.

Attachment B, Figure B-30 shows an alternative view from KOP C90 emphasizing the Oregon Trail ruts.

5.9.3.3 Conformance Analysis

Figures 5.9-7 through 5.9-10 show the viewsheds, KOPs, and other features within the 15-mile-radius study area used to establish the degree of consistency of the proposed transmission line with the existing VRM Class II land crossed. Attachment A, Figures BOP-3b and BOP-3c are simulations showing the Segment 8 Proposed Route and Alternative 9D transmission lines, respectively, in the existing landscape as viewed from KOP 561. Attachment A, Figure BOP-3e simulates Alternatives 9D/9F in the existing landscape as viewed from KOP C90. Due to the Project's proximity to this KOP and the introduction of new elements to the resource's viewshed to the north, the VCR for this KOP is assessed as

strong for Alternative 9D. The proposed Project elements from Alternative 9D/9F may dominate the setting or may draw the attention of the casual observer; therefore, there would be an adverse impact to the resource from Alternative 9D at this location.

Scenic views in the Striker Basin of Guffey Butte and the surrounding mountainous terrain are important to sensitive viewers such as hikers at the BLM trailhead (KOP 561) and the adjacent residences. From this vantage point, Segment 8 of the Proposed Route would interrupt the pristine mountain views that exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture. The structures of Segment 8 of the Proposed Route would contrast with the pyramidal forms, jagged terrain with numerous silhouette lines, and mottled rugged vegetation and would draw the attention of the casual observer, thus not conforming to VRM Class II objectives.

Although Alternative 9D/9F would be farther from the viewers at KOP 561 and partially screened, it would still not conform to VRM Class II objectives due to some skylining structures that would be apparent in the middleground of the view. It would also contrast with the undulating silhouette lines and mottled vegetation. Alternative 9G/9H would cross north of the town of Murphy and could be visible along Murphy Rim. Additionally, the alignment would parallel NHTs and cross VRM Class II lands near historic sites. The structures for Alternatives 9G/9H would contrast with the pyramidal forms as well as the flat to rolling expanse of the existing landscape. Contrast with form and texture as well as proximity to historic sites would draw the attention of the casual observer, thus not conforming to VRM Class II objectives.

5.9.3.4 Associated Plan Amendments

If the Segment 8 Proposed Route, Alternative 8E, Alternatives 9D/9F, or Alternatives 9G/9H is selected, an amendment would be needed for the Project to comply with the SRBOP RMP. A 500-kV powerline would not be compatible with VRM Class II objectives, therefore, the VRM Class II areas associated with the Striker Basin scenic areas that would be crossed by the Alternative(s) would be reclassified to be managed with VRM Class III objectives.

If Alternative 9G or Alternative 9H is selected, an area within 250 feet of the route centerline, taking into account the need for NHT buffers, would be reclassified to VRM Class III. Micrositing may be needed to ensure a proper buffer distance from the NHTs. If any of these routes are selected, it is recommended that the Proponents be required to microsite structures to minimize the visibility.

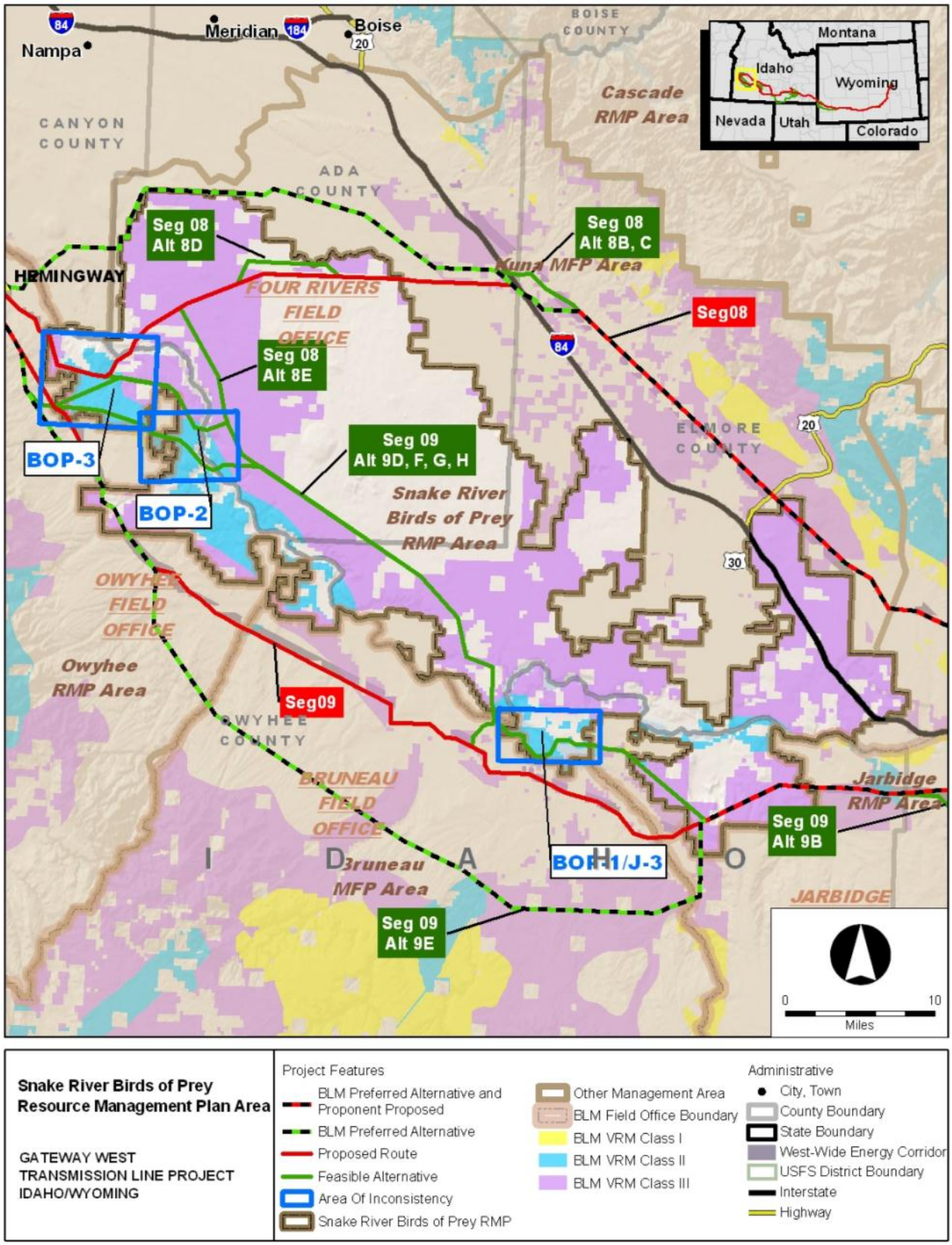


Figure 5.9-1. SRBOP RMP Boundary Map

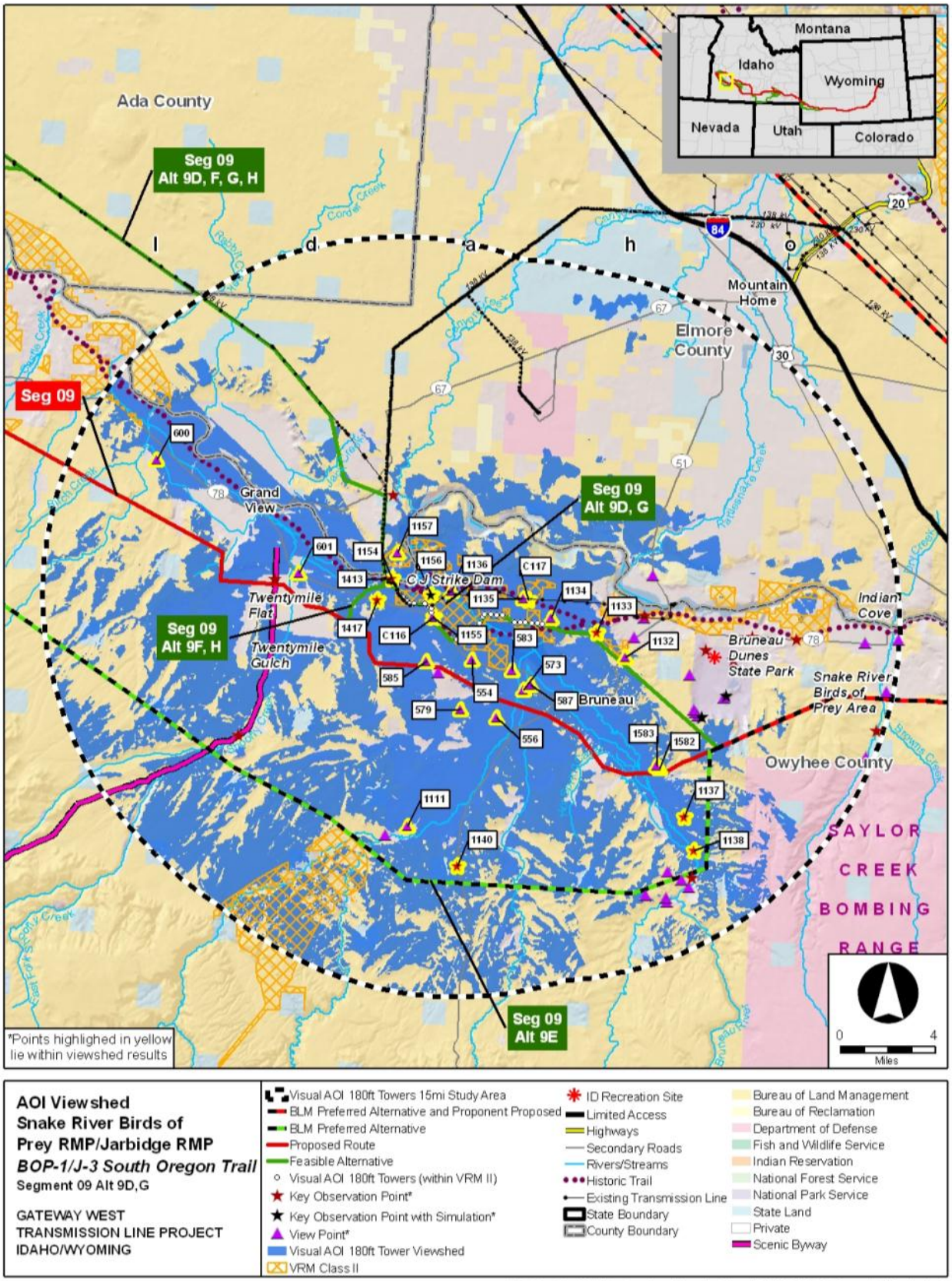


Figure 5.9-2. AOI BOP-1/J-3 South Oregon Trail AOI Visual Analysis

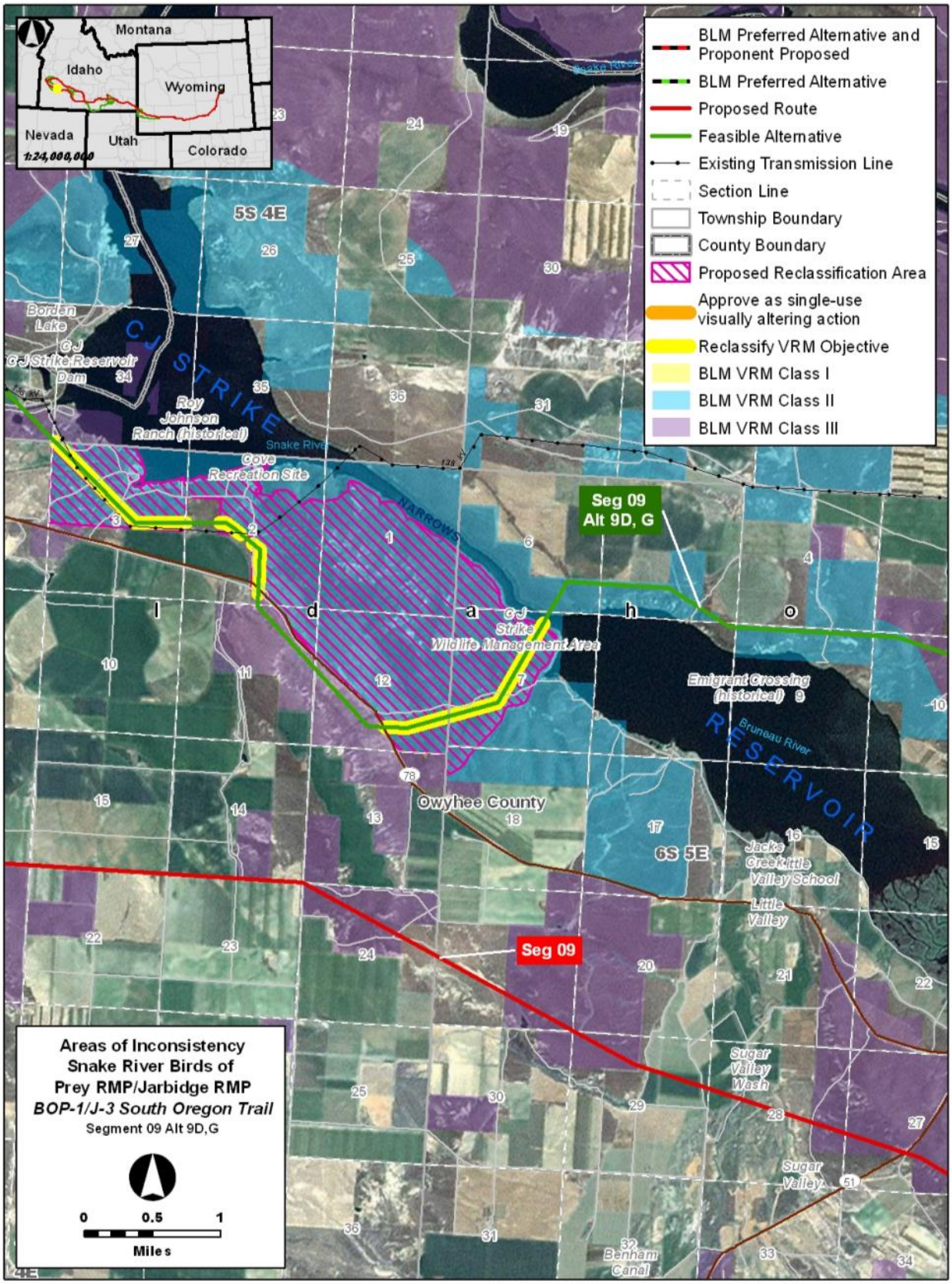


Figure 5.9-3. AOI BOP-1/J-3 South Oregon Trail AOI Detailed Map

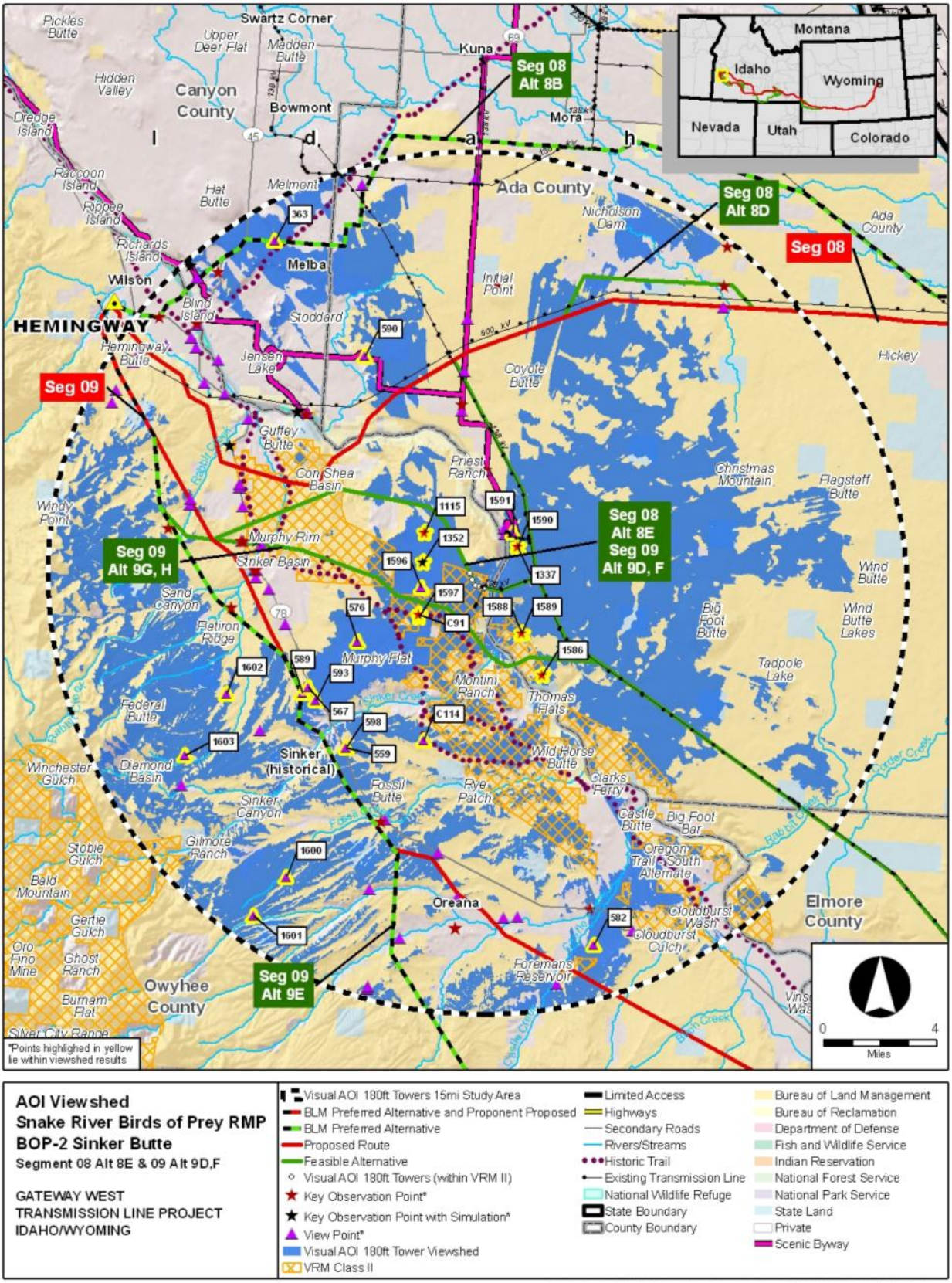


Figure 5.9-4. AOI BOP-2 Sinker Butte AOI Visual Analysis (Alternatives 9D/9F/8E)

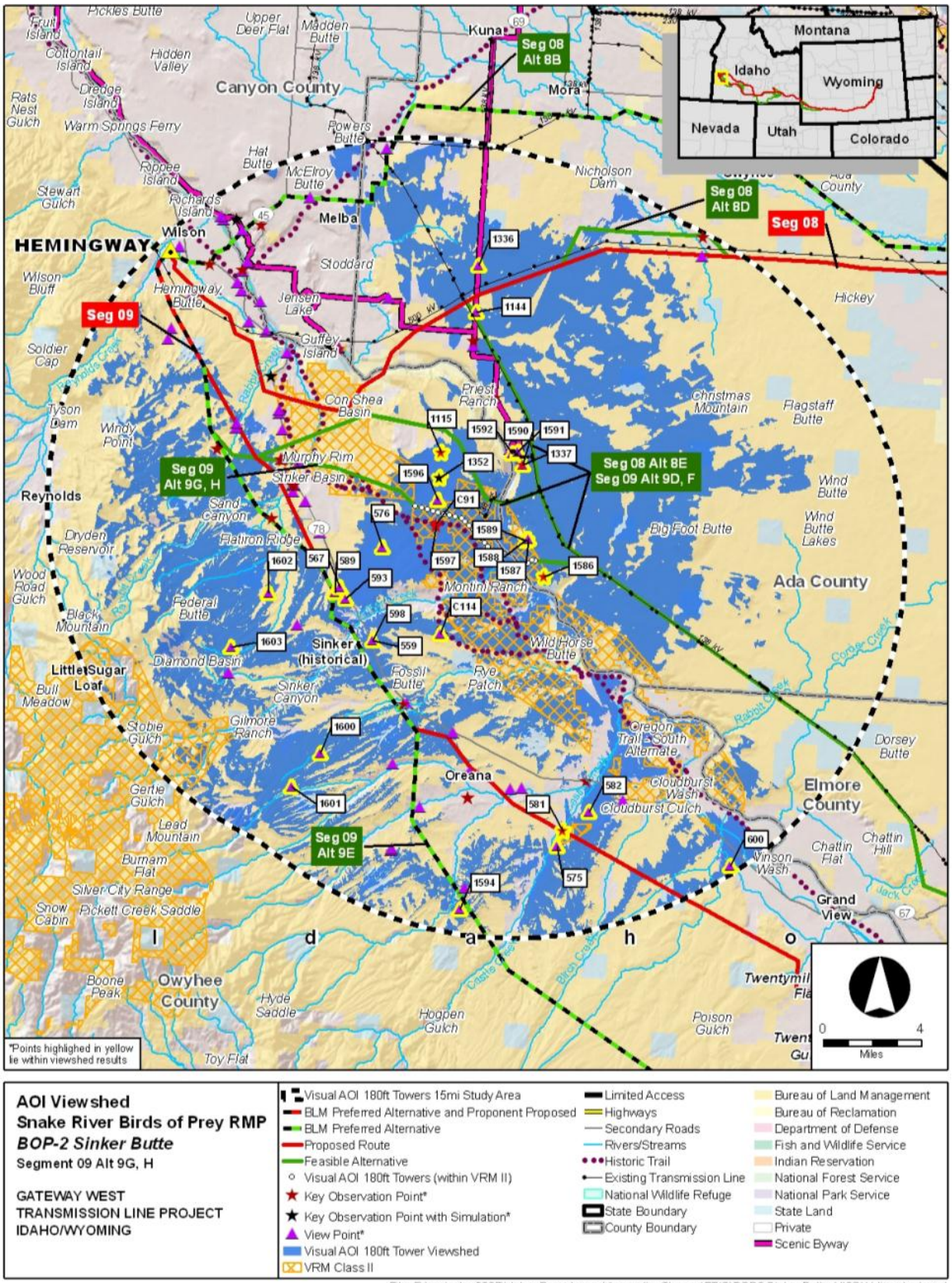


Figure 5.9-5. AOI BOP-2 Sinker Butte AOI Visual Analysis (Alternative 9G/9H)

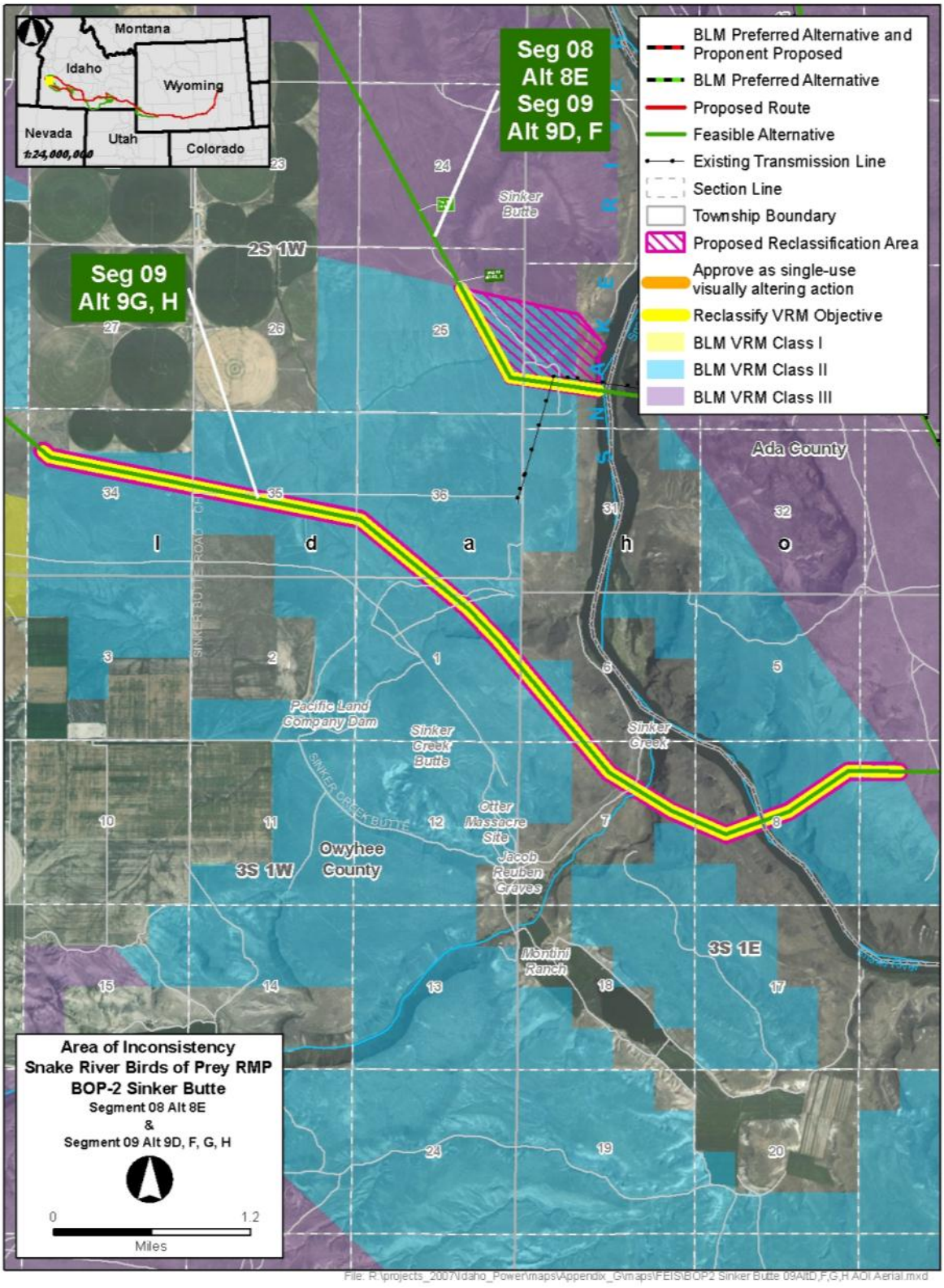


Figure 5.9-6. AOI BOP-2 Sinker Butte AOI Detailed Map

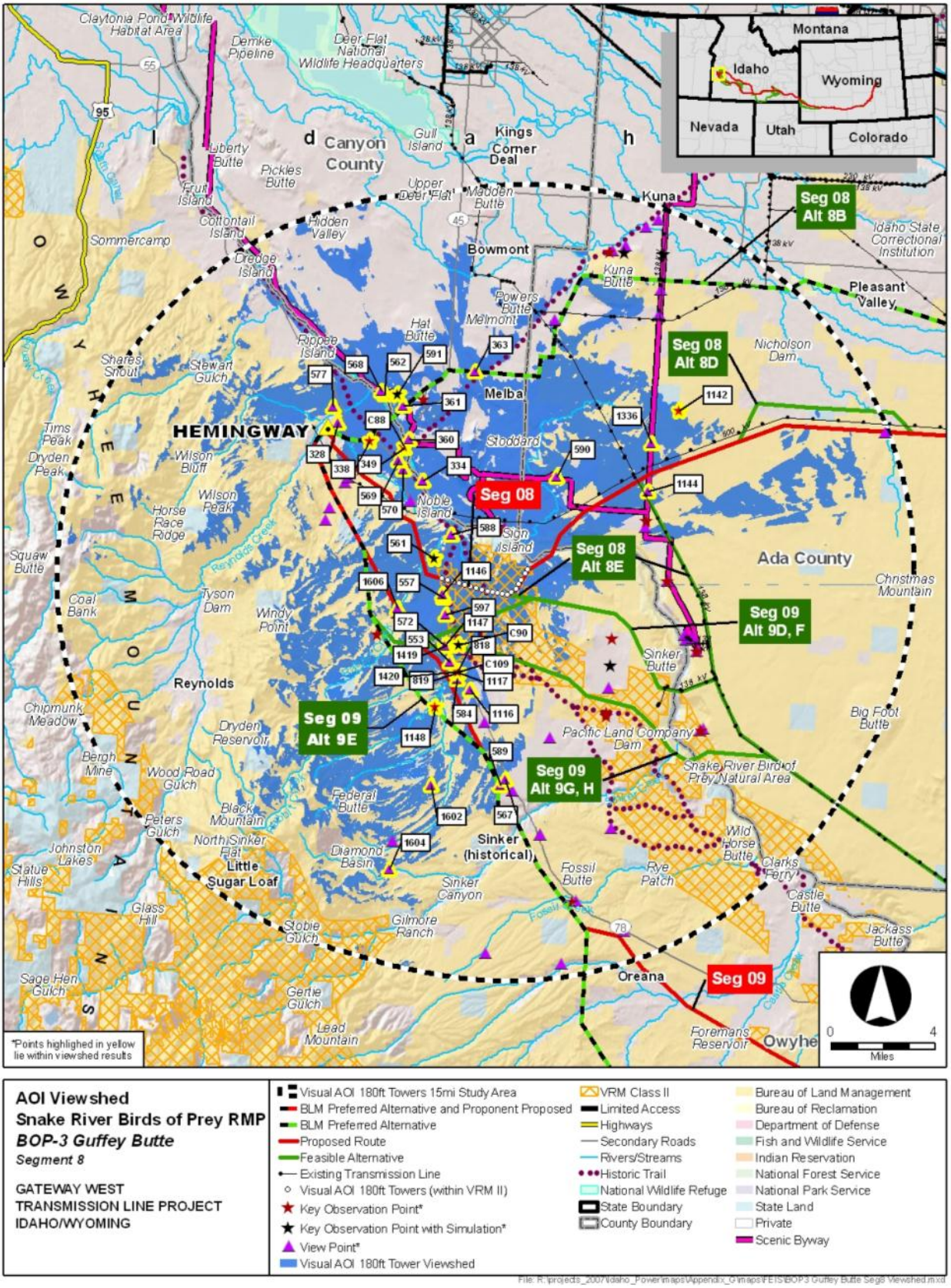


Figure 5.9-7. AOI BOP-3 Guffey Butte AOI Visual Analysis – Segment 8

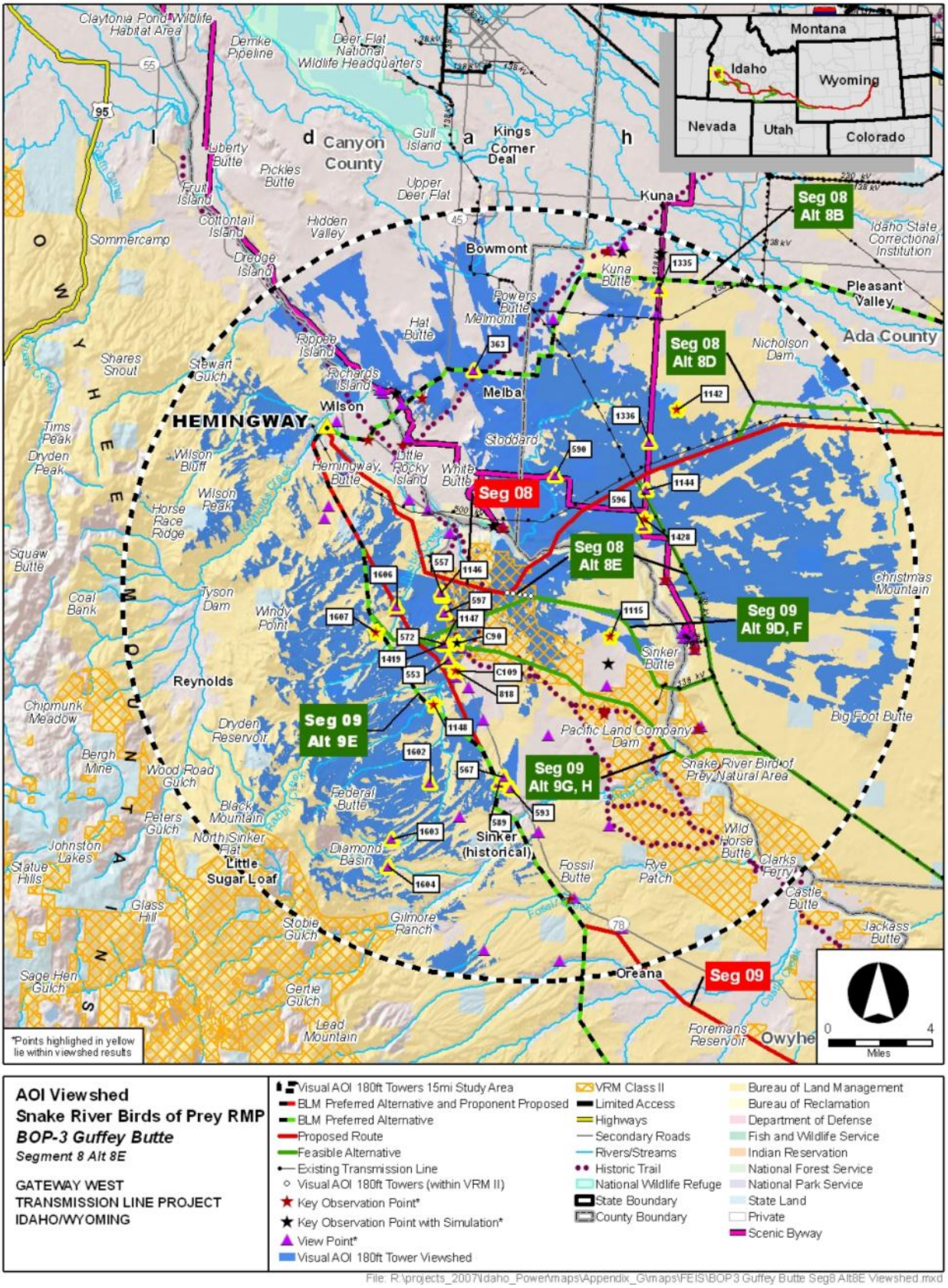


Figure 5.9-8. AOI BOP-3 Guffey Butte AOI Visual Analysis – Alternative 8E

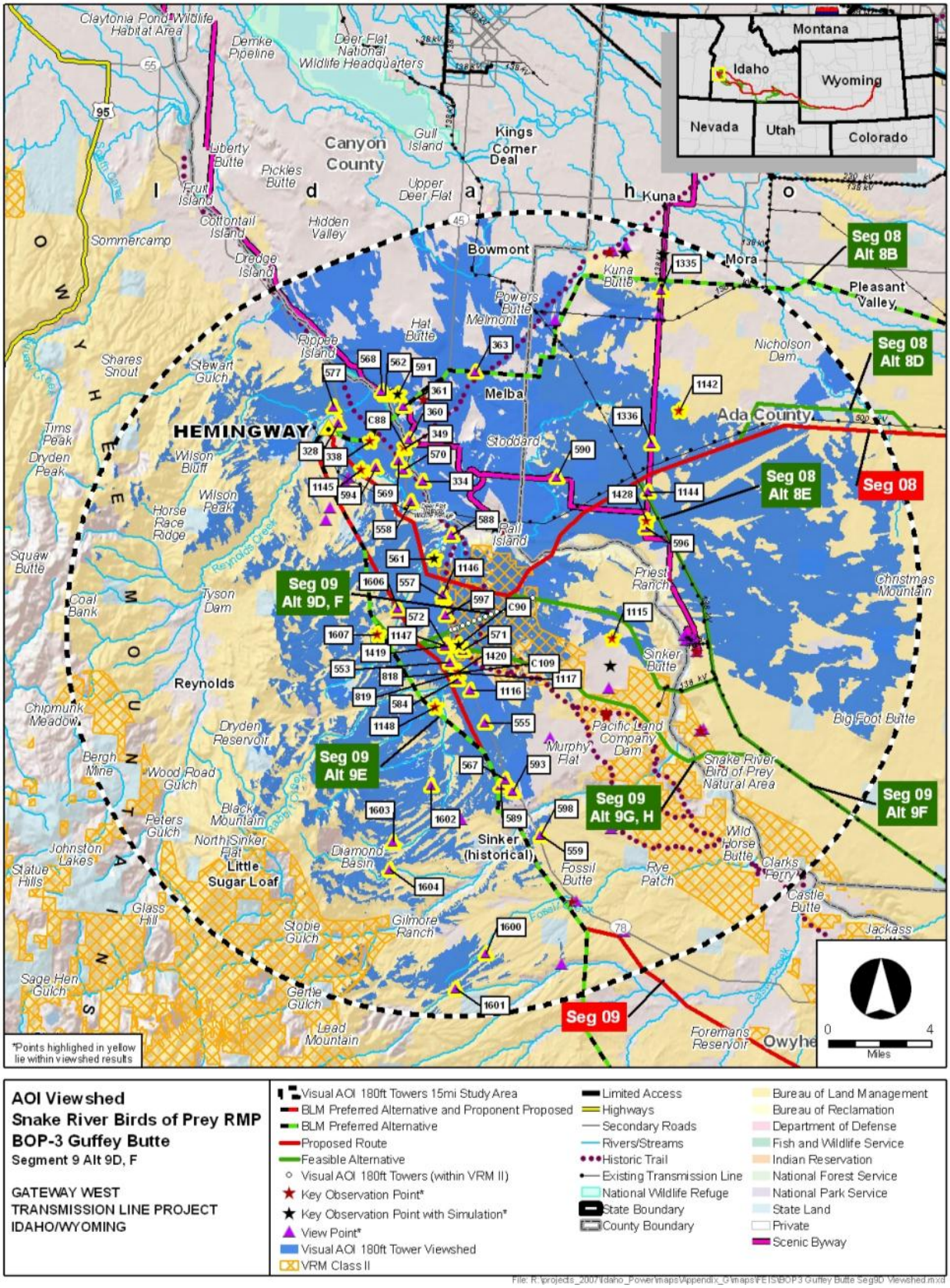


Figure 5.9-9. AOI BOP-3 Guffey Butte AOI Visual Analysis – Alternative 9D/9F

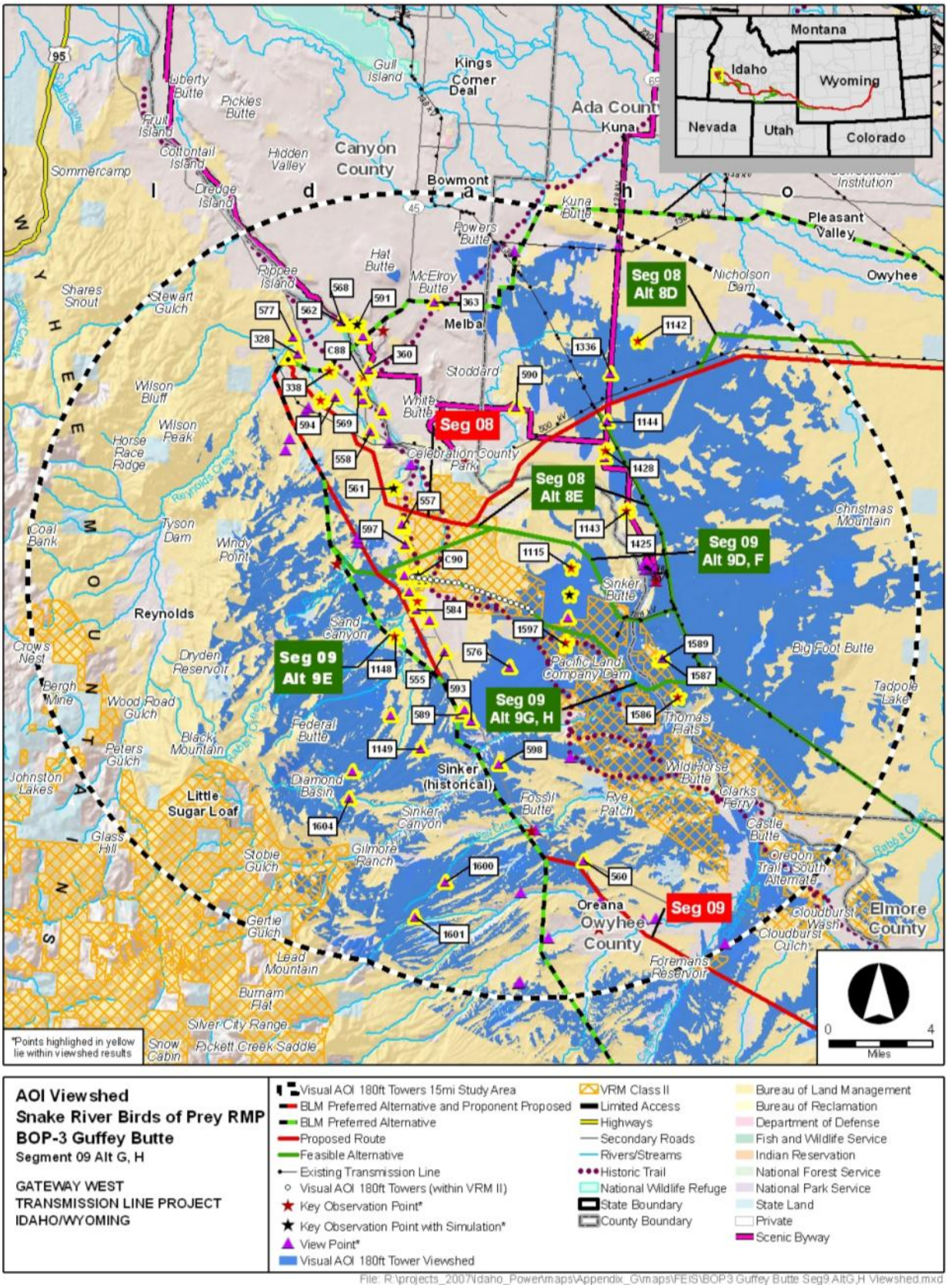


Figure 5.9-10. AOI BOP-3 Guffey Butte AOI Visual Analysis – Alternative 9G/9H

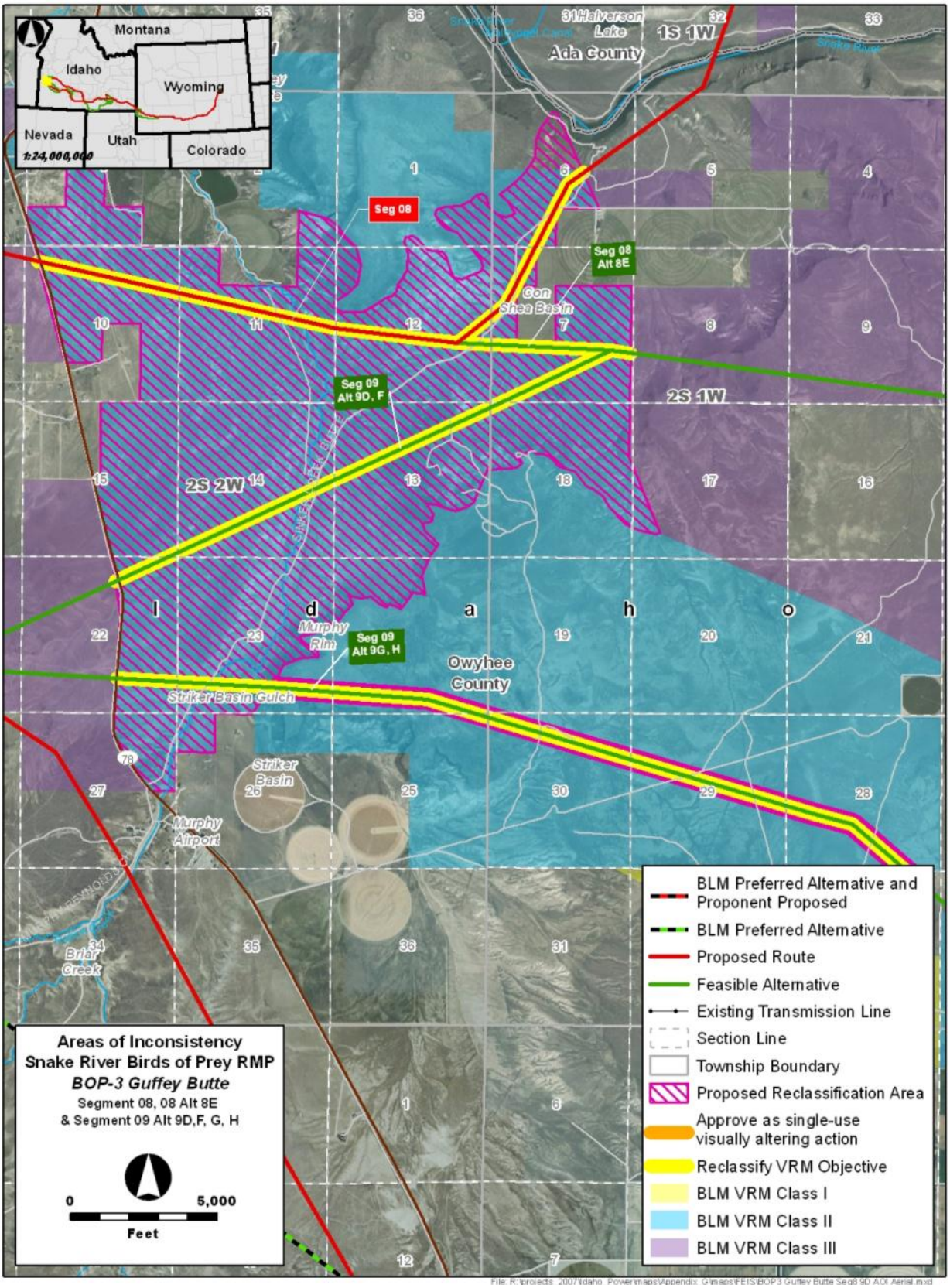


Figure 5.9-11. AOI BOP-3 Guffey Butte AOI Detailed Map

5.10 Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP

Preferred Route: An amendment is proposed for AOI BH-1 on Segment 8 to change the VRM classification from VRM Class II to Class III.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: There no amendments proposed for alternative routes in this FO.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

The Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (BLM 1980) provides direction for management of public land within its boundaries under the jurisdiction of the Shoshone FO in south-central Idaho. The Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP planning area consists of approximately 892,000 acres in Blaine, Camas, Elmore, Gooding, and Lincoln Counties (see Figure 5.10-1). The Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP includes objectives and recommendations for the following activities: lands, minerals, recreation, wildlife, range management, and watershed management.

The MFP includes Recreation Objective R-4, with a stated goal to "Manage the visual resources within the Planning Area in conformance with the guidance in BLM Manual 63l0.l8 B-E." BLM Manual 6310.18 states that the cited guidance is to be used as tentative minimum management objectives. If these objectives can be met, no further or more detailed objectives are considered necessary. The following Classifications appear in the MFP, which are equivalent to the BLM Visual Classes presented in Section 1.0 of this appendix.

> "R-4.1 VRM Class II As a guideline, no management activity should be allowed to cause any evident changes in the form, line, color, or texture that is characteristic of the landscape within Class II areas, utilizing concealment, repetition of elements, minimizing surface disturbance, etc. to meet the goal.
>
> R-4.2 VRM Class III As a goal, management activities may cause changes in the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) of the characteristic landscape, but the changes should remain subordinate to the existing visual character. Incorporate the methodology outlined in BLM Manual 6320 Visual Resource Contrast Rating.
>
> R-4.3 VRM Class IV Changes caused by management activities may subordinate the original character but should reflect what could be a natural occurrence within the characteristic landscape."

Proposed Segment 8 is a 131.5-mile route north of the Snake River that connects the Midpoint and Hemingway Substations. Segment 8 would be constructed as single circuit 500 kV line. A key issue in Segment 8 is balancing between disturbing private agricultural land and publicly managed land with more resource constraints. Constraints on publicly managed land include historic trails, wetlands, steep slopes, and raptor nests. An important siting factor was following existing transmission line corridors. Of the several existing east-west transmission lines the proposed route follows the existing transmission line with the least overall impact.

Approximately 15.7 miles of Proposed Route 8 would cross BLM-administered land managed under the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP, 6.5 miles of which cross VRM

Class II lands. VRM objectives within the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP would not be met by the Project in this area. AOI BH-1 Burnt Ridge was identified as an AOI because the Project would not conform to VRM Class II objectives for this area. Typically the level of change to the characteristic landscape in VRM Class II areas would not allow for the presence of a transmission line.

5.10.1 AOI BH-1 Burnt Ridge (Segment 8 – Preferred [Proposed Route])

The Burnt Ridge AOI is in the vicinity of King Hill, Idaho. It is located approximately 30 miles northwest of Midpoint Substation and approximately 3 miles north of I-84. Much of the Segment 8 Proposed Route in this area was located parallel to existing 230-kV transmission lines. This section of the route, however, also follows portions of the Oregon NHT. The Burnt Ridge AOI passes through four separate parcels of BLM-administered land managed for VRM Class II, ranging in size from 27 acres to 8,249 acres. The Project would cross a total of 6.5 miles of VRM Class II-managed land within the AOI. Figure 5.10-2 shows the location of the Burnt Creek AOI, the location of the Proposed Route, and the VRM management classification.

5.10.1.1 Alternatives Considered

Segment 8 consists of the Proposed Route, and five feasible alternatives. The BLM's Preferred Route in this area is the Proposed Route for Segment 8. Four additional alternatives were considered in detail, but were eliminated due to various constraints. The Proponents attempted to avoid residential and agricultural land and to follow the WWE corridor or existing transmission lines when determining the route for Segment 8. Alternative 8A follows a WWE corridor and would not cross the area managed under the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP. In making a balanced routing decision that led to the selection of the proposed and alternative routes, crossing VRM Class II areas was unavoidable without causing greater overall effects.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.10.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The Snake River is the major water feature in the 15-mile-radius area surrounding the Burnt River AOI. It crosses the southern half of the area from west to southeast, leaving the Study Area in the vicinity of the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area. The flat to rolling topography on both sides of the river is cut by numerous drainages, some with steep, canyon-like walls. The northern part of the area is occupied by the steep terrain of the Mount Bennett Hills. Much of the area in the north is undeveloped. There are large areas of farmland along the Snake River in the southeast as well as Deadman Flat, Black Mesa, and Pasadena Valley. Interstate 84, the major road in the area, passes east and then southeast through the Study Area. US 26 crosses the study area from east to west; and US 30 crosses north to south. Along these highways and the rivers there are a number of communities including Glenns Ferry, Bliss, and Hagerman. A number of historic trails cross the lower southwest half of the Analysis Area. A swale with shallow ruts is visible as part of the North Alternate Oregon Trail from KOP C85. Wooden H-frame towers are present within 0.25 mile south of KOP C85 and a single wood-pole transmission line is located 2.5 to 3 miles to the north. Numerous

transmission lines run southeast to northwest through this area. In addition to the highways and communities, potential viewing areas include recreation areas such as Three Island Crossing State Park.

Attachment A, Figure BH-1a shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP C84, which is located on a segment of the North Alternate Oregon Trail and is 0.8 mile southwest of the Preferred Route (Proposed Route) for Segment 8. In this area, the trail is a two-track road that has been deepened by modern use. The setting contains a wooden, H-frame transmission line and ranching structures within 0.5 mile from the KOP. The topography along the western portion of AOI BH-1 along Segment 8 ranges from essentially flat to severe and canyon-like along King Hill Creek.

Attachment A, Figure BH-1c shows the existing wood pole H-frame transmission line that would be paralleled, as viewed from KOP C85. This KOP is located along the North Alternate Oregon Trail and would be approximately 900 feet northeast of the Preferred Route of Segment 8. South of Segment 8 of the Proposed Route, and moving east, there is a substantial amount of irrigated agriculture and development while north of the segment there is more undeveloped land.

5.10.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.10-3 shows the viewshed, KOPs and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used to determine the degree of consistency with the existing VRM classification. KOPs C8 and C85 were selected because they are located on the Oregon NHT where VRM Class II objectives were assigned to protect from visual intrusion. Thus, conformance between the Project and visual management goals may be directly assessed.

Attachment A, Figure BH-1b simulates landscape conditions showing the Proposed Route as viewed from KOP C84. Topography in the area screens the view of Alternative 8A. The Project's design shares some similarities with existing structures in the area but would introduce new elements that are of different form, material, and texture. Due to these factors, the KOP's proximity to the route, and the potential for the elements to blend into the backdrop, the VCR for this KOP is assessed as weak to moderate. The proposed Project elements may draw the attention of the casual observer; therefore, there would be an adverse impact to the resource at this location.

Attachment A, Figure BH-1d shows the Preferred Route in relation to an existing H-frame transmission line from KOP C85. The Preferred Route in Segment 8 would be located just to the north and parallel to the existing wooden, H-frame transmission line. The Project's design shares some similarities with existing structures in the area, but would introduce new elements that are of different form, material, and texture. Due to these factors and the KOP's proximity to the route, the VCR for this KOP is assessed as moderate. The proposed Project elements would draw the attention of the casual observer; therefore, there would be an adverse impact to the resource at this location.

Scenic views of Kings Crown and the surrounding area north of King Hill are important to the surrounding sensitive viewers such as sensitive viewers along the Oregon NHT at KOPs C84 and C85. Many of the views in this area, including these particular KOPs, are interrupted by development and human-made features such as high voltage

transmission lines and wind towers. Human development has changed the surrounding form, line, and texture of the adjacent views, representing a deviation from the natural setting. From these KOPs it is apparent that there will be some skylining and that screening and other mitigation efforts would not substantially lower the impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. The sweeping terrain, undulating forms, strong horizon line, and mottled vegetation are interrupted by existing human development. Impacts to cultural views are considered to be moderate. However, from views in the foreground and middleground, the Proposed Project structures and access roads would draw the attention of the casual observer, and thus not conform to VRM Class II objectives.

5.10.1.4 Proposed Plan Amendment

Due to the number of transmission lines and other development in the vicinity, an amendment is proposed to reclassify the area within 3,000 feet north of the existing transmission line ROW from VRM Class II to VRM Class III (including the existing ROW). This VRM designation will better reflect the visual resource conditions of the area and allow the Project to conform to the MFP visual objectives.

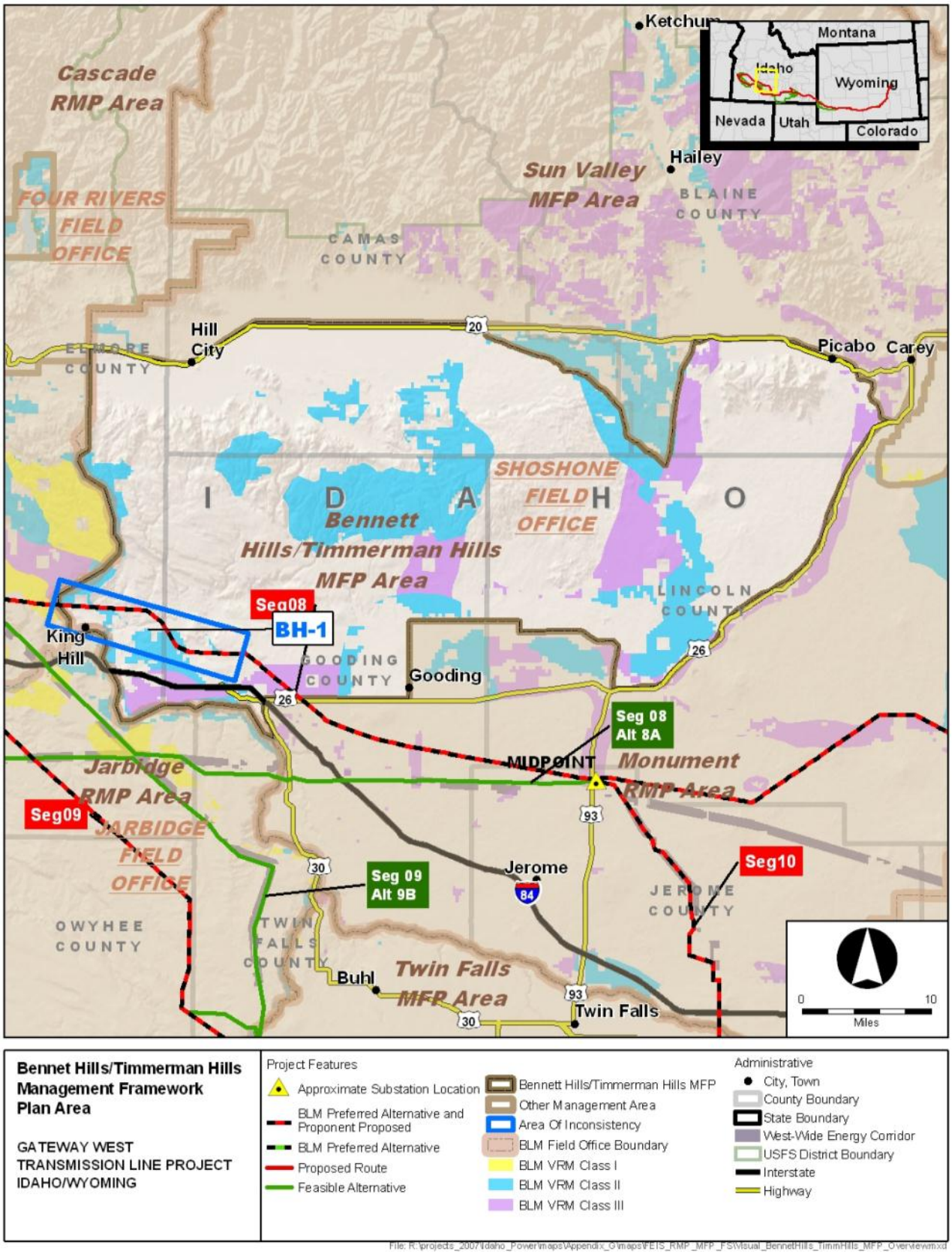


Figure 5.10-1. Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills RMP Boundary Map

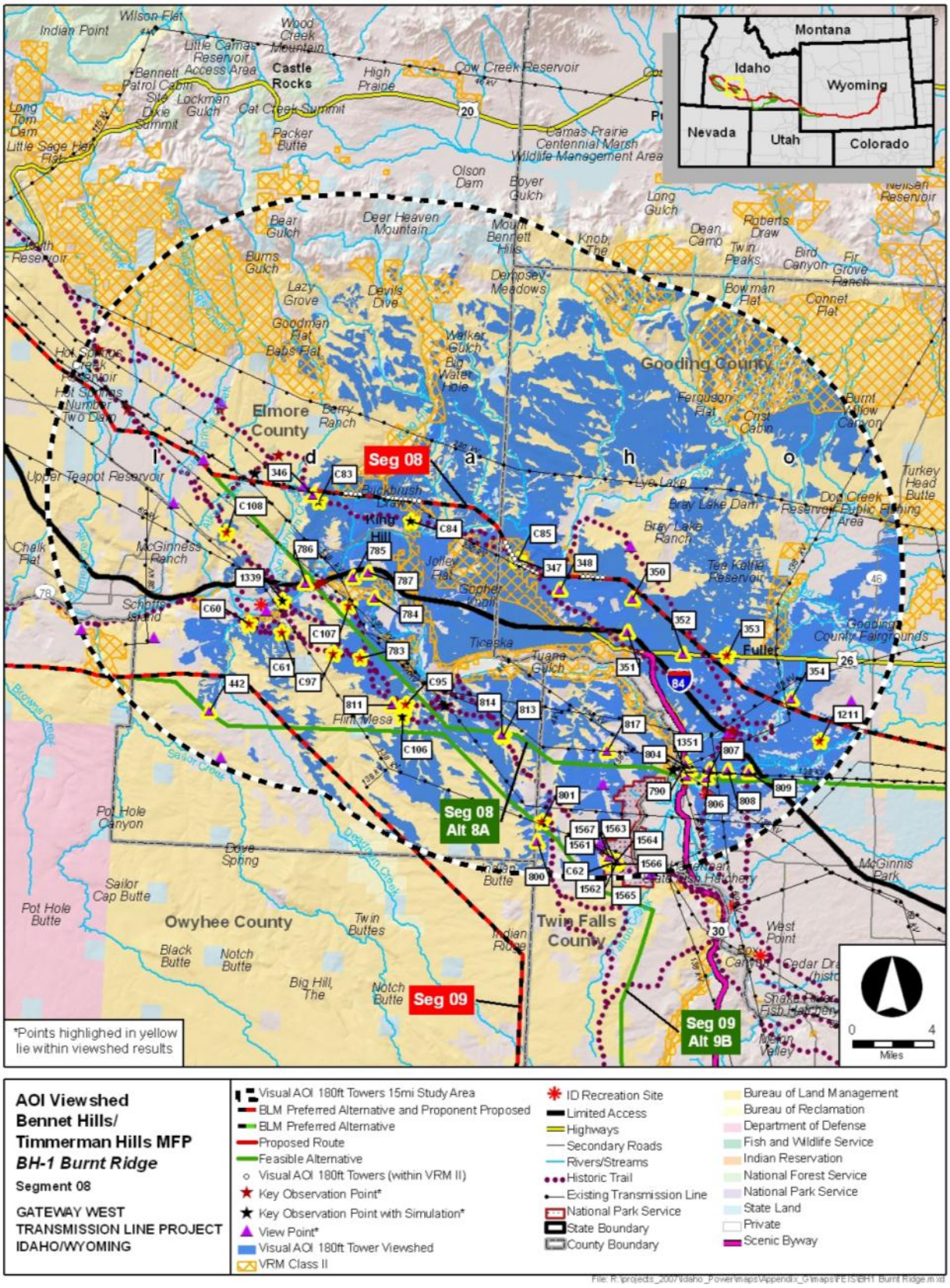


Figure 5.10-2. AOI BH-1 Burnt Ridge Visual Analysis

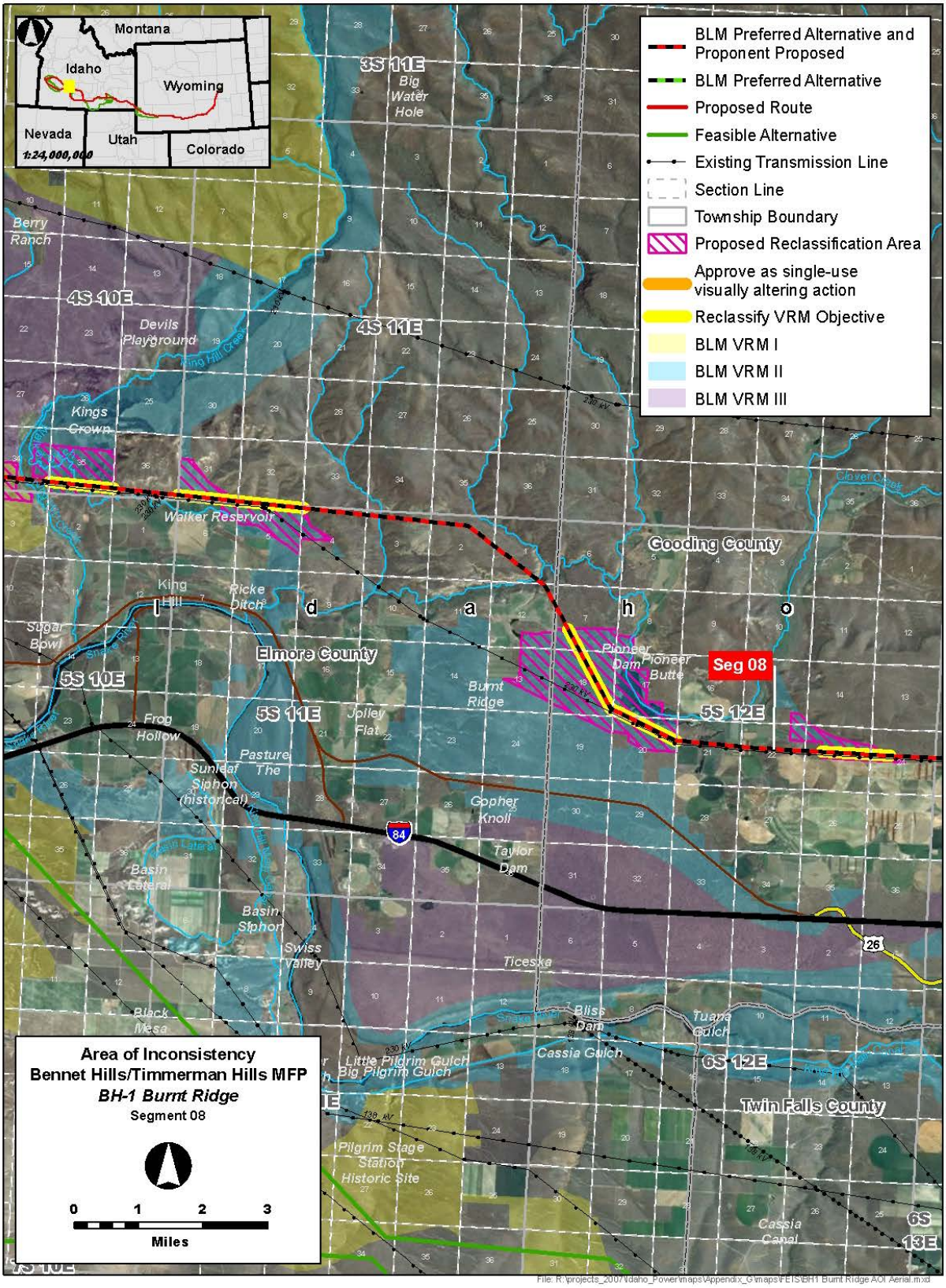


Figure 5.10-3. AOI BH-1 Burnt Ridge Detailed Map Showing the Proposed VRM Action for Amendment #15

5.11 Wells RMP

Preferred Route: The Project no longer crosses this FO and no amendments are proposed.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: The Project no longer crosses this FO and no amendments are proposed.

The Wells RMP (BLM 1985b) provides direction for management of public lands in a planning area of approximately 5.7 million acres in northeast Nevada. The area is managed by the Wells FO of the Elko District. Public Land occupies approximately 83 percent of the planning area, with the remainder consisting of private parcels, including checkerboard lands (alternating public/private sections). A management objective in the RMP is to determine designated utility corridors in coordination with other multiple uses, including scenic resources. One management action is to locate utility corridors on existing rights-of-way wherever possible. Other planning criteria include following existing roads or highways, including Interstate highways. Scenic views of the north-south trending mountains were viewed as high quality visual resources, while valley areas were considered lower quality scenic resources. Two route alternatives, 7I and 7J, that would cross into the Wells FO were presented in the Draft EIS. These alternatives are no longer being considered and no route alternatives would cross this management area. Amendments permitting construction of a transmission line or one-time allowances for crossing VRM Class II areas are no longer needed because the Project would no longer cross this area.

5.12 Bruneau MFP

Preferred Route: No amendment is proposed for the Preferred Route.

Alternatives other than the Preferred Route: An amendment would be associated with AOI B-1 to reclassify the VRM designation if Alternative 9E is selected.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be constructed. Therefore, Project objectives would not be met, but no Project-related plan amendments would be required.

Actions that occur on lands managed by the Bruneau FO, including the granting of ROW under Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, are guided by decisions recorded in the Bruneau MFP (BLM 1983b). The Bruneau MFP currently restricts impacts to visual resources. Thus, the proposed Project does not conform with the Bruneau MFP as currently written:

> "Manage all public lands in a manner which will protect and maintain the existing visual qualities, provide for enhancement where consistent with management policies, and provide for rehabilitation of land which presently do not meet the visual quality standards of surrounding lands. Use VRM contrast rating and project application design process for all management activities without unduly reducing commodity production or limiting program effectiveness."

Segment 9 of the Proposed Route consists of 162.2 miles of single-circuit 500-kV transmission line between the proposed Cedar Hill and planned Hemingway Substations. The route proceeds generally west through private and public land through the Twin Falls MFP planning area and the northwest through Jarbidge RMP,

SRBOP RMP, Bruneau MFP, and Owyhee MFP planning areas. The route crosses the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC, WSR-eligible sections of Salmon Falls Creek, as well as multiple SRMAs throughout its length.

Approximately 33 miles of Segment 9 of the Proposed Route would cross the area within the Bruneau FO boundaries, 17.6 miles of which are on BLM-managed land. One Route Alternative for Segment 9, 9E, is present within the Bruneau MFP planning area, and would avoid the VRM Class II areas. Alternatives 9D, 9F, 9G, and 9H would also avoid this area, traveling through the SRBOP to the north instead. These routes would not follow an existing utility corridor.

5.12.1 AOI B-1 Castle Creek (Segment 9 – Proposed Route)

The Bruneau AOI is located on Segment 9 of the Proposed Route to the east of Castle Creek, approximately 2 miles south of the SRBOP management boundary. The route would cross a 282-acre VRM Class II parcel for approximately 0.25 mile. This AOI is a relatively isolated parcel of VRM Class II management within a larger landscape of extensive agriculture, including pivot-irrigation. Figure 5.12-1 shows the viewshed for the Castle Creek AOI, Segment 9 of the Proposed Route, and the VRM classifications lands.

5.12.1.1 Alternatives Considered

Segment 9 follows the WWE corridor on BLM-managed lands but frequently changes direction on private segments to avoid rural residences, the small communities of Murphy and Oreana and, as much as possible, cultivated lands. Alternatives 9D through 9H would avoid this AOI. Alternatives 9D and 9F–9H would cross VRM Class I and II lands within the SRBOP management area. The BLM Preferred Route (incorporating Alternative 9E) is south of the Proposed Route and would not cross VRM Class I or II designated lands, but would be within the WWE corridor only for those portions that follow the same alignment as the Proposed Route.

The VRI lists the area crossed by the route in this AOI as Scenic Quality Unit #4, Birch Creek Wash, which has an SQR of C with low viewer sensitivity. Approximately 9.2 miles of the route would cross this unit, 0.2 mile of which would be in the AOI of VRM Class II. The unit is approximately 125 square miles, 34 square miles of which would be within 5 miles of the route crossing of the AOI. The majority of the land that is within the VRI unit, managed under the Bruneau MFP, and within 5 miles of the AOI is VRM Class IV with some Class III and the Class II of the AOI.

While no amendments would be needed for the No Action Alternative, not constructing the route would not meet the Project objectives.

5.12.1.2 Existing Conditions

The topography in the 15-mile-radius analysis area for AOI B-1 is defined by undulating to dominant ridges and buttes such as Sinker Creek Butte dissected by broad, open valleys and meandering water bodies such as Castle Creek and the Snake River. The central and northern portions of the area have a series of drainages and ridges running north and south into the Snake River. The areas to the southwest of the Snake River Valley are more rugged with severe slopes such as near Red Mountain and Hayden Peak. The majority of the area is extensively farmed with pivot irrigation. Murphy, the

most significant community in the area, is located in the north quadrant on the west side of the Snake River. Highway 45, which generally parallels the Snake River, crosses the area from northwest to southeast. An existing transmission lines crosses north to south through the area. Sensitive viewing areas include the Oregon NHT, the Snake River, Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway, Western Heritage Historic Byway, Owyhee Uplands Back Country Byway, Celebration Park, Swan Falls, and residences in Murphy and in the adjacent agricultural areas along the Snake River Plain.

Attachment B, Figure B-31 shows existing landscape conditions as viewed from KOP 581. The landscape in the foreground is flat to gently sloping and covered with grasses and riparian vegetation adjacent to Castle Creek. Rolling to rugged hills, such as Red Mountain, are seen in the background. There are visible water elements and a few human-made modifications in view, including Castle Creek Road and farm outbuildings immediately adjacent to the viewer. Attachment B, Figure B-32 shows existing landscape conditions looking towards the route from KOP 582, approximately 1.2 miles northeast of Segment 9 of the Proposed Route through the AOI. The view shows the flat topography in the foreground and middleground with mountains and buttes in the distance.

This AOI is located in the SQR Unit 004 – Birch Creek Wash of the Bruneau FO VRI. The area has a long history of motorcycle racing and past use by the military as a missile base. Sand washes drain to the northeast from higher elevation ranges towards the Snake River throughout. The area has some erosive land features created by sand wash erosion of the sediments left from ancient Lake Idaho deposition. Because of these sediments and soils, rare plants and habitat are common throughout the rating unit although they would not be apparent to the average visitor traveling through the unit. As viewed from the KOPs, the visual resources are generally of a stark and sparsely vegetated landscape. While there are unique, albeit subtle, biologic resources and landforms in this area, the abundance of past disturbances including abandoned military installations and livestock management structures (trough/pipelines and fencing) detract from the visual resources of this unit. In addition, the lack of precipitation (5 to 7 inches in this zone) to provide for a more lush appearing vegetation community and lack of rugged topographic features, in combination with the abundance of non-native plants or weeds, as viewed by the average visitor to the area, result in a Class C rating.

5.12.1.3 Conformance Analysis

Figure 5.12-2 shows the viewshed from AOI B-1, VRM II managed lands, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used to assess the whether the proposed project conforms the existing VRM class. Scenic views of the various buttes throughout the Snake River Plain as well as distant mountain ranges are important to sensitive residential viewers or recreational users visiting portions of the Oregon NHT adjacent to KOP 581. KOP 581 is located on a segment of the Oregon NHT approximately 280 feet north of Segment 9 of the Proposed Route as it follows the Snake River in a southeast to northwest direction. The view from KOP 581 provided in Figure 5.12-4 is not facing the AOI, but is viewing adjacent lands. The views of the flat to undulating terrain, background mountain silhouettes with mottled to clumped vegetation, and meandering waterbody exhibits diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few human-made features. The setting at this KOP is relatively undisturbed in all directions, except for

roadway and a few adjacent wooden structures. From this KOP, the proposed Project would be partially screened by the ridge but would still skyline the mountainous views. The close distance of the Project from KOP 581 results in the features dominating the landscape with such prominence that the visual contrast would be strong. The view from KOP 582 represents views from residences and Castle Creek/Oreana Loop Road, approximately 1.5 miles north of the alignment, where drivers and residences would have a partially obstructed view of the Project.

The Proposed Route would introduce new dominant structural elements into this view to the north which would draw the attention of the casual observer, and would deviate from the natural form, line, color, and texture; therefore, it would not conform to VRM Class II objectives. It is assumed that VRM Class II objectives have been assigned to this particular area in order to protect the Oregon NHT corridor as well as adjacent scenic resources.

5.12.1.4 Associated Plan Amendment

If this route is selected, an amendment to reclassify the entire 282-acre parcel from VRM Class II to Class III (Figure 5.12-3) would be associated with the route. This would prevent the creation of two relatively small and isolated VRM Class II parcels that would occur if just the 177 acres within the WWE corridor were reclassified. This amendment would be consistent with the use of the land for a high-voltage transmission line ROW.

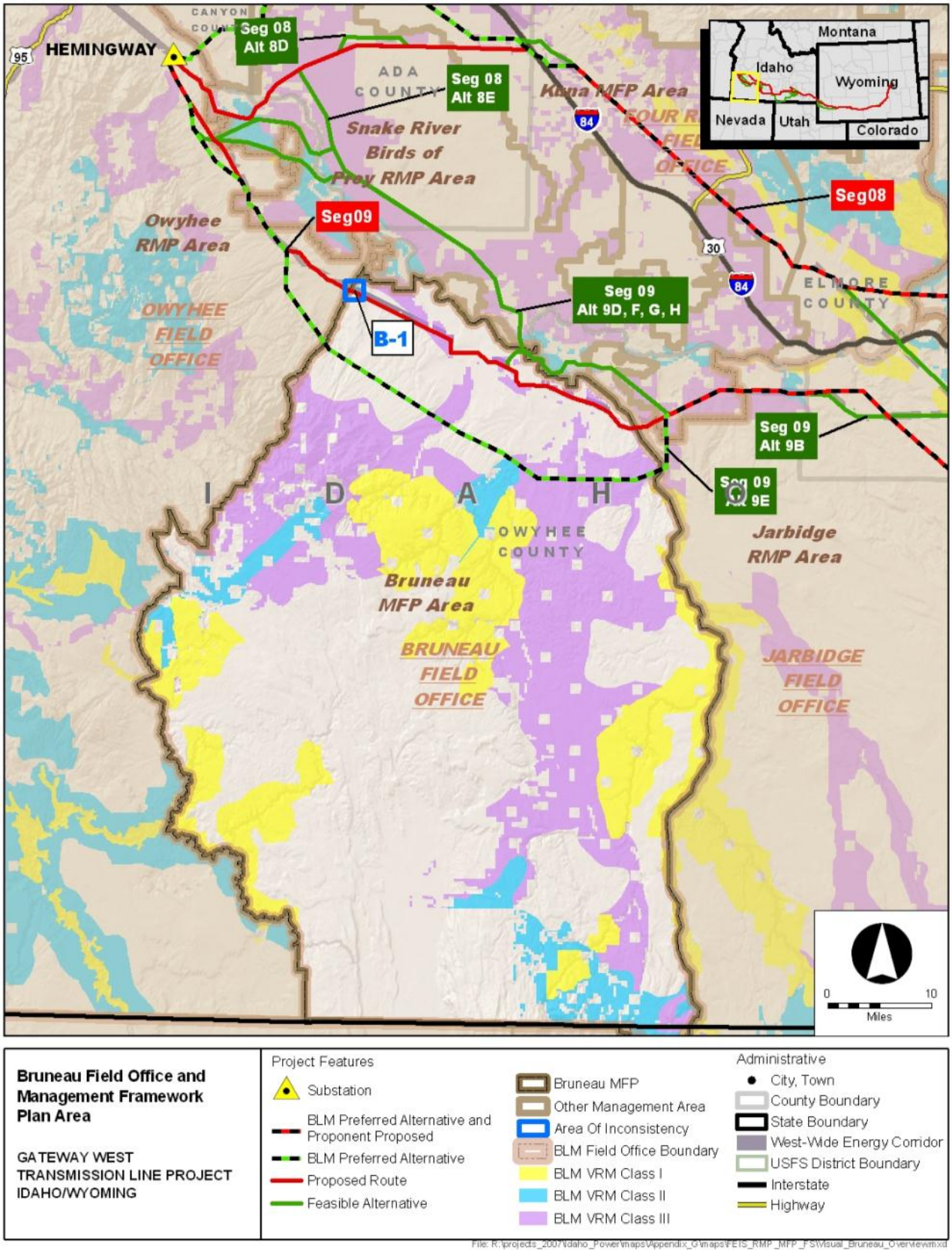


Figure 5.12-1. Bruneau Field Office and Resource Management Plan Area

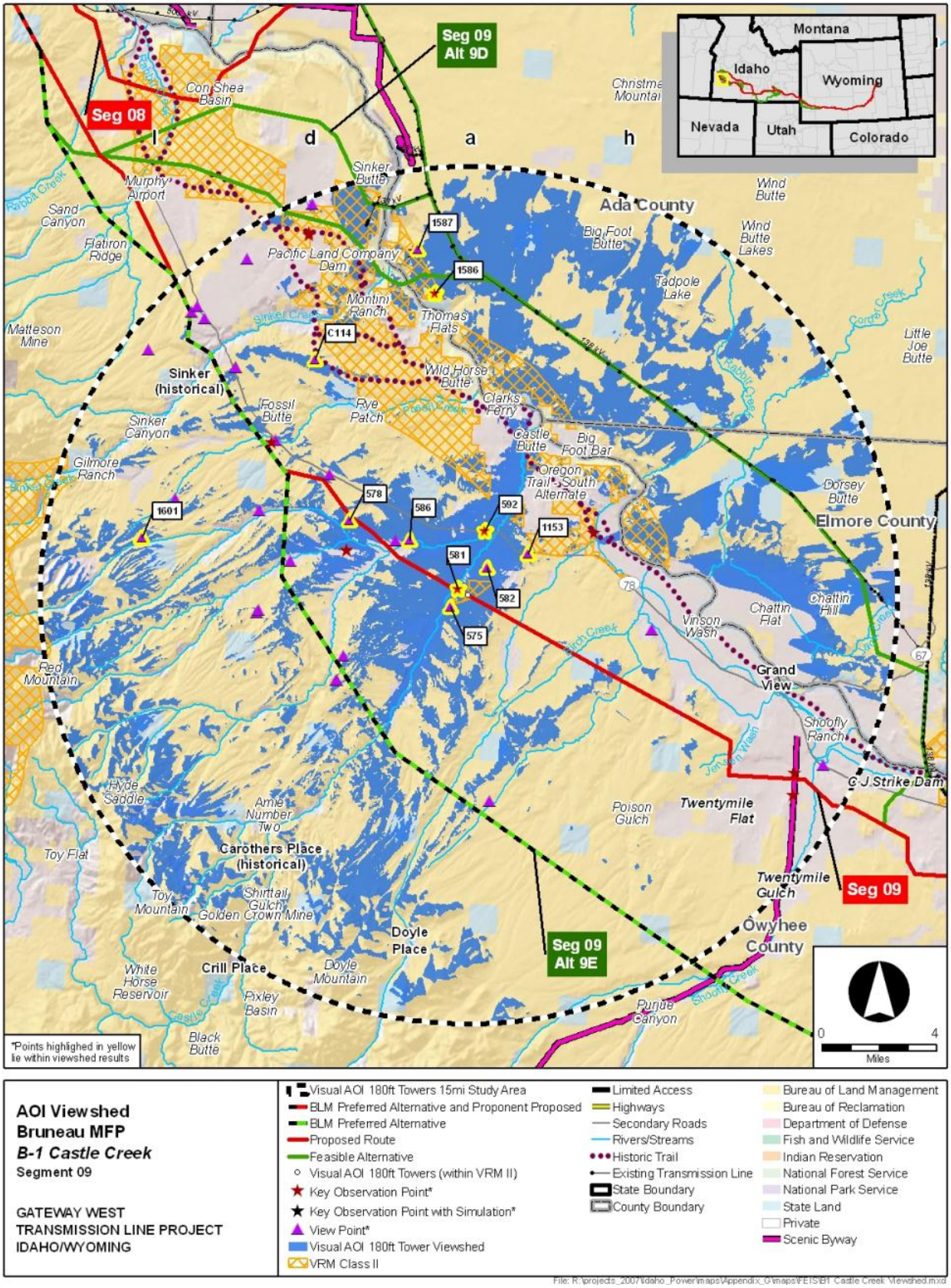


Figure 5.12-2. AOI B-1 Castle Creek Visual Analysis

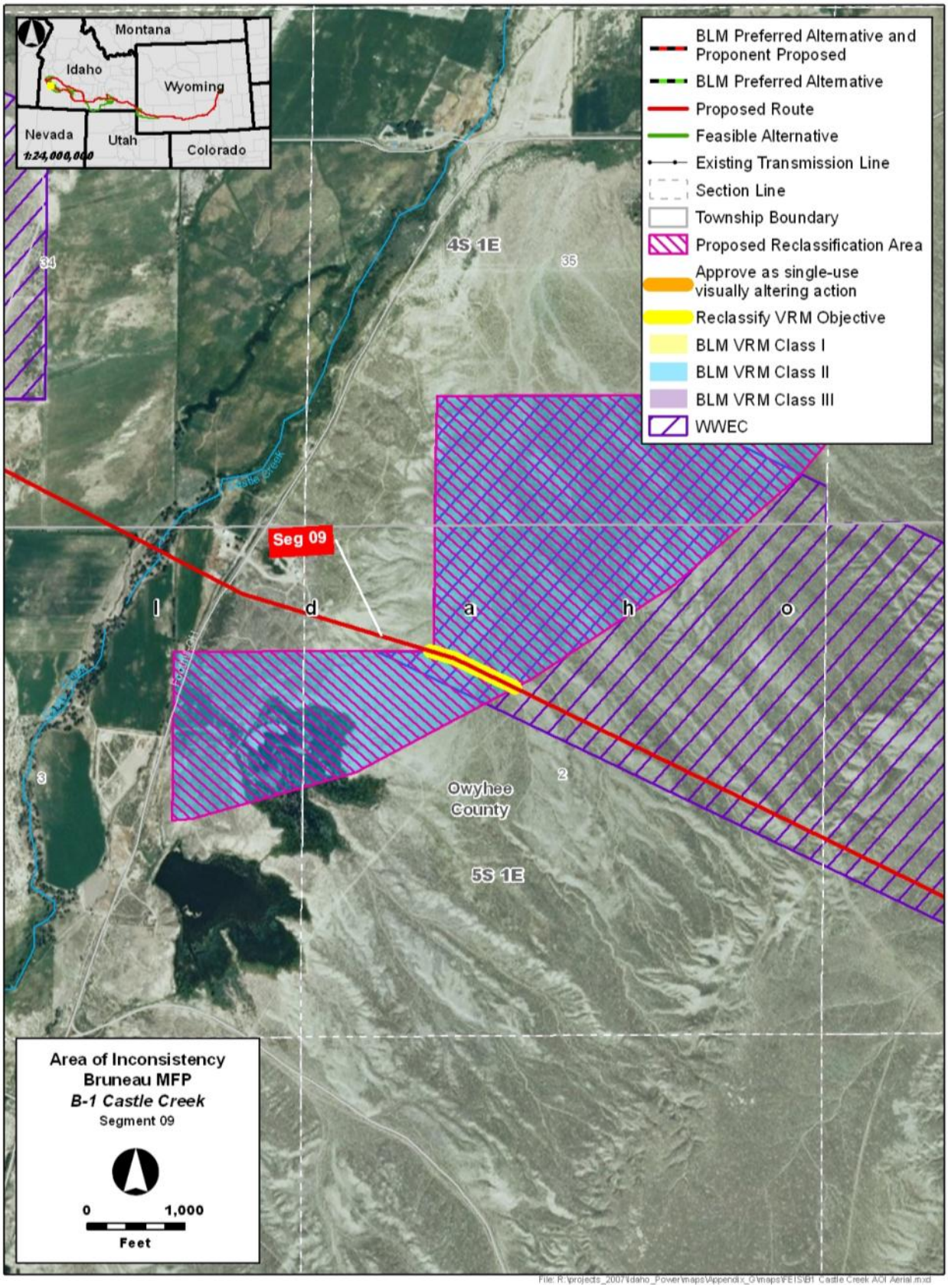


Figure 5.12-3. AOI B-1 Castle Creek Detailed Map

Attachment A

Existing Conditions and Photographic Simulations

List of Simulations by Appendix G-1 Sections

Section	AOI/Figure No.	KOP Number	Figure Title
5.2	R-3a	KOP 822	Existing Conditions, Segment 2
	R-3b	KOP 822	Photographic Simulation, Segment 2
5.3	GR-1a	KOP 1353	Existing Conditions, Segment 4
	GR-1b	KOP 1353	Photographic Simulation, Segment 4
5.4	K-3a	KOP 635	Existing Conditions, Alternative 4F
	K-3b	KOP 635	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 4F
	K-4a	KOP C110	Existing Conditions, Segment 4 (revised)
	K-4b	KOP C110	Photographic Simulation, Segment 4 (revised)
	K-4c	KOP C8	Existing Conditions, Segment 4 (revised)
	K-4d	KOP C8	Photographic Simulation, Segment 4 (revised)
	K-5a	KOP C620	Existing Conditions, Alternative 4F
	K-5b	KOP C620	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 4F
	K-5c	KOP 636	Existing Conditions, Alternative 4F
	K-5d	KOP 636	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 4F
	K-6a	KOP 655	Existing Conditions, Alternative 4B/C
	K-6b	KOP 655	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 4B/C
	K-6c	KOP 652	Existing Conditions, Alternative 4B-E
	K-6d	KOP 652	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 4B-E
	K-7a	KOP 632	Existing Conditions, Alternative 4C/4E
	K-7b	KOP 632	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 4C/4E
	K-8a	KOP 1368	Existing Conditions, Alternative 4C/E
	K-8b	KOP 1368	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 4C/E
5.5	M-1/M-3a	KOP 907	Existing Conditions, Segments 5 and 7
	M-1/M-3b	KOP 907	Photographic Simulation, Segment 5
	M-1/M-3c	KOP 907	Photographic Simulation, Segment 7
5.6	CA-2a	KOP 1171	Existing Conditions, Alternative 7K
	CA-2b	KOP 1171	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 7K
	CA-2c	KOP 1173	Existing Conditions, Alternative 7K
	CA-2d	KOP 1173	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 7K
	CA-6a	KOP 1516	Existing Conditions, Alternative 7K
	CA-6b	KOP 1516	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 7K
5.7/5.8	J-1/TF-1a	KOP 1068	Existing Conditions, Segment 9
	J-1/TF-1b	KOP 1068	Photographic Simulation, Segment 9
	J-1/TF-1c	KOP 1065	Existing Conditions, Segment 9
	J-1/TF-1d	KOP 1065	Photographic Simulation, Segment 9
5.8	J-2a	KOP 372	Existing Conditions, Segment 9
	J-2b	KOP 372	Photographic Simulation, Segment 9
5.8/5.9	BOP-1/J-3a	KOP 1156	Existing Conditions, Alternative 9D
	BOP-1/J-3b	KOP 1156	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 9D
	BOP-1/J-3c	KOP C117	Existing Conditions, Alternatives 9D/G
	BOP-1/J-3d	KOP C117	Photographic Simulation, Alternatives 9/G

List of Simulations by Appendix G-1 Sections (continued)

Section	AOI/Figure No.	KOP Number	Figure Title
5.8	J-4a	KOP C106 North	Existing Conditions, Alternative 8A
	J-4b	KOP C106 North	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 8A
	J-4c	KOP C106 South	Existing Conditions, Alternative 9B
	J-4d	KOP C106 South	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 9B
	J-5a	KOP 1350	Existing Conditions, Segment 8/Alt. 8A
	J-5b	KOP 1350	Photographic Simulation, Segment 8/Alt. 8A
	J-5c	KOP C83	Existing Conditions, Segment 8
	J-5d	KOP C83	Photographic Simulation, Segment 8
5.9	BOP-2a	KOP 1352	Existing Conditions, Alternative 9D
	BOP-2b	KOP 1352	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 9D
	BOP-3a	KOP 561	Existing Conditions, Segment 8/Alt. 9D
	BOP-3b	KOP 561	Photographic Simulation, Segment 8
	BOP-3c	KOP 561	Photographic Simulation, Alternative 9D
	BOP-3d	KOP C90	Existing Conditions, Segment 9/Alts. 9D/9F
	BOP-3e	KOP C90	Photographic Simulation, Segment 9/Alts. 9D/9F
5.10	BH-1a	KOP C84	Existing Conditions, Segment 8
	BH-1b	KOP C84	Photographic Simulation, Segment 8
	BH-1c	KOP C85	Existing Conditions, Segment 8
	BH-1d	KOP C85	Photographic Simulation, Segment 8

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

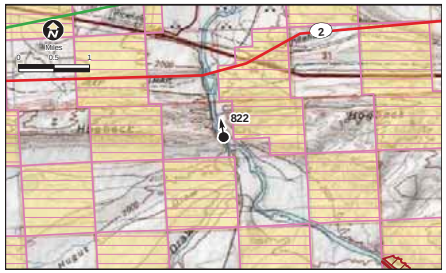
Time of photograph:	5:26 PM
Date of photograph:	5-28-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	41°43'57.14"N
Longitude:	106°56'39.53"W
Distance:	0.9 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 822
Segment 2

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure R-3a



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

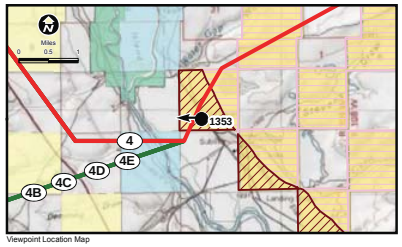
Time of photograph:	5:26 PM
Date of photograph:	5-28-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	41°43'57.14"N
Longitude:	106°56'39.53"W
Distance:	0.9 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 822
Segment 2

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure R-3b



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	4:00 PM
Date of photograph:	11-8-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	West
Latitude:	41°43'27.18"N
Longitude:	109°42'12.54"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile (800 feet)

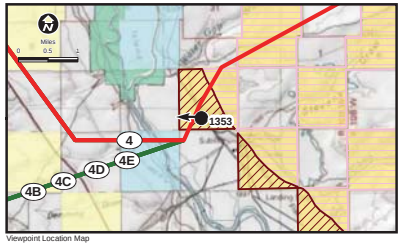
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1353
Segment 4

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure GR-1a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\2224030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-1353.indd Export Date 07/01/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

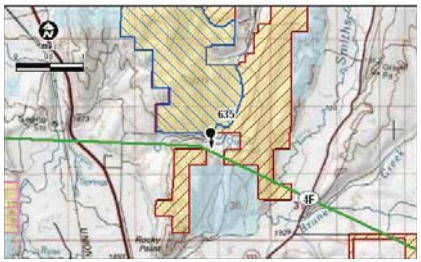
Time of photograph:	4:00 PM
Date of photograph:	11-8-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	West
Latitude:	41°43'27.18"N
Longitude:	109°42'12.54"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile (800 feet)

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1353
Segment 4

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure GR-1b



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	1:22 PM
Date of photograph:	9-23-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°7'26.76"N
Longitude:	110°55'42.72"W
Nearest Tower:	0.3 Mile
Furthest Tower:	0.7 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 635
Alternative 4F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-3a

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Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

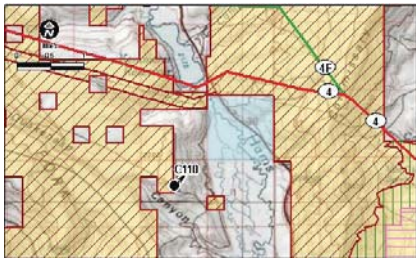
Time of photograph:	1:22 PM
Date of photograph:	9-23-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°7'26.76"N
Longitude:	110°55'42.72"W
Nearest Tower:	0.3 Mile
Furthest Tower:	0.7 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 635
Alternative 4F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-3b



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	9:59 AM
Date of photograph:	9-23-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	41°55'1.58"N
Longitude:	110°39'31.19"W
Distance:	1.5 Miles

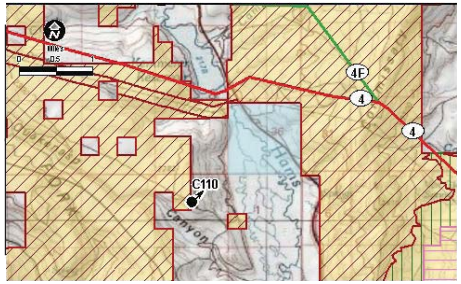
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C110
Segment 4 (revised)

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-4a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-642.indd Export Date 07/16/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

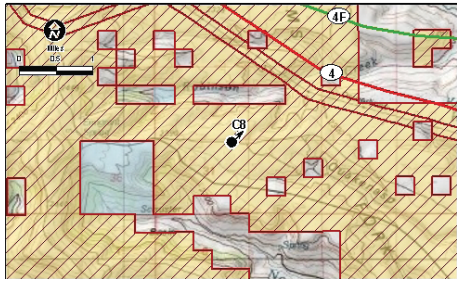
Time of photograph:	9:59 AM
Date of photograph:	9-23-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	41°55'1.58"N
Longitude:	110°39'31.19"W
Nearest Tower:	2.0 Miles
Furthest Tower:	2.9 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C110
Segment 4 (revised)

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-4b



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	12:01 PM
Date of photograph:	9-17-08
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	41°56'12.36"N
Longitude:	110°43'51.93"W
Nearest Tower:	2.2 Miles
Furthest Tower:	6.3 Miles

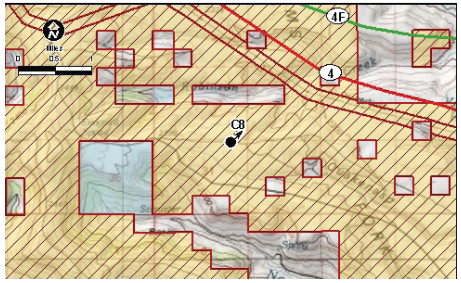
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C8
Segment 4 (revised)

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-4c

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\2224003\0_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-c8 For appendix G.indd Export Date 06/18/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

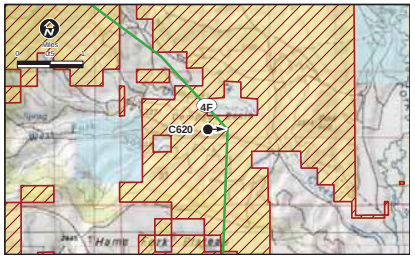
Time of photograph:	12:01 PM
Date of photograph:	9-17-08
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	41°56'12.36"N
Longitude:	110°43'51.93"W
Nearest Tower:	2.2 Miles
Furthest Tower:	6.3 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C8
Segment 4 (revised)

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-4d



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	3:33 PM
Date of photograph:	9-24-08
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	42°1'30.80"N
Longitude:	110°43'32.50"W
Nearest Tower:	0.4 Mile
Furthest Tower:	1.8 Miles

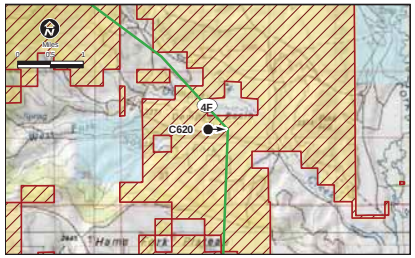
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C620
Alternative 4F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-5a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240\30_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-620.indd Export Date 07/01/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

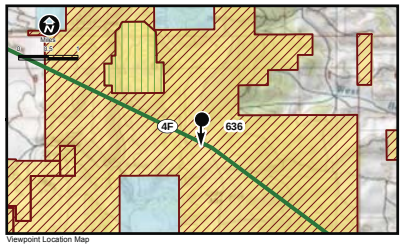
Time of photograph:	3:33 PM
Date of photograph:	9-24-08
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	42°1'30.80"N
Longitude:	110°43'32.50"W
Nearest Tower:	0.4 Mile
Furthest Tower:	1.8 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C620
Alternative 4F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-5b



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	11:49 AM
Date of photograph:	9-23-08
Weather condition:	Partly cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°4'51.04"N
Longitude:	110°48'8.37"W
Nearest Tower:	0.5 Mile
Furthest Tower:	1.1 Miles

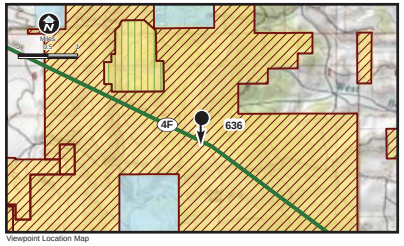
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 636
Alternative 4F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-5c

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-636.indd Export Date 07/01/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

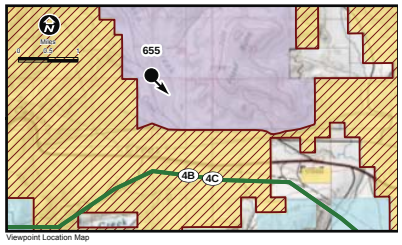
Time of photograph:	11:49 AM
Date of photograph:	9-23-08
Weather condition:	Partly cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°4'51.04"N
Longitude:	110°48'8.37"W
Nearest Tower:	0.5 Mile
Furthest Tower:	1.1 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 636
Alternative 4F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-5d



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	12:12 PM
Date of photograph:	9-22-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	41°50'11.29"N
Longitude:	110°46'16.26"W
Nearest Tower:	2 Miles
Furthest Tower:	5 Miles
Existing H-frame:	2 Miles
Distance to train:	1.4 Miles

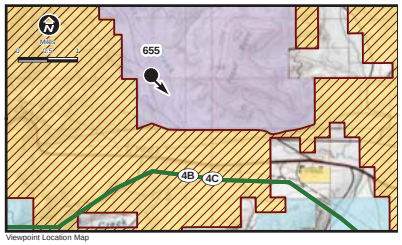
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 655
Alternatives 4B/C

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-6a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-655.indd Export Date 06/30/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

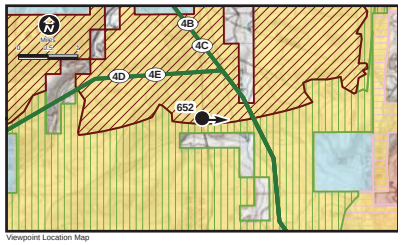
Time of photograph:	12:12 PM
Date of photograph:	9-22-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	41°50'11.29"N
Longitude:	110°46'16.26"W
Nearest Tower:	2 Miles
Furthest Tower:	5 Miles
Existing H-frame:	2 Miles
Distance to train:	1.4 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 655
Alternatives 4B/C

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-6b



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	1:00 PM
Date of photograph:	9-22-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	41°46'0.80"N
Longitude:	110°41'28.31"W
Distance:	0.7 Mile

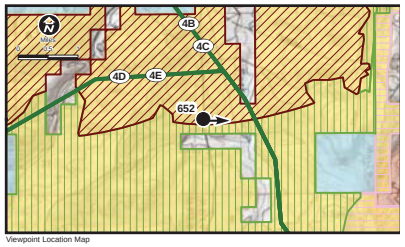
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 652
Alternatives 4B-E

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-6c

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-652.indd Export Date 12/8/2010



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	1:00 PM
Date of photograph:	9-22-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	41°46'0.80"N
Longitude:	110°41'28.31"W
Nearest Tower:	0.8 Mile
Furthest Tower:	0.9 Mile

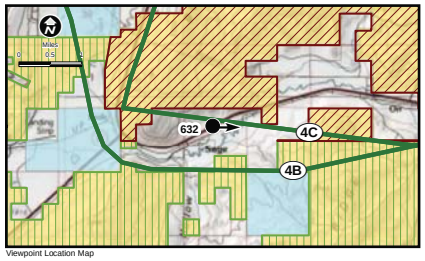
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 652
Alternatives 4B-E

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-6d

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

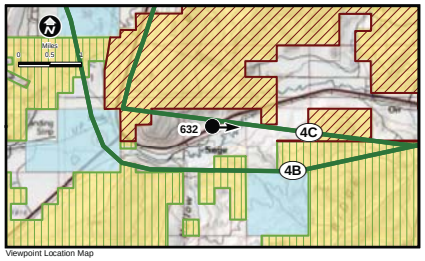
Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	12:04 PM
Date of photograph:	9-24-08
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	41°49'1.54"N
Longitude:	110°57'18.36"W
Distance:	0.1 Mile

Boulder Ridge AOI
Existing Conditions from Key Observation Point 632
Alternatives 4C/4E
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-7a

P:\ENVPLAN\INGI\IdahoPower\02240030_Gateway_Westerns\layouts\kop-632.indd Export Date 12/15/10



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	12:04 PM
Date of photograph:	9-24-08
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	41°49'1.54"N
Longitude:	110°57'18.36"W
Nearest Tower:	0.3 Mile
Furthest Tower:	1.9 Miles

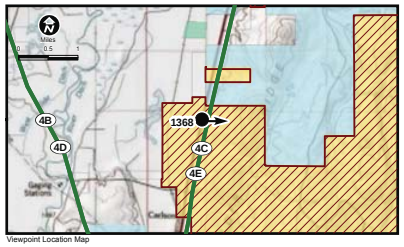
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Boulder Ridge AOI
Photographic Simulation from Key Observation Point 632

Alternatives 4C/4E

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-7b



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	1:15 PM
Date of photograph:	11-9-10
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	41°52'37.88"N
Longitude:	110°57'56.16"W
Nearest Tower:	0.3 Mile
Furthest Tower:	4.6 Miles

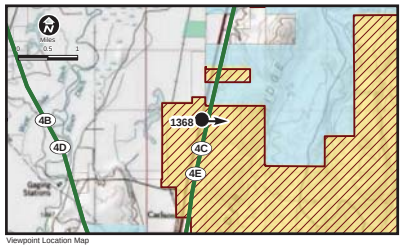
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1368
Alternatives 4C/E

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-8a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-1368.indd Export Date 06/30/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

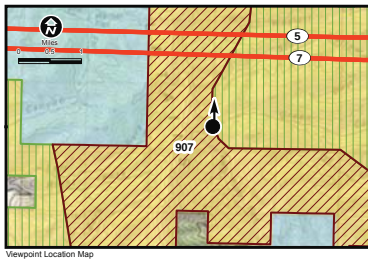
Time of photograph:	1:15 PM
Date of photograph:	11-9-10
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	East
Latitude:	41°52'37.88"N
Longitude:	110°57'56.16"W
Nearest Tower:	0.3 Mile
Furthest Tower:	4.6 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1368
Alternatives 4C/E

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure K-8b



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Mana

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Servic

Bureau of Reclamati

Department of Defen

State

Private

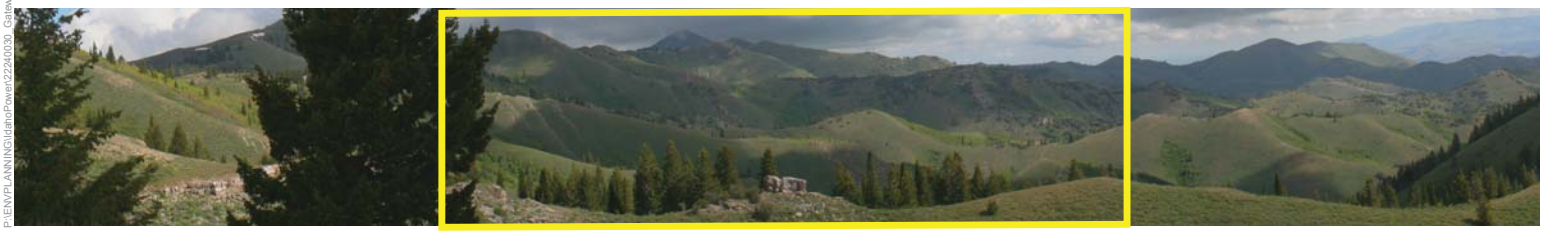
State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:01 AM
Date of photograph:	6-16-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°32'12.79"N
Longitude:	112°41'33.01"W
Distance:	1.0 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

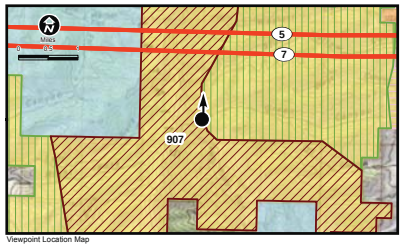


Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 907
Segments 5 and 7

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure M-1/M-3a

P:\ENVPLAN\ING\Idaho\Power\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-907 als 5 and 7.indd Export Date 07/18/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

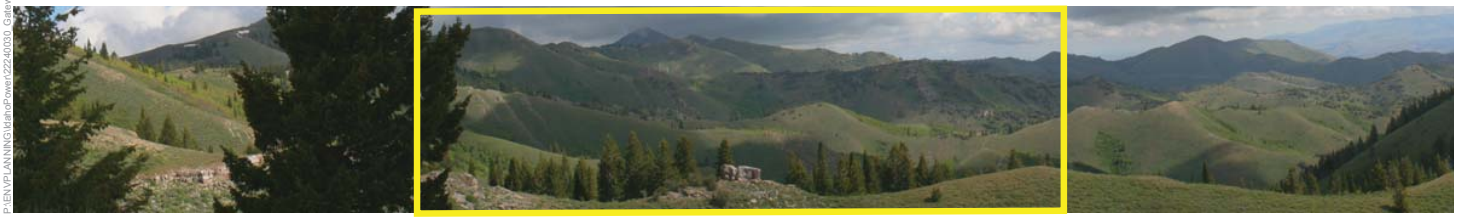
State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:01 AM
Date of photograph:	6-16-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°32'12.79"N
Longitude:	112°41'33.01"W
Distance:	1.0 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

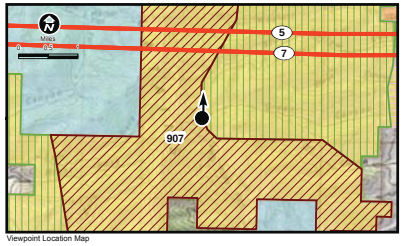


Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 907
Segment 5

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure M-1/M-3b

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-907 zits 5 and 7.indd Export Date 07/16/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

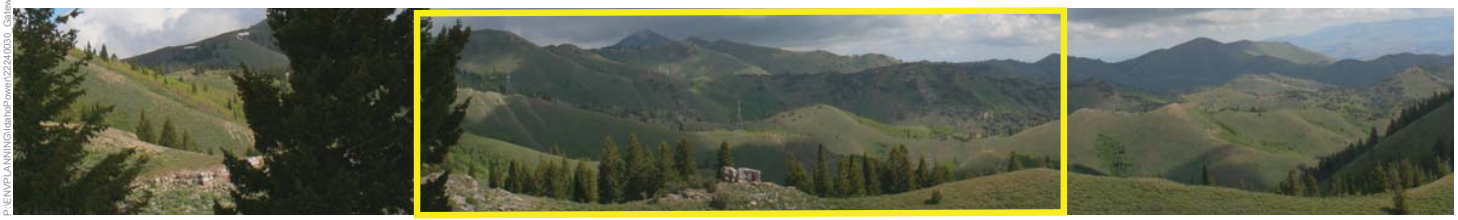
State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:01 AM
Date of photograph:	6-16-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°32'12.79"N
Longitude:	112°41'33.01"W
Distance:	1.0 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 907
Segment 7

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure M-1/M-3c

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\2234030_Gateway_West\ms\layouts\kop-907 alts 5 and 7.mxd Export Date 07/12/11

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	4:01 PM
Date of photograph:	10-15-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°20'29.27"N
Longitude:	114°1'30.91"W
Distance:	1.3 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1171
Alternative 7K
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CA-2a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-1171_SINGLE CIRCUIT.mxd Export Date 11/31/3/12

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

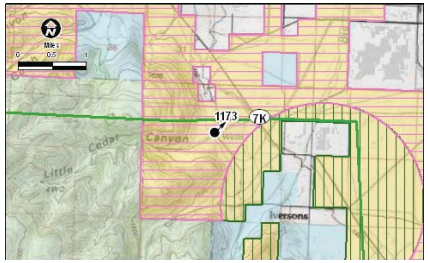
Time of photograph:	4:01 PM
Date of photograph:	10-15-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°20'29.27"N
Longitude:	114°1'30.91"W
Distance:	1.3 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1171
Alternative 7K
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CA-2b

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop 1171 SINGLE CIRCUIT.mxd Export Date 11/31/12



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

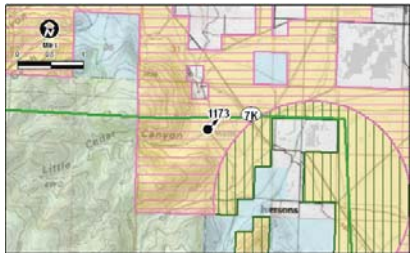
Time of photograph:	4:21 PM
Date of photograph:	10-15-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	42°19'11.97"N
Longitude:	114°1'42.66"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1173
Alternative 7K

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CA-2c



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	4:21 PM
Date of photograph:	10-15-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	42°19'11.97"N
Longitude:	114°1'42.66"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile

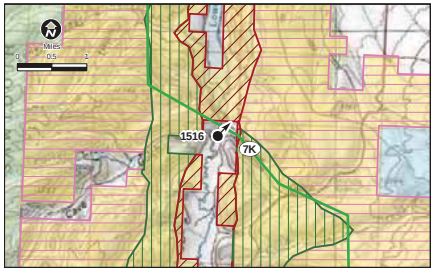
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1173
Alternative 7K

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CA-2d

Above photograph is intended to be viewed 18 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Photograph Information

Time of photograph: 6:45 PM

Date of photograph: 5-15-12

Weather condition: Partly Cloudy

Viewing direction: Northeast

Latitude: 42°7'28.14"N

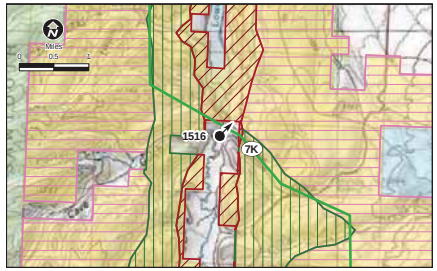
Longitude: 113°56'13.575"W

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1516
Alternative 7K

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CA-6a

Above photograph is intended to be viewed 18 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Photograph Information

Time of photograph: 6:45 PM

Date of photograph: 5-15-12

Weather condition: Partly Cloudy

Viewing direction: Northeast

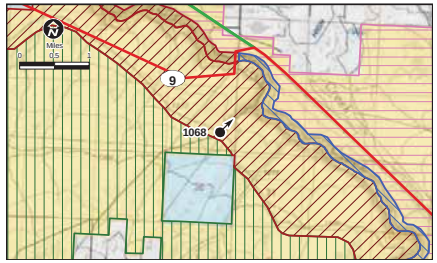
Latitude: 42°7'28.14"N

Longitude: 113°56'13.575"W

Nearest tower in view: 0.18 Mile

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1516
Alternative 7K
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CA-6b



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

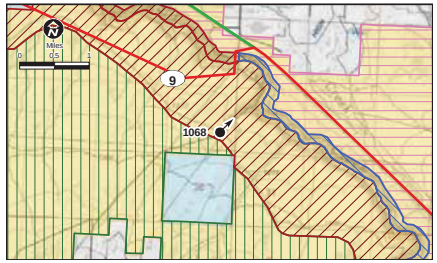
Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	11:56 AM
Date of photograph:	9-14-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	42°26'17.30"N
Longitude:	114°52'22.00"W
Distance:	0.8 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1068
Segment 9
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-1/TF-1a



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

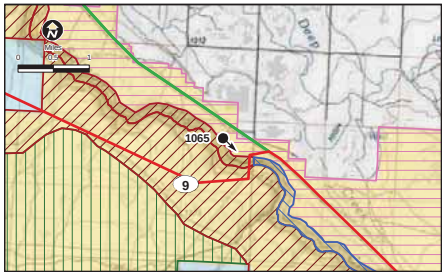
Time of photograph:	11:56 AM
Date of photograph:	9-14-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	42°26'17.30"N
Longitude:	114°52'22.00"W
Distance:	0.8 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1068
Segment 9
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-1/TF-1b

Above photograph is intended to be viewed 18 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Photograph Information

Time of photograph: 12:08 PM

Date of photograph: 9-14-09

Weather condition: Cloudy

Viewing direction: Southeast

Latitude: 42°27'30.816"N

Longitude: 114°52'36.79"W

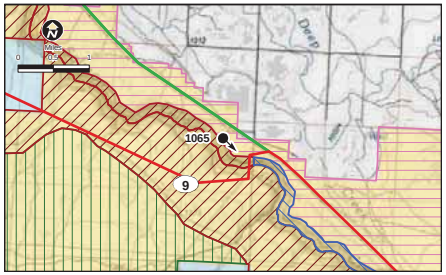
Distance: 0.5 mile

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1065
Segment 9

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-1/TF-1c

Above photograph is intended to be viewed 18 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Photograph Information

Time of photograph: 12:08 PM

Date of photograph: 9-14-09

Weather condition: Cloudy

Viewing direction: Southeast

Latitude: 42°27'30.816"N

Longitude: 114°52'36.79"W

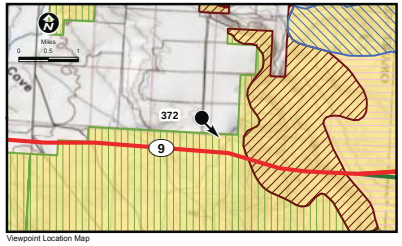
Nearest tower in view: 0.45 Miles

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1065
Segment 9

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-1/TF-1d

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

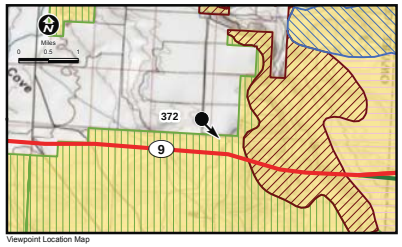
Time of photograph:	11:52 AM
Date of photograph:	8-21-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°53'53.78"N
Longitude:	115°30'10.06"W
Distance:	0.5 Mile

Existing Condiions
from Key Observation Point 372
Segment 9

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-2a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-372.indd Export Date 06/18/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	11:52 AM
Date of photograph:	8-21-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°53'53.78"N
Longitude:	115°30'10.06"W
Distance:	0.5 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

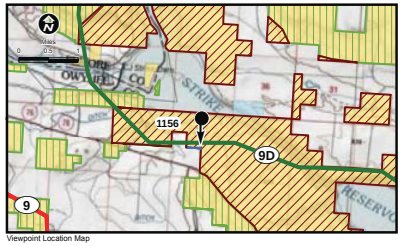
Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 372
Segment 9

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-2b

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-372.indd Export Date 06/16/11

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	4:07 PM
Date of photograph:	9-14-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°56'17.26"N
Longitude:	115°56'51.77"W
Distance:	0.4 Mile

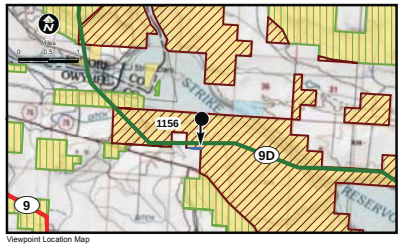
Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1156
Alternative 9D

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-1/J-3a

P:\ENVP\PLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sima\layouts\kop-1156.indd Export Date 07/18/2/11

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

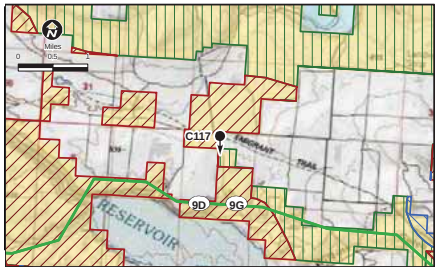
Time of photograph:	4:07 PM
Date of photograph:	9-14-09
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°56'17.26"N
Longitude:	115°56'51.77"W
Distance:	0.4 Mile

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1156
Alternative 9D

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-1/J-3b

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\2224030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-1156.indd Export Date 07/18/2/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	2:35 PM
Date of photograph:	7-29-10
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°56'18.26"N
Longitude:	115°52'1.93"W
Distance:	1 Mile

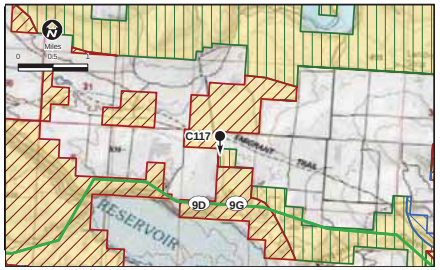
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C117
Alternatives 9D/9G

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-1/J-3c

P:\ENV\PLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_Westsims\layouts\NEW\LAYOUT\gateway_cultural simulations.indd Export Date 08/23/10



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	2:35 PM
Date of photograph:	7-29-10
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°56'18.26"N
Longitude:	115°52'1.93"W
Distance:	1 Mile

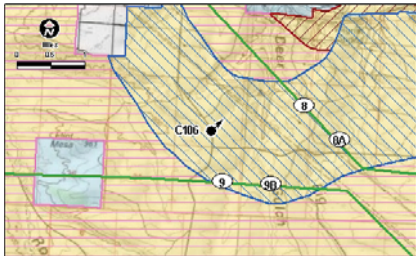
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C117
Alternatives 9D/9G

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-1/J-3d

P:\ENV\PLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_Westsims\layouts\NEW\LAYOUT\gateway_cultural simulations.indd Export Date 08/23/10



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

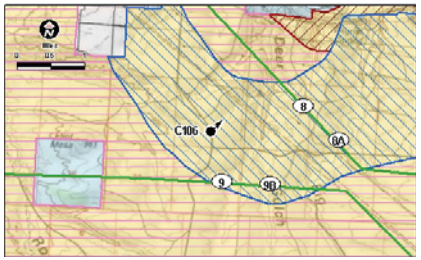
Time of photograph:	2:14 PM
Date of photograph:	12-1-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	42°52'7.00"N
Longitude:	115°10'25.51"W
Distance:	1.2 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C106
North
Alternative 8A
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-4a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\2224030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-810.indd Export Date 07/18/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

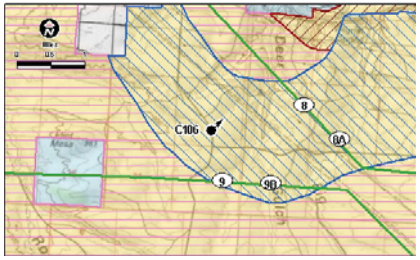
Time of photograph:	2:14 PM
Date of photograph:	12-1-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northeast
Latitude:	42°52'7.00"N
Longitude:	115°10'25.51"W
Distance:	1.2 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C106
North
Alternative 8A
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-4b

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\2224030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-810.indd Export Date 07/18/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

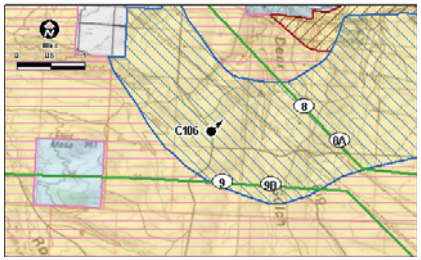
Time of photograph:	2:14 PM
Date of photograph:	12-1-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°52'7.00"N
Longitude:	115°10'25.51"W
Distance:	0.7 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C106
South
Alternative 9B
Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-4c

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-810.indd Export Date 07/18/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	2:14 PM
Date of photograph:	12-1-08
Weather condition:	Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	42°52'7.00"N
Longitude:	115°10'25.51"W
Distance:	0.7 Mile

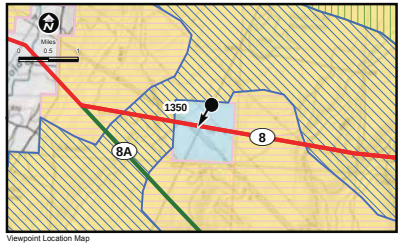
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C106
South
Alternative 9B

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-4d

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-810.indd Export Date 07/18/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:06 AM
Date of photograph:	8-21-10
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	43°2'8.80"N
Longitude:	115°20'1.74"W
Distance:	0.1 Mile

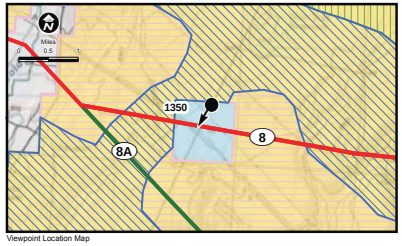
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1350
Segment 8/Alternative 8A

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-5a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop1350.indd Export Date 07/18/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:06 AM
Date of photograph:	8-21-10
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	43°2'8.80"N
Longitude:	115°20'1.74"W
Distance:	0.1 Mile

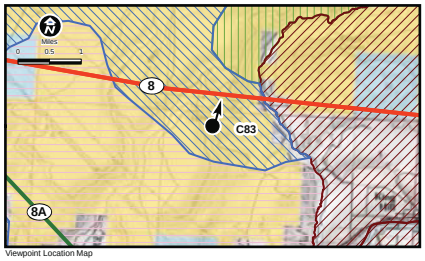
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1350
Segment 8/Alternative 8A

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-5b

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop1350.indd Export Date 07/18/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

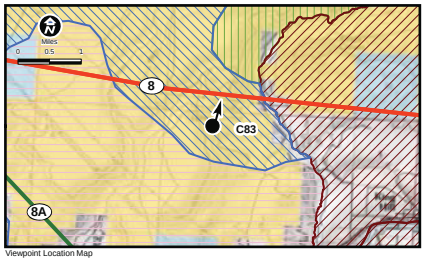
Time of photograph:	9:00 AM
Date of photograph:	12-8-09
Weather condition:	Party Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°48'41.47"N
Longitude:	105°49'41.72"W
Distance:	0.5 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C83
Segment 8

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-5c



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

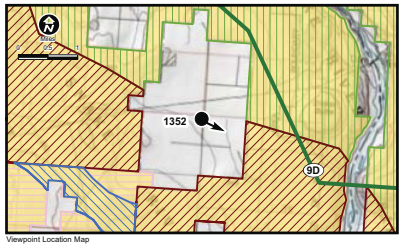
Time of photograph:	9:00 AM
Date of photograph:	12-8-09
Weather condition:	Party Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°48'41.47"N
Longitude:	105°49'41.72"W
Distance:	0.5 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C83
Segment 8

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure J-5d



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	12:05 PM
Date of photograph:	8-21-10
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	43°13'36.35"N
Longitude:	116°26'3.22"W
Distance:	1.3 Miles

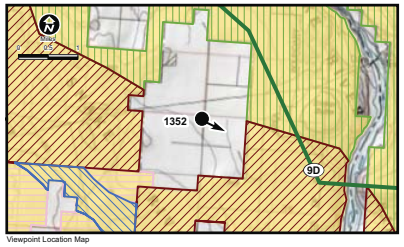
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1352
Alternative 9D

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-2a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-1352.indd Export Date 06/18/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	12:05 PM
Date of photograph:	8-21-10
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	43°13'36.35"N
Longitude:	116°26'3.22"W
Distance:	1.3 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1352
Alternative 9D

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-2b

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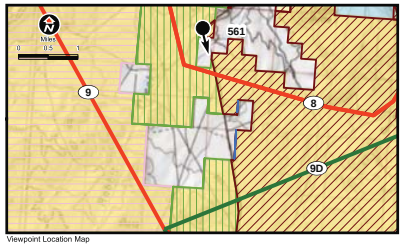

Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:51 AM
Date of photograph:	8-18-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	43°16'49.52"N
Longitude:	116°34'29.67"W
Distance:	0.4 Mile Segment 8
	2.9 Miles Segment 9

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 561
Segment 8 and Alternative 9D

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-3a

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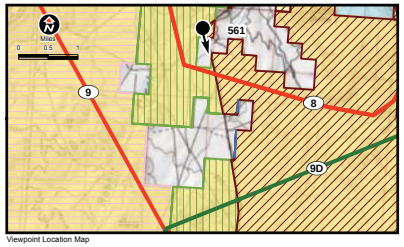

Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:51 AM
Date of photograph:	8-18-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	South
Latitude:	43°16'49.52"N
Longitude:	116°34'29.67"W
Distance:	0.4 Mile Segment 8

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 561
Segment 8

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-3b

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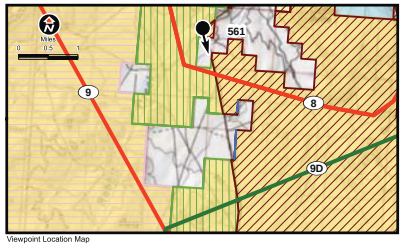


Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	10:51 AM
Date of photograph:	8-18-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southwest
Latitude:	43°16'49.52"N
Longitude:	116°34'29.67"W
Distance:	2.9 Miles Segment 9

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 561
Alternative 9D

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-3c

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-561.indd Export Date 07/18/11

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	3:25 PM
Date of photograph:	12-9-09
Weather condition:	Party Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°29'30.61"N
Longitude:	106°12'59.77"W
Distance:	1.1 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C90
Segment 9 and Alternatives 9D and 9F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-3d

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

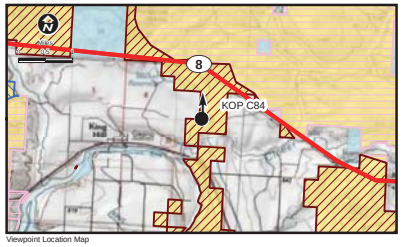
Time of photograph:	3:25 PM
Date of photograph:	12-9-09
Weather condition:	Party Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°29'30.61"N
Longitude:	106°12'59.77"W
Distance:	1.1 Miles

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C90
Segment 9 and Alternatives 9D and 9F

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BOP-3e



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

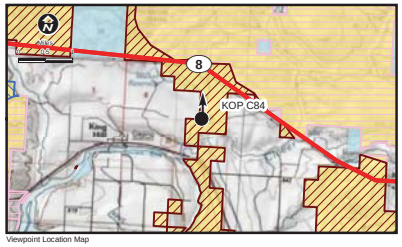
Time of photograph:	10:38 AM
Date of photograph:	11-8-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	43°0'37.67"N
Longitude:	115°10'29.43"W
Distance:	1 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C84
Segment 8

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BH-1a



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

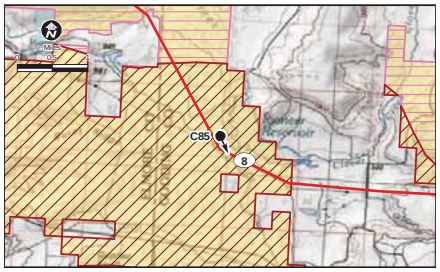
Time of photograph:	10:38 AM
Date of photograph:	11-8-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	43°0'37.67"N
Longitude:	115°10'29.43"W
Distance:	1 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C84
Segment 8

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BH-1b



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

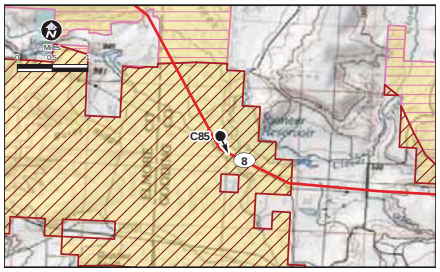
Time of photograph:	11:46 AM
Date of photograph:	8-6-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°59'9.61"N
Longitude:	115° 4'5.51"W
Distance:	0.1 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point C85
Segment 8

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure BH-1c



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

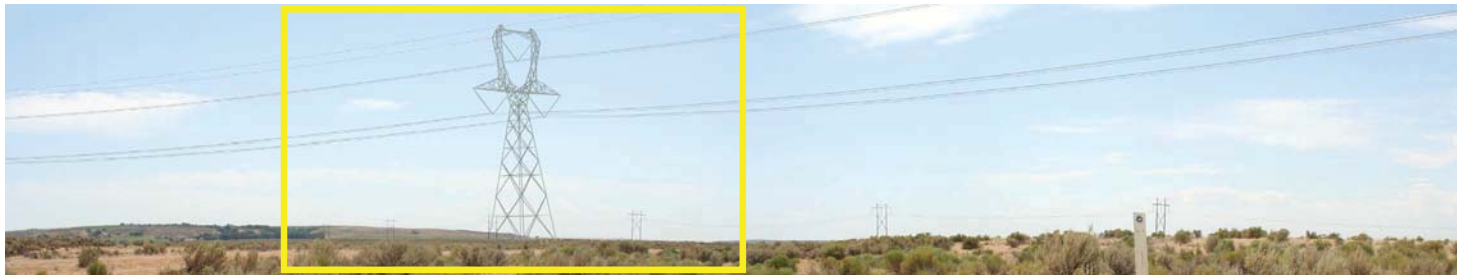
State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	11:46 AM
Date of photograph:	8-6-08
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°59'9.61"N
Longitude:	115° 4'5.51"W
Distance:	0.1 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point C85
Segment 8

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

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Appendix G-2
USDA Forest Service Visual Resource Management Amendments Analysis

Appendix G-2

USDA Forest Service
Visual Resource Amendments Analysis

Gateway West Transmission Line Project

Prepared by:

Tetra Tech

Submitted To:

USDA Forest Service

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOI	area of inconsistency
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	best management practice
EIS	environmental impact statement
EPM	environmental protection measure
Forest Plan	Land and Resource Management Plan
Forest Service	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
FSM	Forest Service Manual
Gateway West	Gateway West Transmission Line Project
GIS	geographic information system
KOP	key observation point
kV	kilovolt
LRT	Linear Routing Tool
MA	Management Area
MP	milepost
MPC	Management Prescription Category
NF	National Forest
NFS	National Forest System
NHT	National Historic Trail
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
Project	Gateway West Transmission Line Project
Proponents	Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power
RN	Roaded Natural
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
ROW	right-of-way
SIO	Scenic Integrity Objective
SMS	Scenery Management System
SPM	Semi-Primitive Motorized
SR	State Route
VMS	Visual Management System
VQO	Visual Quality Objective
WWE	West-Wide Energy

1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides an analysis of locations where the Gateway West Transmission Line Project (Gateway West or Project) may be inconsistent with established scenery objectives. This 990.5-mile, high-voltage transmission line consists of 10 segments between the Windstar Substation at Glenrock, Wyoming, and the Hemingway Substation approximately 30 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho (see Figure 1-1).

Portions of the proposed transmission line route or an alternative route would cross three National Forests (NFs). Effects on scenery are analyzed using Scenic Management System (SMS) for the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs and Visual Management System (VMS) for the Caribou-Targhee and Sawtooth NFs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) developed these systems to provide a mechanism for inventory and analysis of landscape resources and the effects of land management activities on those resources. The SMS was developed to eventually replace the VMS and, in October 1996, *Landscape Aesthetics: A Handbook for Scenery Management*[1] was released to begin the transition to SMS. This handbook supersedes the *National Forest Landscape Management, Volume 2, Chapter 1: The Visual Management System* (issued April 1974).[2] Scenic management criteria are described below.

1.1 Scenic Management System (SMS)

The SMS entails identifying the landscape character, visual sensitivity, and scenic integrity. The SMS was used to evaluate those portions of the proposed Project and an alternative route that would cross the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs. The SMS provides an overall framework for the orderly inventory, analysis, and management of scenery. It is a tool for integrating the benefits, values, desires, and preferences regarding aesthetics and scenery for all levels of land management planning. The SMS also considers Concern Levels, which are a categorization of the importance of scenic resources to forest visitors. Three concepts of the SMS are of key importance to the present analysis: (1) Scenic Attractiveness, (2) Landscape Character, and (3) Scenic Integrity Objectives. These concepts and landscape character are defined below:

- **Scenic Attractiveness** is the primary indicator of the scenic importance of a landscape based on human perceptions of the intrinsic beauty of landforms, rock outcrops and forms, waterforms, vegetation patterns, and cultural features. It reflects varying visual perception attributes of variety, unity, vividness, intactness, coherence, uniqueness, harmony, balance, and pattern. The frame of reference for scenic attractiveness (generally at the section scale) is landscape character. Three levels of scenic attractiveness are identified during the scenery inventory process: (A) Distinctive, (B) Common or Typical, and (C) Undistinguished (Forest Service Manual [FSM] 2380 – Landscape Management).

[1] Forest Service. 1995. *Landscape Aesthetics: A Handbook for Scenery Management.* Agriculture Handbook Number 701. December.

[2] Forest Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service). 1974. National Forest Landscape Management, Vol. 2, Chapter 1: The Visual Management System. "THE BIG EYE BOOK." USDA Agriculture Handbook No. 462.

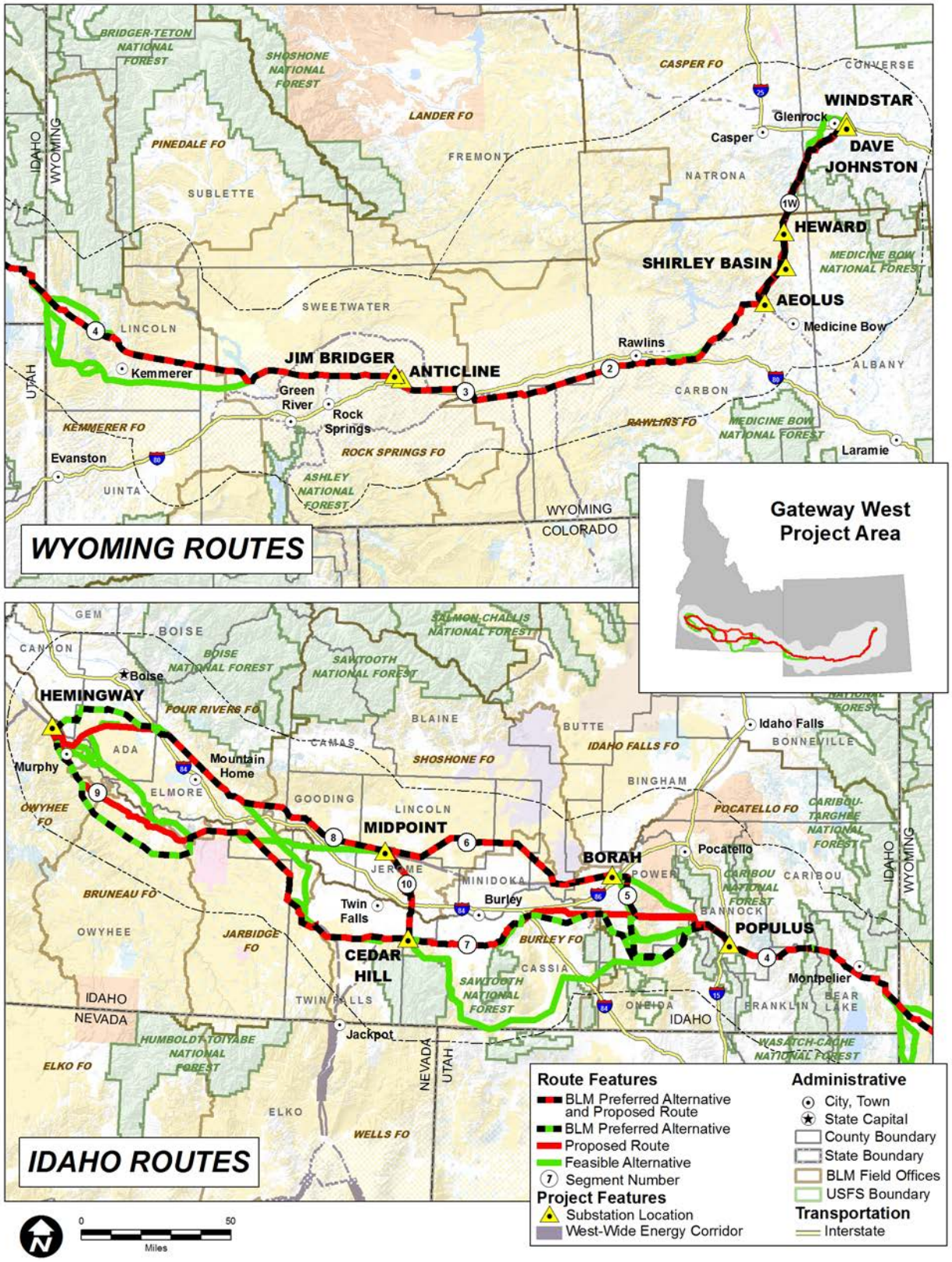


Figure 1-1. Project Overview

- **Landscape Character** is a combination of physical, biological, and cultural images that gives an area its visual and cultural identity and helps to define a "sense of place." Landscape character provides a frame of reference from which to determine scenic attractiveness and to measure scenic integrity (FSM 2380 – Landscape Management).
- **Scenic Integrity Objectives, referred to as SIOs,** define the degrees of deviation from the landscape character that occur at any given time by using the process described in Agriculture Handbook 701, *Landscape Aesthetics: A Handbook for Scenery Management* (FSM 2380 – Landscape Management).

When discussing SIOs, the degree of alteration is measured in terms of visual contrast with the surrounding natural landscape. The objectives of each SIO classification are included below:

- Very High – Management activities, except for very low visual-impact recreation facilities, are prohibited. Allows for ecological changes only. The existing landscape character and sense of place is expressed at the highest possible level.
- High – Management activities are not visually evident to the casual observer. The landscape character *appears* intact. Deviations may be present but must repeat the form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the landscape character so completely and at such scale that they are not evident. Changes in the qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., should not be evident.
- Moderate – Management activities remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape being viewed. Activities may repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the characteristic landscape but may not change in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc.
- Low – Management activities begin to visually dominate the original characteristic landscape. However, activities of vegetative and landform alteration must borrow from naturally established form, line, color, or texture so completely and at such a scale that its visual characteristics are those of natural occurrences within the surrounding area or character type. Structures must remain visually subordinate to the proposed composition.
- Very Low – Management activities of vegetative and landform alterations may dominate the characteristic landscape. While alterations may not borrow from attributes such as size, shape, edge effect, and pattern of natural openings, vegetative type changes, or architectural styles within or outside the landscape being viewed, they must be shaped and blended with the natural terrain so that elements such as unnatural edges, roads, landings, and structures do not dominate the composition.

The SMS system defines four distance zones for project-level planning and to evaluate potential visibility:

- Immediate Foreground – At this distance people can distinguish details such as individual leaves, flowers, twigs, bark texture, small animals, and can notice the movement of leaves and grasses in light wind (from 0 to 300 feet).
- Foreground – At this distance people can distinguish small boughs of leaf clusters, tree trunks and large branches, individual shrubs, clumps of wildflowers, medium sized animals, and medium-to-large birds. At this distance, people can also distinguish movement of tree boughs and tree tops in moderate winds (from 0 to 0.5 mile). Forms are dominant.
- Middleground – This is the predominant distance zone at which Forest Service landscapes are seen, except for regions of flat lands or tall, dense vegetation. At this distance, people can distinguish individual tree forms, large boulders, flower fields, small openings in the forest, and small rock outcrops. Tree forms typically stand out vividly in silhouetted situations. Form, texture, and color remain dominant and pattern becomes more visible (from 0.5 to 4 miles).
- Background – At a background distance, people can distinguish groves or stands of trees, large openings in a forest, and large rock outcrops. Texture has disappeared and color has flattened, but large patterns of vegetation or rock are still distinguishable, and landform ridgelines and horizon lines are the dominant visual characteristic (from 4 miles to the horizon).

The SMS process uses particular ecosystems as the environmental context for aesthetics. Ecosystem management broadens understandings of environments by its holistic consideration of the physical, biological, and social dimensions of ecosystems. The social dimension has many aspects, but one of importance for public lands is recreation. A key attribute of recreation is aesthetics. During the inventory process, the SMS uses interdisciplinary collaborative knowledge to discuss constituent input, landscape character, scenic attractiveness, existing scenic integrity, place attachment, concern levels, distance zones, and scenic classes to develop alternatives and achieve landscape character goals (SMS, page 5-2).

1.2 Visual Management System

The VMS is used by NFs that have not yet converted to the SMS, such as the Caribou-Targhee and Sawtooth NFs. The VMS provides a framework for establishing the visual landscape as a basic resource and to treat it as an essential part of the basic quality of the land. The Visual Management System identifies a desired level of scenic quality and diversity of natural features based on physical and sociological characteristics of an area, referred to as Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs). A given VQO quantifies the degree of acceptable alterations of the characteristic landscape. A VQO is determined by comparing the variety class with the sensitivity level.[3] These terms are described below.

- **Characteristic Landscape** is the naturally established landscape being viewed. It visually represents the basic vegetative patterns landforms, rock formations, and water forms which are in view.

[3] Bacon, W. 1974. The Visual Management System. In: National Forest Landscape Management, Agricultural Handbook No. 462 (Vol.2). Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office.

- **Variety Class** designates those landscapes which are most important and those which are of lesser value from the standpoint of scenic quality. The classification is based on the premise that all landscapes have some value, but those with the most variety and diversity have the greatest potential for high scenic quality. There are three variety classes: 1) Class A–Distinctive, 2) Class B–Common, and 3) Class C–Minimal.
- **Sensitivity Level** is a measure of people's concern for the scenic quality of an NF. Sensitivity levels are determined for land areas used by those traveling through the forest on developed roads and trails and those using areas such as campgrounds, visitor centers, and other recreation areas. There are three sensitivity levels: Level I–Highest Sensitivity, Level 2–Average Sensitivity, and Level 3–Lowest Sensitivity.
- **Distance Zones** are divisions of a particular landscape being viewed. The three distance zones are: foreground (the area from 0.25 to 0.5 mile from the observer), middleground (the area from foreground to 3 to 5 miles from the observer), and background (from middleground to infinity).

The VQOs represent the visual resource objectives under the Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The objectives of each VQO classification are listed below:

- Preservation – Management activities are generally not allowed in this setting. The landscape is allowed to evolve naturally.
- Retention – Management activities are not evident to the casual Forest visitor.
- Partial Retention – Management activities may be evident but are subordinate to the characteristic landscape.
- Modification – Management activities may dominate the characteristic landscape but will, at the same time, use naturally established form, line, color, and texture. It should appear as a natural occurrence when viewed as middleground.
- Maximum Modification – Management activities may dominate the characteristic landscape, but should appear as a natural occurrence when viewed as background.

2 PROJECT FEATURES AFFECTING THE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Facility Components

The Project facility components that affect the visual environment include:

- Approximately 990.5 miles of transmission lines and associated support structures and conductors.
- Approximately 147 miles (1,119 structures) would be single-circuit 230-kilovolt (kV) or 345-kV steel H-frame structures between 60 and 90 feet tall with an 800-foot average distance between structures.

- Approximately 838 miles (3,724 structures) would be single-circuit 500-kV lattice steel structures between 145 and 180 feet tall with a 1,200- to 1,300-foot average distance between structures.
- Approximately 5.1 miles (25 structures) would be single-circuit 345-kV steel H-frame structures between 80 and 110 feet tall with an 800-foot average distance between structures.
- The Project would have 12 substations, including 3 proposed new Project-specific substations and 9 existing substations that would be expanded for this Project;
- Ancillary facilities such as construction roads (up to 16 feet wide) and 8-foot-wide service roads, temporary construction multipurpose yards, regeneration stations, power supply to new substations, and other similar facilities would also be visible in the construction and operations phases of the Project.

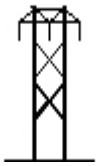
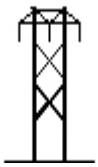
Table 2.1-1 describes aspects of the primary proposed structures that would affect the visual environment.

Within the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs, the proposed transmission line and an alternative route cross an area with an SIO of Moderate. Within the Caribou-Targhee NF, the proposed transmission line crosses areas with Retention and Partial Retention VQOs. Within the Sawtooth NF, alternative routes for the transmission line cross areas with Partial Retention VQOs. The presence of the transmission line in sensitive visual classes is inconsistent with Forest Plan visual management objectives. Therefore, locations with incursions into these sensitive visual classes were identified as areas of inconsistencies (AOIs).

This appendix reviews each of the AOIs: one in the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs, one in the Caribou-Targhee NF, and one in the Sawtooth NF. It provides background such as the justification for the route location, reasons the route cannot avoid the sensitive visual class, and other features that may be affected if the line were placed in a different location. Visual analyses were conducted at each AOI to estimate the area of impact. These analyses can be used to assist the NFs in identifying actions that would be necessary to bring the transmission line project into conformance with their Forest Plans. Best management practices (BMPs) for transmission structure design and locations would be applied to reduce Forest Plan inconsistencies as much as possible.

There are three likely scenarios available to the NFs. For some AOIs, the Forest Plan may be amended to make the Project consistent with the visual management class objectives. In other cases, an NF may grant a one-time exemption to the visual management requirements to construct the transmission line, knowing Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power (the Proponents) will construct the line using the mitigation measures described in Section 2.2 to minimize visual effects, and understanding that many other environmental constraints were also analyzed in determining the location of the transmission line. Lastly, the NF may decide that the transmission line in an AOI is incompatible with visual objectives, and the visual resources are so valued that the National Environmental Policy Act environmental impact statement (EIS) process may be used to develop an alternative line location.

Table 2.1-1. Primary Transmission Structures – Visual Description

Project Facility	Description
Transmission Line Segments	
Transmission Line Features Common to All Proposed 500-kV Segments Example single-circuit structure	• Conductors: Bundled with three subconductors per phase. Non-specular (dull) finish rather than a shiny finish. • Estimated subconductor diameter: 1.504 inches. • Bundle spacing: Distance between subconductors is 18 inches and 25 inches. • Non-reflective, non-refractive insulators. • Typical ground clearance: 35 feet. • Structure types: lattice steel single and double circuit structures. Dulled galvanized steel finish. • Structure heights: Single-circuit structure varies between 145 and 180 feet. Average height of 156 feet. • Approximate distance between structures: 1,200 to 1,300 feet. • Right-of-way (ROW) width: 250 feet.
Transmission Line Features for Segment 3A (345-kV)  Example single-circuit structure	• Conductors: Bundled with three subconductors per phase. Non-specular (dull) finish rather than a shiny finish. • Estimated subconductor diameter: 1.345 inches. • Bundle spacing: Distance between subconductors is 18 inches and 25 inches. • Non-reflective, non-refractive insulators. • Typical ground clearance: 30 feet. • Structure types: single-circuit steel H-frame structures, self-weathering steel. • Structure heights: varies between 80 and 110 feet. • Approximate distance between structures: 800 feet. • ROW width: 150 feet.
Transmission Line Features Common to All Proposed 230-kV Segments  Example single-circuit structure	• Conductors: Bundled with two subconductors per phase. Non-specular finish. • Bundle spacing: 18 inches vertical. • Non-reflective, non-refractive insulators. • Typical ground clearance: 28 feet. • Structure types: single-circuit steel H-frame structures, self-weathering steel. • Above-ground structure heights: varies between 60 and 90 feet. • Approximate distance between structures: 800 feet. • ROW width: 125 feet.

2.2 Project-wide Visual Mitigation Measures Proposed by the Proponents

The Proponents have incorporated two mitigation measures into the Project to reduce visual impacts:

1. Transmission structures would be constructed of dulled galvanized steel.
2. Non-specular (dull appearance) transmission line conductors would be used.

3. Self-weathering steel pole H-frame structures would be used in Segment 1 and in certain visually sensitive areas.

3 STUDY ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that AOIs in several areas may require an amendment to a Forest Plan to address the proposed Project's nonconformance with visual class objectives. It is not expected that design elements and/or other mitigation measures intended to reduce impacts would reduce visual contrast to a level consistent with an area's visual class.

For the purpose of this study, certain assumptions have been made as detailed below:

- Within the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs, the proposed transmission line would cross an area with an SIO of Moderate. The Project would be inconsistent with an SIO of Moderate.
- Within the Caribou-Targhee NF, the proposed transmission line crosses areas with Retention and Partial Retention VQOs. The Project would be inconsistent with these VQOs.
- Within the Sawtooth NF, an alternative route for the transmission line cross areas with a Modification VQO. A transmission line would be inconsistent with the Modification VQO.
- Direction for considering visual resource values stated in Forest Plans was taken into consideration. Where absent or general in nature, the management direction provided in FSM 2380, Landscape Management, was considered.
- The AOI analysis area covered up to 15 miles from either side of the centerline of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives.

4 PROJECT-WIDE ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

During transmission line siting, sensitive visual classifications were avoided where possible. When feasible, the routes also avoided historic trails and monuments, wildlife refuges, state or federal parks or monuments, prominent peaks, and populated areas where either the viewshed was either valued or lines were in view of large population centers. Ground disturbances necessary for construction would be reclaimed and restored to a natural condition as soon as possible. The use of guy wires was avoided where possible, with the exception of transmission line directional changes where forces would require additional directional support.

Constraints analyses have been used for the Project to assist in siting the transmission line Proposed Route and Route Alternatives. In the initial phase, the Proponents attempted to locate the routes between required interconnection points (substations) using a comprehensive set of avoidance and opportunity criteria. Using this information, the Proponents initially identified, evaluated, and compared alternative corridors for each of the 10 segments. A Proposed Route was selected and alternative corridors were also evaluated for each segment.

Two general approaches were used to identify and evaluate alternative routes and select the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives carried forward for detailed study for each segment.

1. In proposed and established utility corridors[4] such as the Section 368 Energy Act Draft West-wide Energy (WWE) corridor or Bureau of Land Management– (BLM) and Forest Service–designated utility corridors, and/or where existing transmission lines exist, analyses were completed to characterize the resources present in the areas crossed by the corridors and to determine if use of such corridors would result in significant environmental effects. A combination of constraint mapping, stakeholder input, and field reconnaissance was used to confirm the use of existing or planned corridors. In several cases, new routes deviating from the existing or planned corridors were proposed because of adjacent environmental constraints such as sage-grouse leks, historic features, raptor nests, and oil and gas wells.
2. Where no existing or planned corridors existed, a geographic information system (GIS) computer analysis (Linear Routing Tool [LRT]) was used to identify initial corridors for further evaluation. Using data from numerous public sources, the LRT was used to develop alternative transmission line corridors by considering both routing constraints and opportunities. Constraints are defined as resources or conditions that potentially limit transmission line routing because they negatively affect natural resource features or economic factors. Opportunities are defined as resources or conditions that are favorable to facility construction or operation because of their characteristics.

Opportunities included, but were not limited to, WWE corridors, BLM- or Forest Service–designated utility corridors, and existing transmission lines energized to at least 230 kV. Many constraints were considered; the list included railroads, pipelines, major streets or highways, state and national parks, wildlife refuges, BLM Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wilderness Study Areas, Department of Defense land, Bureau of Indian Affairs land or reservations, prime farmland, irrigated agriculture, confined animal feeding operations or dairies, airports, residences, cities and towns, oil and gas wells and leases, surface and underground mining, erodible soils, geologic hazards, steep slopes, paleontological or historical resources, and wetlands and floodplains. A wide variety of plant and animal concerns was also considered, including plant and animal species of concern, sensitive fisheries, sage-grouse leks and core areas, raptor nests, designated big game winter and parturition ranges, and wild horse and burro management areas. Visual considerations included Forest Service SIO Classes moderate, high and very high; Forest Service VQO classes Preservation, Retention, and Partial Retention; scenic overlooks; scenic highways; federally designated scenic areas; and state and local scenic byways. Following selection of Proposed and Alternative Routes via the LRT process, the

[4] In order to achieve the capacity rating needed to serve present and future loads within the Companies' service area, the Western Electricity Coordinating Council requires a minimum separation from existing transmission lines that serve substantially the same load as that served by each of the new Gateway West transmission segments. As described in the Plan of Development, that minimum separation depends on the purpose of the existing line, the load it now serves, and the remaining capacity of the rest of the grid to absorb the load if the several co-located lines fail at once. For the purposes of the initial siting study, the longest span was assumed to be 1,500 feet, thereby dictating the minimum distance between existing and proposed transmission lines serving the same load.

alternatives were further refined by reviewing aerial photography and topographic maps or on the basis of important input received from stakeholders, field reconnaissance, and other sources. The lead federal agency (BLM) evaluated the routes, made adjustments, and added additional routes to minimize impacts. Later cooperators and other stakeholders identified other routes, often to accomplish single-purpose objectives that did not include avoidance of sensitive visual classes. Taking all of the various constraints and opportunities into consideration, crossing of visually sensitive lands could not be completely avoided across the entire Project. Section 5 describes each AOI on National Forest System (NFS) land and provides recommendations for Forest Service action for the Project to remain consistent with Forest Service visual objectives.

5 AREAS OF INCONSISTENCY

This section of the report summarizes the conditions for each AOI on NFS land. It is organized by NF and individual AOI. Each AOI discussion includes a summary of the applicable Forest Plan and any visual considerations described in the Plan. The route segments and alternatives are then described by location and include the opportunities and constraints used to determine the Proposed Route locations and the locations and justification for any Route Alternatives. Site maps are introduced showing the distribution of visual classes and a visual analysis conducted for an area within a 15-mile radius of the AOI. The general discussion is followed by a summary of the existing landscape conditions that support the visual class designations. The last section of each AOI discussion is a consistency analysis describing the results of the analysis and the degree to which the AOI is consistent with or differs from the visual class objective. The consistency analysis also provides a recommendation for a Forest Service action (Forest Plan amendment or one-time exemption) to resolve each AOI.

The Gateway West Proposed Route or Route Alternatives would require Forest Service actions to account for visual impacts in areas within three different NFs. Transmission line Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) of the Proposed Route (Figure 1-1) would cross land within the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs. One AOI is located on Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c). Segments 2 and 3 would not cross NFS land. Segment 4 of the Proposed Route would cross the Caribou-Targhee NF and Alternative 7K to the Segment 7 Proposed Route would cross the Sawtooth NF. Segments 1W, 4, and 7 contain a total of three AOIs. Segments 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 do not cross NFS lands. Table 5-1 lists AOIs by Forest Plan and visual management class.

Table 5-1. Forest Plan Areas of Inconsistency

Forest Plan	Area	AOI	Route Segment/Tower Height (feet)	SIO/VQO Crossed	Simulation (S) or Photos (P)	KOP No.
Medicine Bow Forest Plan	Medicine Bow	MB-1	Proposed Route 1W(a) (180) Proposed Route 1W(c) (180)	Moderate	Yes	105[1/]
Caribou Forest Plan	Caribou	CB-1	Proposed Route 4 (180)	Retention/ Partial Retention	Yes	1346, 1505
Sawtooth Forest Plan	Sublett Division	ST-1	Alternative 7K (180)	Modification	Yes	1273

1/ Key observation point (KOP) is south of National Forest boundary. No KOP was established on the Forest due to lack of access.
AOI – Area of Inconsistency; SIO – Scenic Integrity Objective; VQO – Visual Quality Objective

5.1 Medicine Bow National Forest Plan

The Medicine Bow-Routt NFs maintain separate management plans for each proclaimed NF. The Medicine Bow Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (2003) (Medicine Bow Forest Plan) provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Medicine Bow NF in southeast Wyoming. The Forest Plan guides activities on 1,084,390 acres within parts of Albany, Carbon, Converse, Laramie, and Platte Counties, Wyoming (see Figure 1.1-1). Route segments within the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs are 1W(a) and 1W(c). The Forest Plan includes Scenery Management Standards and Guidelines, including the following:

Management Standards:

1. Apply the SMS to all NFS lands. Travel routes, use areas, and water bodies determined to be of primary importance are concern level 1, and appropriate scenic integrity objectives are established according to the SMS.
2. Meet the SIO of Moderate within the foreground for all National Scenic and Recreation Trails.

Guidelines:

1. When rehabilitating projects and areas that do not meet SIOs specified for each management area prescription, consider the following when setting priorities for rehabilitation:
   a. Relative importance of the area and the amount of deviation from the scenic integrity objectives.
   b. Length of time it will take natural processes to reduce the scenic impacts so they meet the scenic integrity objective.
   c. Length of time it will take rehabilitation measures to meet the scenic integrity objective.
   d. Benefits to other resource management objectives to accomplish rehabilitation.
2. Meet the scenic integrity objectives of High and Moderate within 1 year after completion of a project. Meet the scenic integrity objective of Low within 3 years after project completion.

The Medicine Bow Forest Plan includes guidelines for utility corridors to minimize scenic impacts and plan for rehabilitation of existing impacts. These include:

- Locate and design utility corridors and electronic sites to blend with the landscape and be compatible with SIOs in adjacent management areas.
- Crossing the Medicine Bow NF along a transmission corridor shall require the preparation of a vegetation management plan for the utility corridor to minimize scenic impacts and plan for rehabilitation of existing impacts.

The NF has recommended the following measures to reduce contrast: feathering the edges on cleared areas to provide a more natural appearance, using transmission

structures similar to the existing structures, and using non-reflective materials for the structures.

The Medicine Bow Forest Plan discusses the SMS as applying to all NFS lands. Travel routes, use areas, and waterbodies determined to be of primary importance are concern level 1 and appropriate SIOs are established according to the SMS. Guidelines also include meeting the SIO of Moderate within the foreground for all National Scenic and Recreation Trails. The Medicine Bow NF uses Geographic Areas to create focal points for implementing forest plan decisions based on ecological assessments at various levels in collaboration with other land managers. The Geographic Area on the western side of the NF crossed by proposed Project is managed as the Box Elder Geographic Area, which is considered remote and primitive. The Management Area (MA) prescription for this portion of the Box Elder Geographic Area is 3.31, Backcountry Recreation-Year-round Motorized, with the exception of the area adjacent to the existing 230-kV transmission line, which is MA 8.3, Utility Corridor.

The northern portions of Segment 1W consist of single-circuit 230-kV transmission lines between the existing Windstar Substation near the Dave Johnston Power Plant at Glenrock, Wyoming, and the planned Aeolus Substation near Hanna, Wyoming. Proposed Route 1W parallels an existing transmission line. The Proponents proposed to rebuild the existing line (portions of Proposed Route Segment 1W[a] and Proposed Route Segment 1W[c]). The distance between the substations is approximately 75 to 80 miles. Certain factors, such as following the existing WWE corridor, minimizing the length of the lines, avoiding large population centers, and locating within favorable topography, were considerations for this area. Specific constraints within these three segments that affected the route locations included big game crucial winter range, National Historic Trails (NHTs), raptor nest sites, avoidance of sensitive visual resources, sage-grouse leks and sage-grouse core areas, oil and gas wells, large private landholders who placed high values on the natural scenery, and threatened or endangered plants and animals.

Visual classifications in the Forest Plan would be affected by this Project. An area with a Moderate SIO would be crossed by the Proposed Routes of Segment 1W. The presence of additional transmission lines in this landscape would not meet the designated SIO. As a result, Forest Service action would be necessary to modify the visual classification or approve a one-time exemption in order for 1W to be consistent with the Forest Plan. Figure 5.1-1 shows the location of the AOI described in Section 5.1.1 below.

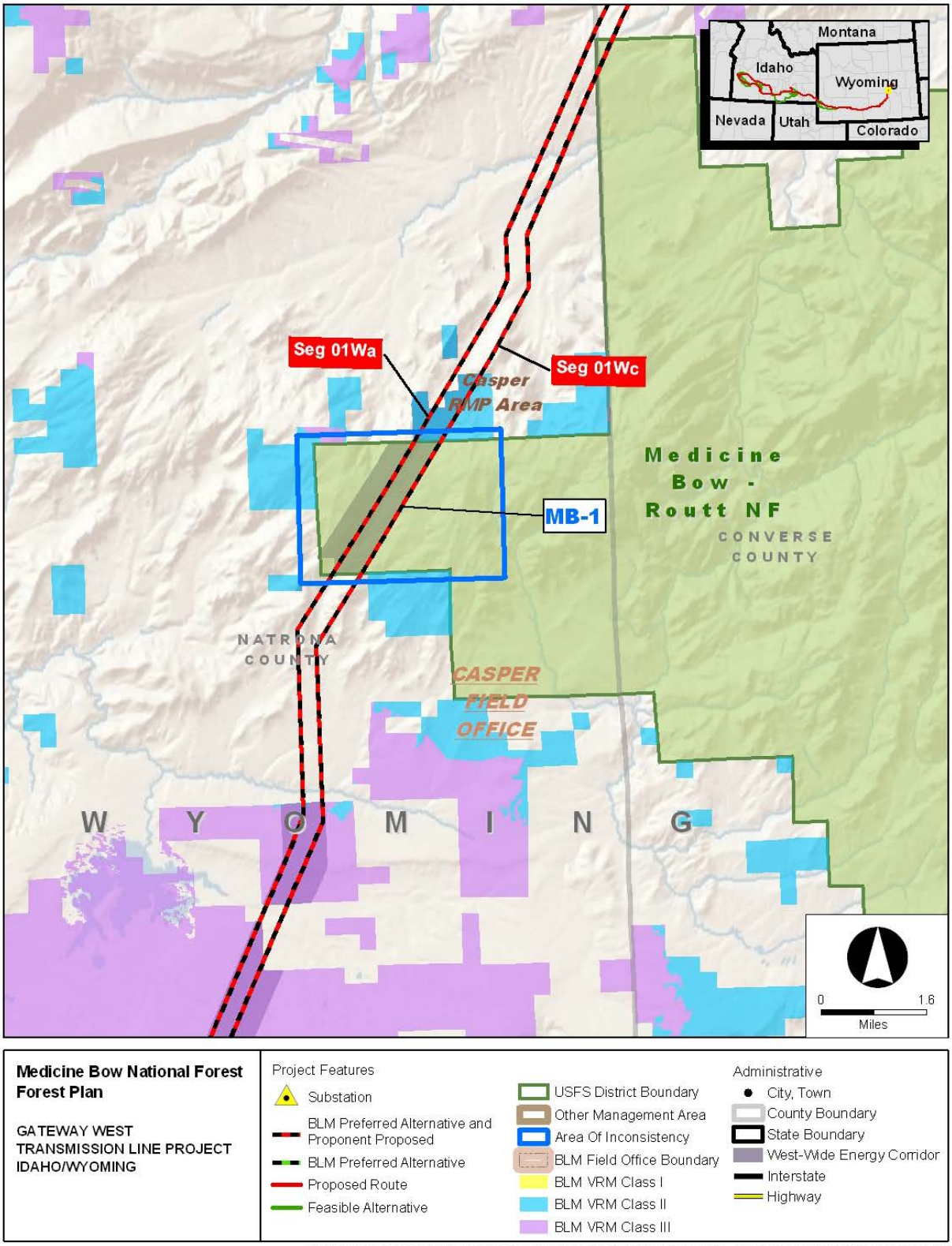


Figure 5.1-1. AOI Location for the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests

5.1.1 AOI MB-1 Medicine Bow (Segments 1W[a] and 1W[c])

AOI MB-1 is located approximately 30 to 35 miles south-southwest of the Windstar Substation near the Dave Johnston Power Plant at Glenrock, Wyoming. The two Project segments, 1W(a) and 1W(c), would cross approximately 2.3 miles of the NF from northeast to southwest. This portion of the NF is designated for management as SIO Moderate. Segment 1W(a) is a rebuild of an existing transmission line in this location. Segment 1W(c) would be located within an existing transmission line corridor, to the east of, and generally parallel to, the existing line. The 1W(c) route generally maintains a minimum of separation of 1,500 feet from the 1W(a) route to meet reliability criteria (as discussed in Chapter 1 of the EIS); however, the two lines would be as close as 530 feet in places between mileposts (MPs) 24 and 30 due to topography. Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) would be located within the WWE corridor.

Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c) would cross NFS land on the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs designated as MA 8.3, Utility Corridors and Electronic Sites. Crossing lengths are approximately 2.3 miles for each route. The utility corridor has an SIO of “compatible with adjacent management areas.” The adjacent area has an SIO of Moderate; therefore, a new transmission line within the WWE corridor would not be consistent with Forest Plan direction on scenery management.

The area is not visible from any developed recreation area or travelway. Existing roads are closed to the public. Any new roads would also be closed. The borders of the cleared right-of-way (ROW) would be feathered to create a more natural-appearing line, as required by the Forest Plan. The transmission structures would also be made of material that, over time, becomes non-reflective. However, the portions of the Proposed Routes would still be inconsistent with the SIO of Moderate.

Figure 5.1-3 shows the viewshed of the Medicine Bow AOI. The crossing of this AOI includes one parcel designated SIO Moderate comprising 5,814 acres.

5.1.1.1 Alternatives Considered

Several routes between Windstar and Aeolus were considered in the Draft EIS, including three proposed routes and four feasible alternatives. In the area of the AOI MB-1, the routes are in, or parallel to, the WWE corridor. The former Proposed Route 1E deviates from the WWE corridor for part of the route. Alternative 1E-C was developed to avoid a new Greenfield[5] route. Both Proposed Route 1E and Alternative 1E-C were dropped from consideration between the Draft and Final EIS. Current Forest policy suggests that WWE corridor routes are often preferred utility routes, although other constraints may take precedence over the WWE corridor. Siting routes within corridors of existing routes can also be preferred locations although the environmental consequences from the reliability separation sometimes results in more effects than if a new route were selected. During the siting process, the Proponents attempted to follow the WWE corridor unless fewer environmental and other impacts would occur along an alternative route.

[5] “Greenfield” is defined herein to mean a geographic area where no transmission electric lines or other linear infrastructure such as major roads or pipelines, etc. oriented in the same direction of the proposed transmission line exist.

Several routes, including routes to the east of the Laramie Mountains and near the Thunder Basin National Grassland, were considered and eliminated by the Proponents because of scenic concerns and public opposition to development of a new Greenfield route. The remaining alternatives, for the most part, avoid mountainous areas but have remaining issues including avoidance of raptor nests and roosting areas near the North Platte and Medicine Bow Rivers, sage-grouse leks and core areas, historic Rock Creek to Fort Fetterman Road, active mining claims, and the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs.

A No Action Alternative is also analyzed in the EIS; it is the predicted result of the denial of the applications. Under the No Action Alternative, Gateway West would not be constructed (no construction of the new substations, substation expansion, or the transmission line); therefore, no associated plan amendments would be required. The objectives of the Project, which include providing increased transmission capacity and a more reliable transmission line system for transport of energy, including wind energy, to meet existing and future needs (as described in Section 1.3, Purpose and Need, of the EIS), would not be met.

5.1.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

There is little development in the 15-mile area surrounding AOI MB-1 and much of the area is mountainous, containing the Laramie Mountains, Casper Mountain, and the Deer Creek Range. The topography flattens out southwest of the AOI, near Bates Creek Reservoir. There are many creeks throughout the 15-mile radius. Forests are found mostly in the more mountainous areas especially in the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs. State Route (SR) 487 is the most significant road in the area and the Old Casper Medicine Bow Highway crosses the area from northwest to southeast. An existing 230-kV line crosses the area from northeast to southwest and a large strip mining area lies in the south-central portion of the area. Potential sensitive viewers include local residents, motorists, hikers, and visitors to local recreation areas and historic sites.

5.1.1.3 Analysis

Figure 5.1-2 shows the viewshed, AOI, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used in evaluating the consistency of the proposed transmission facilities with the existing landscape and visual classification. Figure MB-1b in Attachment A is a simulation showing the transmission lines on the existing landscape.

Scenic views west of the Deer Creek Range and Reno Hill are important to sensitive viewers in this remote area of the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs. There were no key observation points (KOPs) identified due to the remote nature of the area; however, views in the surrounding area range from the undulating valley to more dramatic rocky terrain with numerous mountain silhouettes. KOP 105 (Figures MB-1a and MB-1b in Attachment A) is located approximately 2.5 miles south of the Medicine Bow-Routt NFs boundary but represents views of the surrounding areas adjacent to the forest. KOP 105 and other adjacent viewpoints exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few man-made features. The most visible man-made feature in the surrounding area is an existing 230-kV transmission line. Proposed Route Segments 1W(a) and 1W(c)would be moderately visible and screening and other mitigation efforts would not be successful at lowering impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. With

little man-made development in the area, the structures would have a moderate to high contrast due to backdropping effects offered by the high relief terrain. Many of the views in the surrounding area exhibit a high level of variety in form line, color, and texture, which would be contrasted by the addition of new man-made structures and access roads to the existing structures. Figure 5.1-3 shows the AOI and proposed amendment management action. The amendment would allow the Project without changing the SIO for the area. The Project, if approved, would be constructed with mitigation measures and BMPs used to lower potential direct impacts to visual resources (see Table 2.7-1 in the Final EIS).

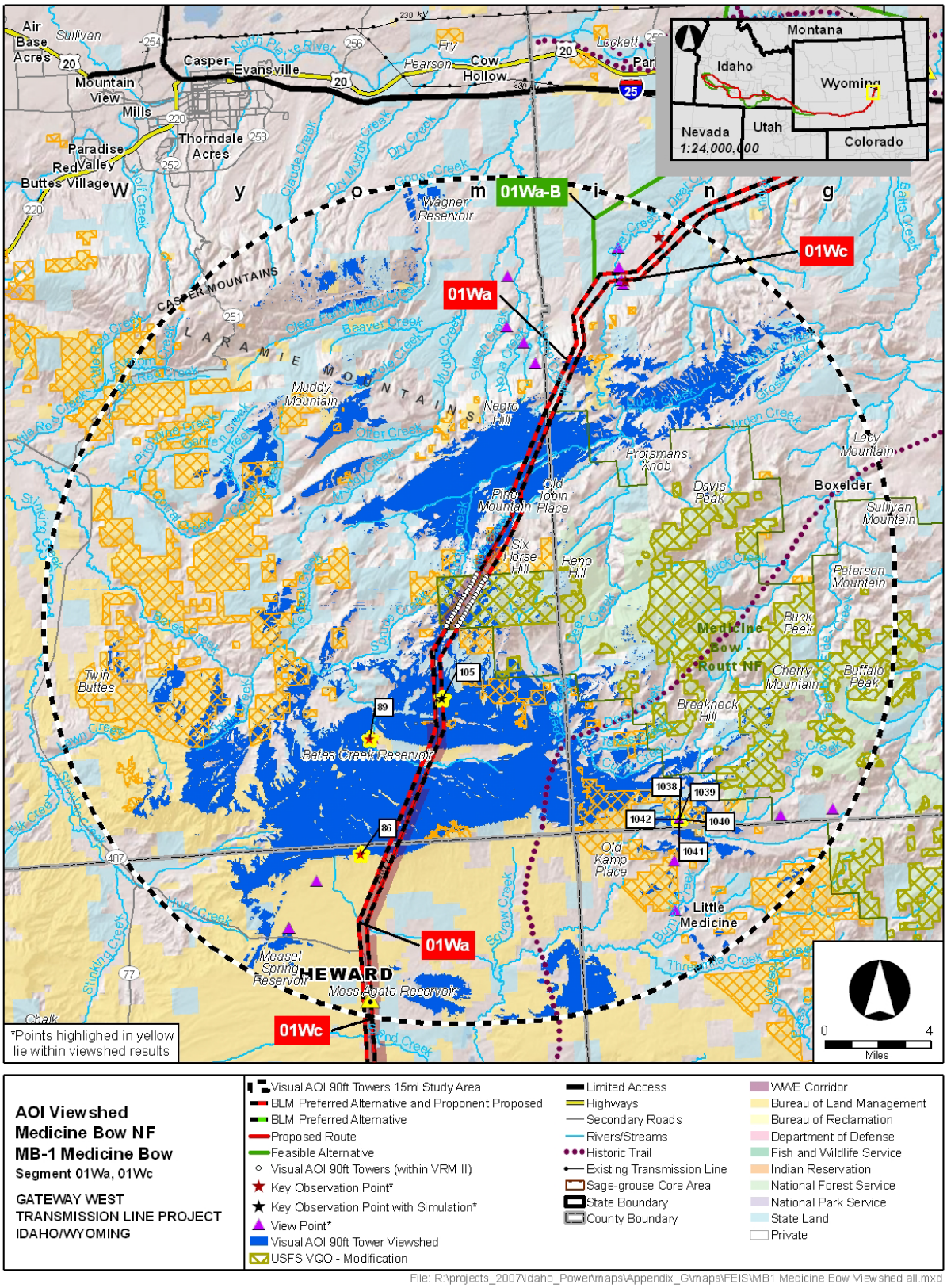


Figure 5.1-2. AOI MB-1 Aerial View

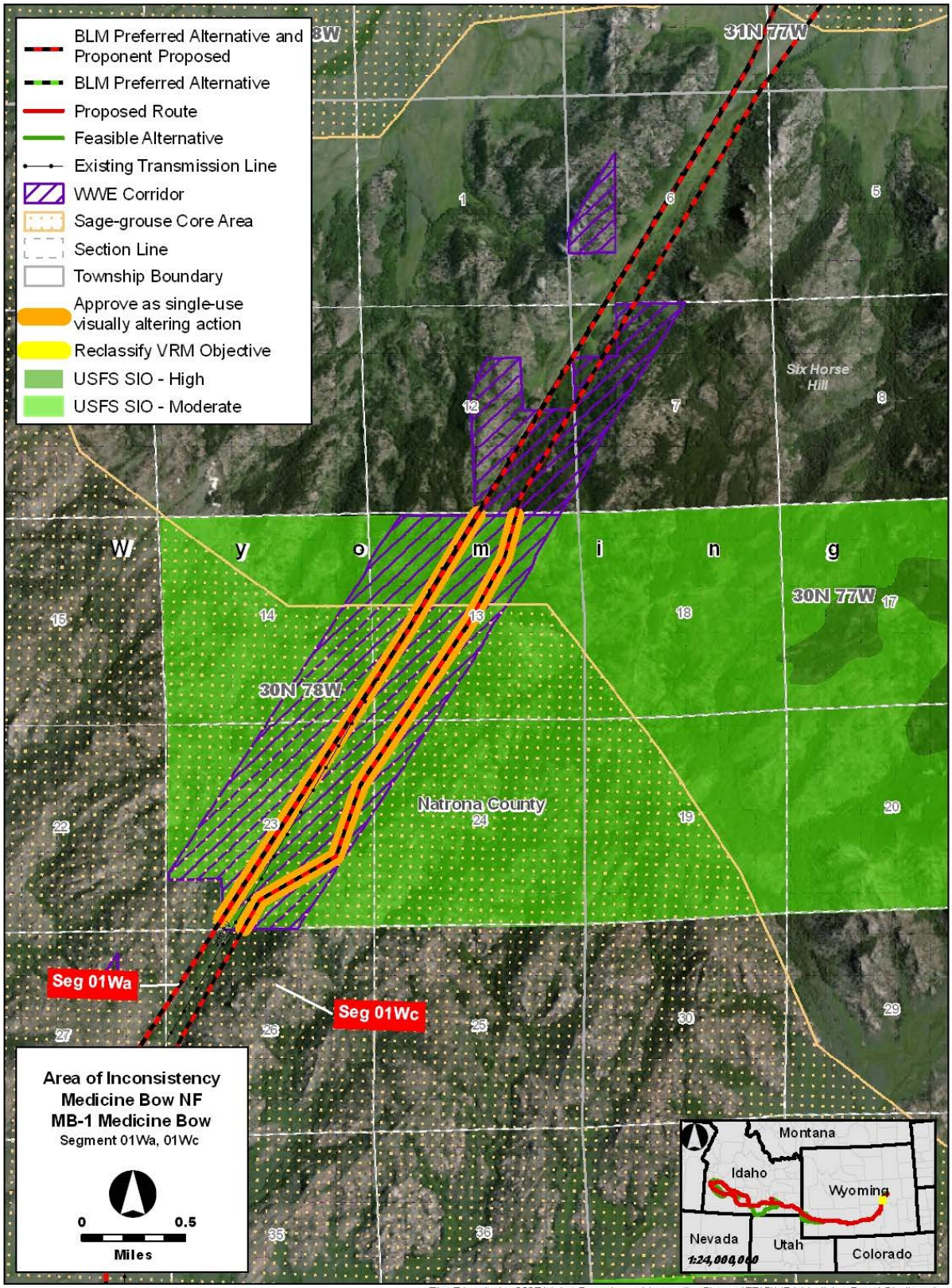


Figure 5.1-3. AOI MB-1 Medicine Bow AOI Visual Analysis

5.2 Caribou National Forest Plan

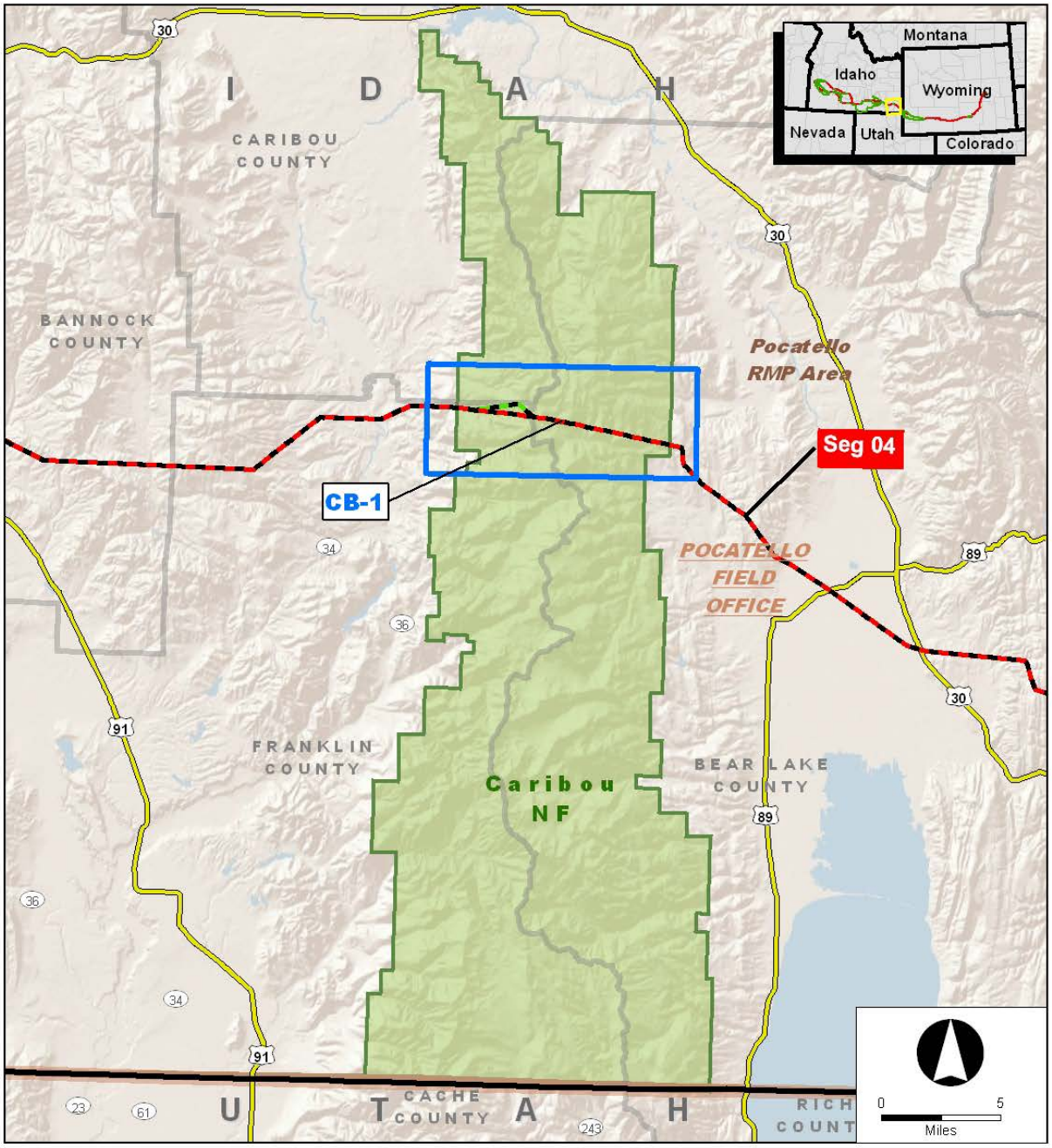
The Caribou-Targhee NF maintains separate management plans for each proclaimed NF. The Revised Forest Plan for the Caribou NF (2003; Caribou Forest Plan) provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Caribou NF in southeast Idaho. The Caribou NF encompasses nearly 1,000,000 acres (see Figure 1.1-1). The Forest Plan contains the following visual objective: "Objectives for scenery (either VQOs or SIOs) shall be met along Scenic or Historic Byways, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other sensitive travel routes and special emphasis areas."

As the east-west route crosses the Bear River Range, through the Caribou-Targhee NF, VQO Partial Retention and VQO Retention lands are crossed. The presence of a transmission line in these landscapes would not meet the designated VQOs. Because of the impact the Project would have on visual attributes of the Caribou-Targhee NF, action would be necessary to modify the visual classification or approve a one-time exemption to be consistent with the Forest Plan. Figure 5.2-1 shows the location of the AOI and a description and management recommendation follow.

Alternatives Considered – The alignment through NFS lands is restricted by the location of Populus Substation, and the Bear River and Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The primary siting opportunity in this area is the existing 345-kV transmission line corridor and the existing NF utility corridor.

The Preferred Route through the Forest is the Proposed Route with Alternative 4G. The Proposed Route for Segment 4 crosses the eastern boundary of the Forest in Section 12, Township 12 South, Range 42 East near MP 161. The route continues in a west/northwest direction through the Forest, and exits near MP 170 (at the western boundary of Section 3, Township 12 South, Range 41 East). Constraints in this subsection include steep slopes, unstable soils, and Retention and Partial Retention VQOs. Alternative 4G was proposed by the Forest Service to avoid crossing steep slopes and unstable soils along a portion of the Proposed Route within the Forest. These areas were identified by a soil survey completed in October 2012. Alternative 4G would diverge from the Proposed Route within the Forest and follow a north/northwest and then a west/southwest alignment along a ridge for approximately 2.6 miles. Alternative 4G would then rejoin the Proposed Route within a mile of the Forest's western boundary.

Three additional alternatives were considered but eliminated from additional study. One route would avoid the National Forest in Idaho but did not meet the Proponents' Objectives, would impact densely populated areas, and would still cross NFS land in Utah. An alternative was considered that followed the existing transmission line for 3 miles (offset by 1,500 feet) before turning north towards the Proposed Route (page 2-68 of the Draft EIS). It generally followed the Proposed Route (but somewhat south of it) across the National Forest, but was not selected for detailed analysis because the Forest staff recommended a different route that was more feasible in regard to constructability and environmental impacts. An alignment was also considered that exactly paralleled the existing 345-kV powerline in North Canyon (offset by 1,500 feet to the north). This alignment was not considered in detail because the Forest staff determined that it unnecessarily impacted a substantial length of North Canyon Creek and the associated Aquatic Influence Zone.



Caribou-Targhee National Forest Forest Plan

GATEWAY WEST
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
IDAHO/WYOMING

Project Features
- Substation
- BLM Preferred Alternative and Proponent Proposed
- BLM Preferred Alternative
- Proposed Route
- Feasible Alternative

- USFS District Boundary
- Other Management Area
- Area Of Inconsistency
- BLM Field Office Boundary

Administrative
- City, Town
- County Boundary
- State Boundary
- West-Wide Energy Corridor
- Interstate
- Highway

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Figure 5.2-1. Caribou-Targhee National Forest AOI Location

Figures 5.2-2, 5.2-3, and 5.2-4 are photographs of existing transmission lines that cross the Caribou-Targhee NF. These lines are approximately 40 years old and lie roughly 1 mile south of the Proposed Route. These photographs demonstrate potential visual impacts from Gateway West as seen from foreground and middleground perspectives.

Figure 5.2-2. Existing Transmission Lines in the Caribou-Targhee NF, Viewed from Within the Right-of-Way (a distance of zero)

Figure 5.2-3. Existing Transmission Lines in the Caribou-Targhee NF, Visible in the Foreground to Middleground (approximately 0.5 mile away)

Figure 5.2-4. Existing Transmission Lines in the Caribou-Targhee NF, Visible in the Middleground (less than 5 miles away)

5.2.1 AOI CB-1 Caribou (Segment 4)

The Caribou AOI is located in the north-south trending Bear River Mountain Range, approximately 17 miles south of Soda Springs, Idaho. Segment 4 crosses the Bear River Valley from southeast to northwest, following the existing 345-kV transmission line. The route turns to the west to cross the Bear River Range. The lower slopes on the east and west side of the range are designated as VQO Partial Retention, and the route crosses a total of 7.8 miles in this visual classification. The central top of the range is designated as visual class VQO Retention, which the route crosses for 1.3 miles. Figure 5.2-1 shows the location of the Caribou AOI.

5.2.1.1 Alternatives Considered

Segment 4 has five Route Alternatives, almost entirely within the Kemmerer area in proximity to sensitive landscape elements such as the Cokeville Meadows NWR and Fossil Butte National Monument in Lincoln County, Wyoming. Following field work in October 2012, an alternative route (Alternative 4G) through the Caribou-Targhee NF was developed to avoid steep unstable soils and follow ridgelines for much of its length. Partial Retention and Retention lands are found in the Bear River Range for several miles to the north and south of the Proposed Route and Alternative 4G. No small route adjustments were identified that would avoid the sensitive visual areas. The Proponents initially selected a route that roughly followed the two existing 345-kV lines (offset by 1,500 feet) near the designated utility corridor, which also crosses the sensitive visual classes. The existing corridor is 315 feet wide, which is too narrow to also contain the proposed Gateway West transmission line. Riparian concerns led them to consider the Proposed Route, which would range between 0.5 mile and just over 1 mile north of the existing corridor. Other constraints include wetlands, NWRs, steep and unstable soils, and residential development located in the Bear River Valley, east of the AOI.

A No Action Alternative is also analyzed in the EIS; it is the predicted result of the denial of the applications. Under the No Action Alternative, Gateway West would not be constructed (no construction of the new substations, substation expansion, or the transmission line); therefore, no associated plan amendments would be required. The objectives of the Project, which include providing increased transmission capacity and a more reliable transmission line system for transport of energy, including wind energy, to meet existing and future needs (as described in Section 1.3, Purpose and Need, of the EIS), would not be met.

5.2.1.2 Existing Landscape Conditions

The 15-mile study area for AOI CB-1 includes three groups of mountains running north to south separated by several valleys. Approximately one-third of the area within the study area is NFS land. One-fourth of the study area includes the Cache portion of the Caribou-Targhee NF. The mountains include the Aspen and Pruess Ranges in the east, the Wassatch and Bear River Ranges in the central part of the area, and the Portneuf Range in the west. Much of the mountainous areas are part of the Caribou-Targhee NF. The Gem, Gentile, Bear Lake, Bear River, and Mound Valleys are found along the course of the Bear River. There is considerable agricultural land and farms in

these valleys; the major roads U.S. Highway 30, U.S. Highway 89, and SR 34; and small communities including Grace in the northwest, Montpelier and Ovid in the southeast, Bern in the east, Thatcher in the southwest, and Georgetown in the northeast. There are also three east-west transmission line corridors and two north-south transmission lines that cross the analysis area. Sensitive viewing areas include the local communities, highways and roads, camping areas, hiking trails, the Oregon NHT, the Bear Lake NWR, and Bear Lake State Park.

Scenic views of the Bear River and Wasatch Ranges are important to sensitive viewers hiking the Highline Trail in this primitive and remote area of the Caribou-Targhee NF. These sensitive views are represented by KOP 1346 (Figure CB-1a in Attachment A), which displays views ranging from undulating valleys to more dramatic rocky terrain and mountain silhouettes with dominant rugged, vertical vegetation. Views in the surrounding area exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with man-made features adjacent to the view. Views from KOP 1505 represent views from travelers on road 20401 (Figure CB-1c in Attachment A). These views are limited to a forested corridor along the road, giving drivers and passengers a sense of traveling through a continuous forested landscape.

The Preferred Route (Proposed Segment 4 with Alternative 4G) would follow the Proposed Route through much of the forest, except where it diverts to the north in order to avoid steep and unstable soils. Scenic views of the South Ant Basin and Rocky Knoll as well as Lake Loa are important to sensitive viewers traveling on Forest Road 401 in this primitive and remote area of the Caribou-Targhee NF. These sensitive views are represented by KOP 1370 (Figure 5.2-5), which displays views ranging from undulating valleys and heavily forested angular slopes as well as more dramatic rocky terrain and mountain silhouettes with dominant rugged, vertical vegetation. Views in the surrounding area exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few discernible man-made features adjacent to the view.

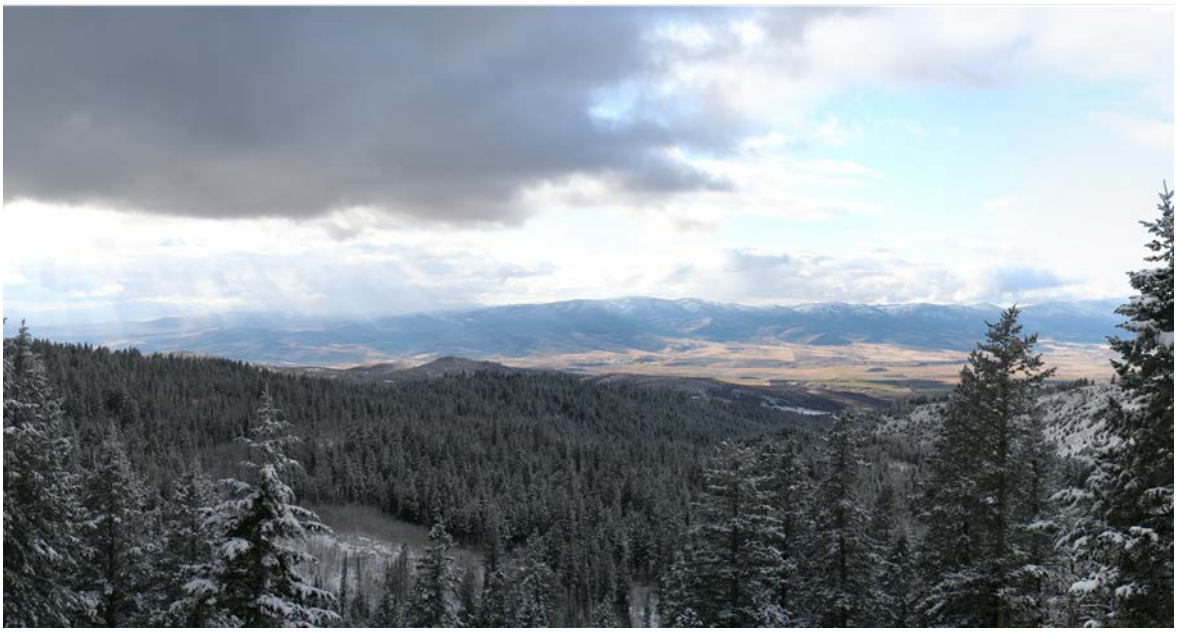


Figure 5.2-5. View from KOP 1370, Looking Towards the Preferred and Proposed Alignments

5.2.1.3 Analysis

Figure 5.2-6 shows the viewshed, AOI, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used in evaluating the consistency of the proposed 500-kV transmission facilities with the existing landscape and Class II VQOs. Figure CB-1b in Attachment A is a simulation showing the transmission lines on the existing landscape. This simulation is for the line before adjustment and the actual impact would likely be greater because the Proposed Route is approximately 180 feet closer to the view than simulated. Simulations for KOPs 1346 and 1505 apply to the portion of the Proposed Route that is the same for both the Forest Service's Preferred Route as well as the Proponents' Proposed Route. There is no simulation for Alternative 4G of the Forest Service's Preferred Route. KOPs 1370 and 670 would have partially screened views of the Preferred Route where it is skylined along the ridge tops.

The transmission line would be visible to sensitive viewers hiking the Highline Trail in this primitive and remote area of the Caribou-Targhee NF. Impacts to these sensitive views are represented by KOP 1346 (Figure CB-1b in Attachment A), which shows the transmission line within views ranging from undulating valleys to more dramatic rocky terrain and mountain silhouettes with dominant rugged, vertical vegetation. Views in the surrounding area exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with man-made features adjacent to the view. Segment 4 of the Project would be moderately to highly visible. Micrositing to take advantage of topographic and vegetative screening to some extent, plus other mitigation efforts, would only slightly lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area.

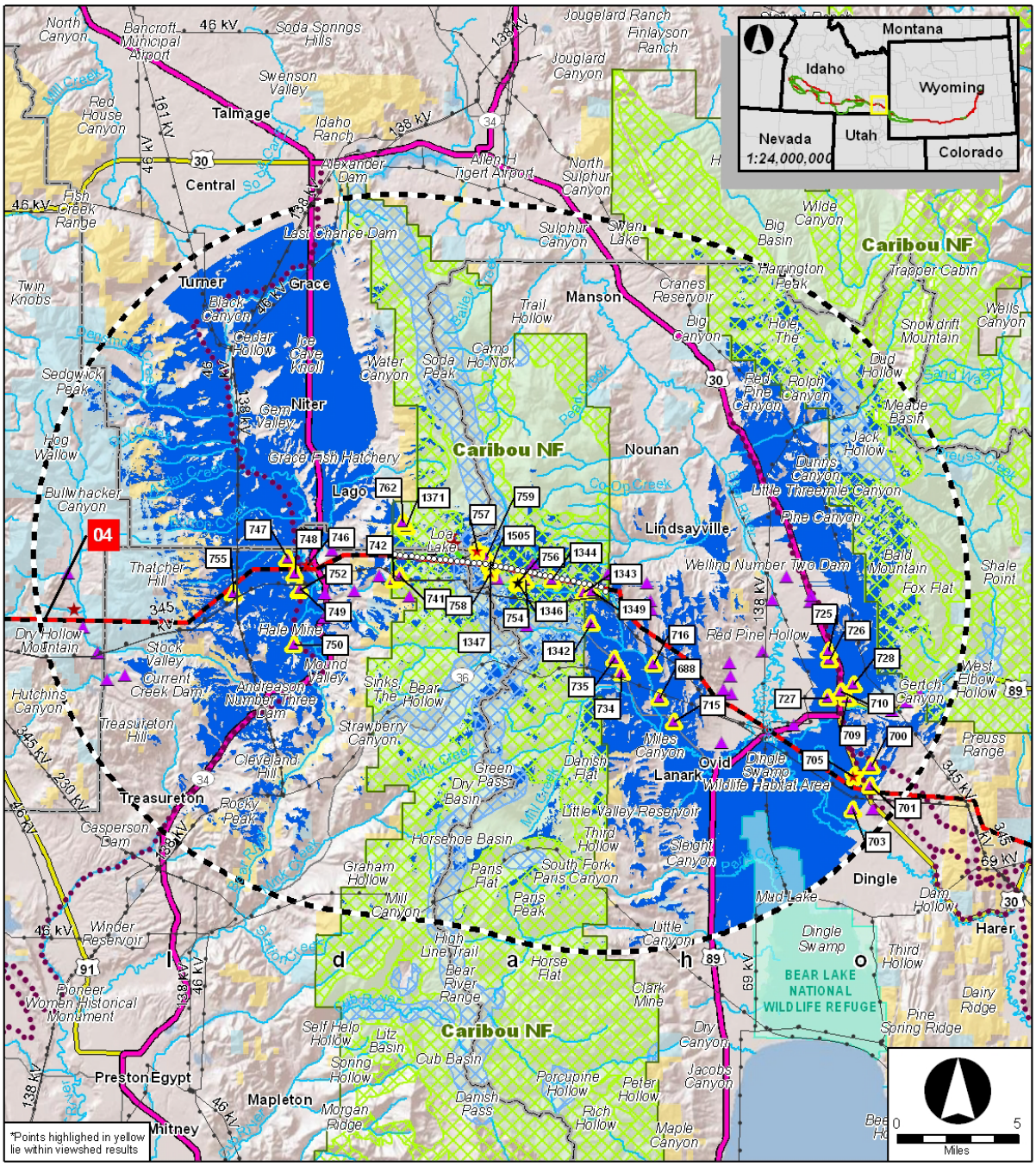
The transmission line would cross a travel route, road 20401, and would be highly visible to road users. The existing conditions and simulation of the surrounding landscape are represented by KOP 1505 in Attachment A (Figures CB-1c and CB-1d, respectively). Views from this KOP are limited due to the density of trees. The road travels through an evergreen forest with no views of development other than the road. Figure CB-1d is a representation of the view after Project. Clearing, required for maintaining reliability and safety of the Project, results in direct views of the conductors overhead and transmission structures along the ROW. The forest landscape is broken up by a cleared corridor, which interrupts the feeling of being in a remote forest. From these figures, it is clear that the line will be obvious to the casual observer, not blending in with the surrounding landscape, and will not meet requirements of Partial Retention or Retention.

Segment 4 of the Project would be moderately to highly visible 0.6 mile from the viewpoint at KOP 1370; an opening in the vegetation that allows a broad horizontal view of the Gentile Valley. Micrositing to take advantage of topographic and vegetative screening and other mitigation effort would only slightly lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area and it is likely that new access roads would be highly visible due to the clearing of the dominant vegetation along the steep slopes and possible cut and fill required to access the remote areas of the forested landscape. The addition of new man-made structures and access roads would draw the attention of the casual observer, would not likely borrow from the landscape elements of the existing environment, and would therefore not be consistent with the VQO of Retention or Partial

Retention. Three transmission lines currently cross through the Retention and Partial Retention areas within the Forest; however, they are not discernible from KOP 1370.

With little man-made development in close proximity to the Proposed Route, the structures would contrast highly with the surrounding dense vegetation. Figure CB-1b (Attachment A) shows a visual simulation of the proposed transmission facilities as viewed from KOP 1346. Many of the views in the surrounding area exhibit a high level of variety in form, line, color, and texture that would be contrasted by the addition of new man-made structures and access roads. These would draw the attention of the casual observer and thus not conform to the VQO of Retention or Partial Retention. Figure CB-1d (Attachment A) demonstrates the high visibility of the Project where it would cross major travel routes. The required ROW clearing would result in high Project visibility and would affect views of the surrounding landscape. The VQO for Retention and Partial Retention was identified to protect the scenic quality of the Highline Trail; however, three transmission lines currently cross through the Retention and Partial Retention areas.

A Project-level plan amendment changing the land classification for the Project ROW to MA 8.1, Utility Corridor, is recommended. Prescription 8.1 does not contain Retention or Partial Retention as stated in the Forest Plan description (page RFP 4-78): “Lands where Category 8 prescription are applied are likely to be permanently altered by human activities beyond the level needed to maintain appearing natural landscapes…”. Therefore, the effect of changing the current management prescriptions to Prescription 8.1 would be to remove these acres from the Partial Retention and Retention VQO categories (see Figure 5.2-7). The Project, if approved, would be constructed with mitigation measures and BMPs used to lower potential direct impacts to visual resources (see Table 2.7-1 in the Final EIS).



AOI Viewshed
Caribou NF
CB-1 Caribou
Segment 04

GATEWAY WEST
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
IDAHO/WYOMING

- Visual AOI 190ft Towers 15mi Study Area
- BLM Preferred Alternative and Proponent Proposed
- BLM Preferred Alternative
- Proposed Route
- Feasible Alternative
- Visual AOI 190ft Towers (within VRM II)
- Key Observation Point*
- Key Observation Point with Simulation*
- View Point*
- Visual AOI 190ft Tower Viewshed
- USFS VQO - Retention
- USFS VQO - Partial Retention
- Limited Access
- Highways
- Secondary Roads
- Rivers/Streams
- Historic Trail
- Existing Transmission Line
- National Wildlife Refuge
- State Boundary
- County Boundary
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Department of Defense
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Indian Reservation
- National Forest Service
- National Park Service
- State Land
- Private
- Scenic Byway

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Figure 5.2-6. AOI CB-1 Caribou Visual Analysis

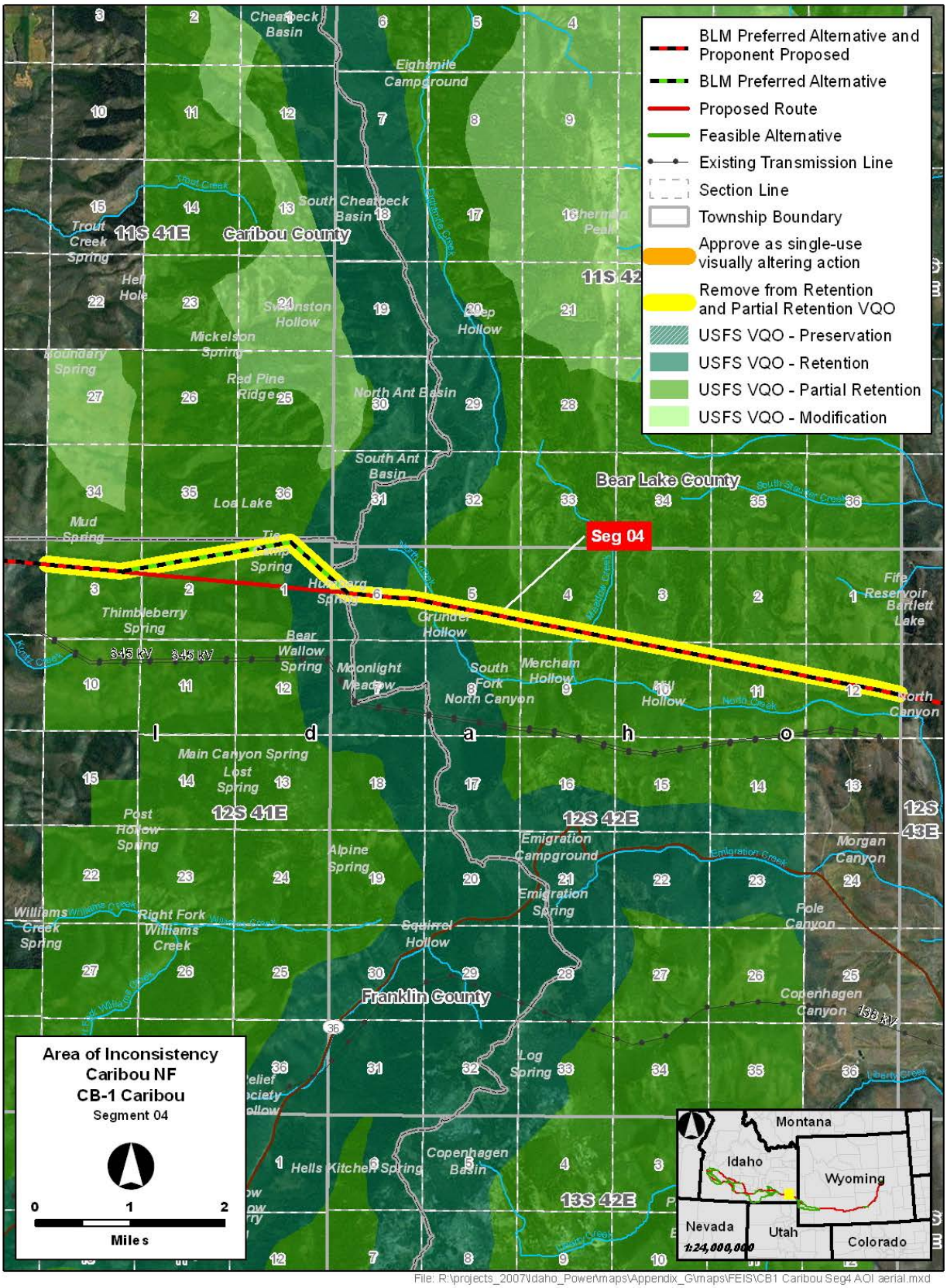


Figure 5.2-7. AOI CB-1 Caribou AOI Aerial Map

5.3 Sawtooth National Forest Plan

The Sawtooth National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (2003, as amended 2012) (Sawtooth Forest Plan) provides direction for managing approximately 2.1 million acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Sawtooth NF (see Figure 1.1-1). The Sawtooth Forest Plan lists two decisions related to the management of the scenic environment. Decision SCST01 states: "All projects shall be designed to meet the adopted Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) as displayed on the Forest VQO map." Decision SCST02 states: "When reducing VQOs, attempt to meet the next-highest objective at the closest viewer distance or most relevant distance given the probable sensitive viewer."

The Segment 7 Proposed Route consists of 118.2 miles of single-circuit 500-kV transmission line. It leaves Populus Substation and proceeds northwest for about 15 miles, following existing transmission lines and Segment 5 before turning due west and proceeding through about 103 miles of mainly private irrigated agriculture to the Cedar Hill Substation. There is significant local opposition to the Proposed Route due to its proximity to residences. There are also potential economic effects on local agricultural including loss of prime farmland and Conservation Reserve Program land, disruption to existing crops and surface irrigation patterns, interference with center pivot irrigation, and potential electrical effects on confined animal feeding operations. As a result, a multi-county task force consisting of residents, county officials, and state legislators has recommended alternatives well south of the Proposed Route, mainly on BLM-managed or NFS land. Constraints in the southern alternatives include high quality forested land, historic trails, wetlands, steep slopes, designated big game range, sage-grouse, and raptor nests.

The Preferred Route for Segment 7 follows the Proposed Route and Alternatives 7B, 7B, 7C, 7D, and 7G. The Preferred Route would not cross NFS land. However, one feasible alternative, Alternative 7K, would cross two divisions of the Sawtooth NF—the Sublett Division and the northeastern edge of the Cassia Division—for a total distance of 12.7 miles. These crossings include areas with VQOs of Modification and Maximum Modification.

The 5.7 miles of Project that would cross the Cassia Division would cross a VQO of Maximum Modification. The Project would be consistent with this VQO designation. The scenery is considered to be low to moderate and would have a high degree of contrast with the Alternative 7K alignment, were it to be constructed. Figure 5.3-1 shows the view from KOP 1518 looking south towards the western portion of where the alignment for Alternative 7K would cross the Cassia Division of the Sawtooth NF. This image represents the views of travelers on Forest Service Road 529, south of Buckhorn Canyon. There would be a high level of Project visibility with the route being 0.1 mile away. Figure 5.3-2 is viewpoint 1519, which is slightly farther away but has more of a panoramic view towards Alternative 7K than KOP 1518, due to the hill topography.

Figure 5.3-1. View from KOP 1518 Toward Alternative 7K

Figure 5.3-2. View from Viewpoint 1519 Toward Alternative 7K

Of the 7 miles of the Sublett Division crossed, approximately 4 miles would cross Modification and 2 miles would cross Maximum Modification VQO designated land. The project would not be consistent with a VQO of Modification. The Project also proposes to use existing roads that cross the northwestern edge of the Black Pine Division. Alternative 7K would pass within 0.5 mile of the Black Pine Division. Alternative 7K would cross 10 miles of NFS lands allocated to the Management Prescription Category (MPC) 6.1, Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Shrubland and Grassland Landscapes, and 2.7 miles (all in the Sublett Division) allocated to MPC 4.2, Roaded Recreation Emphasis.

Should Alternative 7K be approved, the transmission line would affect the AOI that is managed as VQO Modification in the Sublett Division. As a result, Forest Service action would be necessary to modify the visual classification or approve a one-time allowance to be consistent with the Forest Plan. The AOI is shown in Figure 5.3-3 and described in Section 5.3.1 below.

5.3.1 AOI ST-1 Sublett (Alternative 7K)

AOI ST-1 is located in the southwest corner of Power County, Idaho. At MP 45.9, the route enters the Sublett portion of the Sawtooth NF, turning to the southwest. This results in the alternative crossing approximately 4.0 miles of NFS land managed as VQO Modification. The presence of the proposed transmission line in these landscapes would not meet the designated VQOs. As a result, Forest Service action would be necessary to modify the visual classification or approve a one-time allowance to be consistent with the Forest Plan.

A No Action Alternative is also analyzed in the EIS; it is the predicted result of the denial of the applications. Under the No Action Alternative, Gateway West would not be constructed (no construction of the new substations, substation expansion, or the transmission line); therefore, no associated plan amendments would be required. The objectives of the Project, which include providing increased transmission capacity and a more reliable transmission line system for transport of energy, including wind energy, to meet existing and future needs (as described in EIS Section 1.3, Purpose and Need), would not be met.

5.3.1.1 Existing Landscape Conditions

A large percentage of the area around AOI ST-1 is undeveloped. In the northeast lie the Deep Creek Mountains, in the central part of the area is the Sublett Range, and in the southwest are the Black Pine Mountains. Farms and farmland are found in the Raft River Valley to the west, Juniper Valley to the south, and Rockland Valley to the east. Forests are found in the more mountainous areas, especially in the Sawtooth NF. Interstate 84, the primary road in the 15-mile area around AOI ST-1, extends northwest to southeast in the southwest portion of the study area. Another highway in the area is SR 37, which is a north-south road in the east passing through Rockland Valley. There are no sizable communities in the area, although Rockland and Holbrook are situated just beyond 15 miles. In addition to the local roads, highways, and residences, there are sensitive viewing areas such as campgrounds and trails in the National Park, the Curlew National Grasslands, and Minidoka Forest State Bird Sanctuary. As viewed from KOP 1273 (Attachment A, Figure ST-1a), the landscape in the vicinity of AOI ST-1 is mountainous with a mixture of open areas and deciduous and evergreen forests with little in the way of man-made modifications.

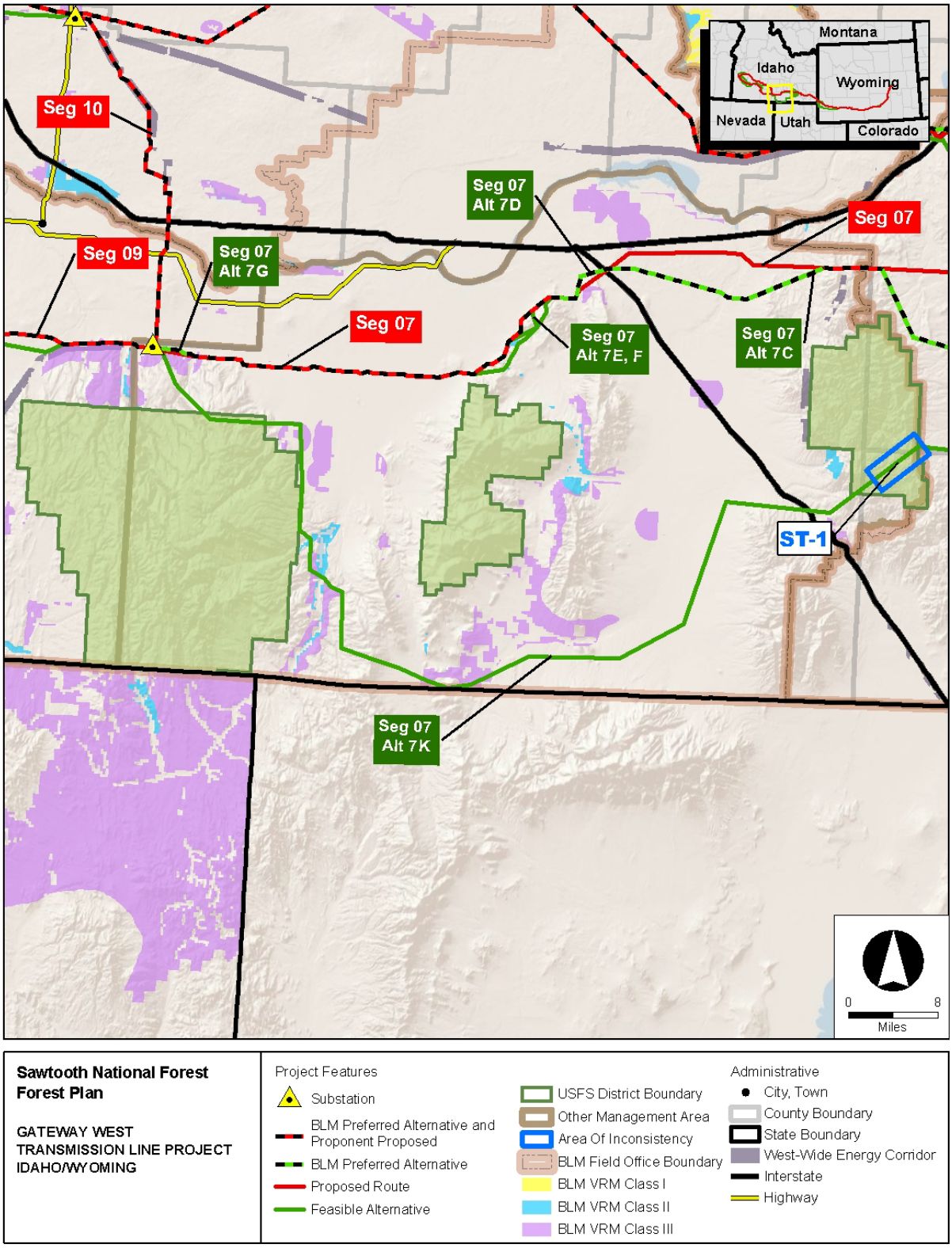


Figure 5.3-3. Overview Map of AOI Locations on Sawtooth National Forest Land

5.3.1.2 Analysis

Figure 5.3-4 shows the viewshed, AOI, and other features within the 15-mile radius study area used to evaluate the consistency of the proposed 500-kV facilities with the existing landscape and VQOs. Figure 5.3-5 shows the alignment against an aerial photograph demonstrating the topography of the surrounding area. Figure ST-1b (in Attachment A) is a simulation showing the lattice tower transmission lines on the existing landscape.

Scenic views of the Sublett Range south of Hartley Peak are important to sensitive viewers hiking the historic Hudspeth Cutoff Trail in this primitive and remote area of the Sawtooth NF. These sensitive viewers are represented by KOP 1273 with views ranging from undulating valleys to more dramatic rocky terrain with mountain silhouettes, such as the Quaking Asp Mountains in the background, and dominant rugged, vertical, and contrasting vegetation. Views in the surrounding area exhibit diversity in form, line, color, and texture with few man-made features adjacent to the view. Alternative 7K of the proposed Project would be at least partially screened and backdropped by existing vegetation and topography, resulting in moderate visibility. Micrositing and other mitigation efforts may further lower impacts to scenic resources in the surrounding area. With little man-made development in the vicinity of the proposed alignment, the structures would contrast sharply with the surrounding landscape. Figure ST-1b (Attachment A) shows a visual simulation of what the transmission structures would look like from KOP 1273.

The alignment for Alternative 7K was proposed by Cassia County. This alignment does not take into consideration the topography and other factors identified by the Forest Service that would result in lower resource effects. Figure 5.3-6 shows how topography and other resources would guide the actual alignment for the Project. This would likely result in reduced visibility from some vantage points as backdropping of the line would occur and the alignment would more closely follow the line of the existing land forms.

Views from KOP 1273 represent the views of recreational users looking south on Heaydlauff Canyon Road in the Sawtooth NF. Open, panoramic views of the rolling to rugged terrain have high scenic quality due to the numerous aesthetic landscape elements in the middleground and background views. The view is considered a natural characteristic landscape with a landscape variety class of A, or distinctive. Viewers traveling on this roadway would have a level 2 (average) sensitivity to changes in the characteristic landscape. Level 2-sensitivity recreational viewers would have a high level of Project visibility 0.3 mile from Alternative 7K. The viewer would have an open and elevated view toward the alignment, which would not parallel any existing alignments or linear features and may span the rugged terrain in the middleground and background. The resulting contrast levels are anticipated to be high. The area is managed for Modification by the Sawtooth NF, which allows for vegetative and landform alterations that may dominate the characteristic landscape, but must use naturally established form, line, color, and texture. They should appear as a natural occurrence when viewed as middle ground. When viewed as foreground, the Project may not appear to completely borrow from naturally established form, color, line, or texture. Alterations may also be out of scale or contain detail that is incongruent with natural occurrences as seen in the foreground. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class for this area is listed as

both Roaded Natural (RN) and Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). Potential visual impacts on recreational users from this KOP and in the general vicinity are expected to be high because the alternative would create a new linear feature in a landscape with little existing visible disturbance, high contrast, and landscape variety class of A. Alternative 7K would conform to the Forest Service Maximum Modification classification as well as the ROS of RN, but not SPM where structures are supposed to be rare and isolated.

The new transmission structures, ROW clearing, and access roads would draw the attention of the casual observer and thus not conform to the VQO of Modification, which allows management activities to dominate the characteristic landscape while using naturally established form, line, color, and texture. It should appear as a natural occurrence when viewed as middleground. This would not occur from KOP 1273 because the vegetation removal and large vertical structures would not appear natural. If this route were selected, a plan amendment would need to be approved by the Forest Service. It is recommended that this amendment be a project-level plan amendment to permit the Project in areas with Modification VQO. Figure 5.3-5 shows the location of the Sublett AOI with the existing VQO, alternative route, and amendment recommendation. Alternative 7K, if approved, would be constructed with appropriate mitigation measures and BMPs to lower potential impacts to visual resources (see Table 2.7-1 in in the Final EIS).

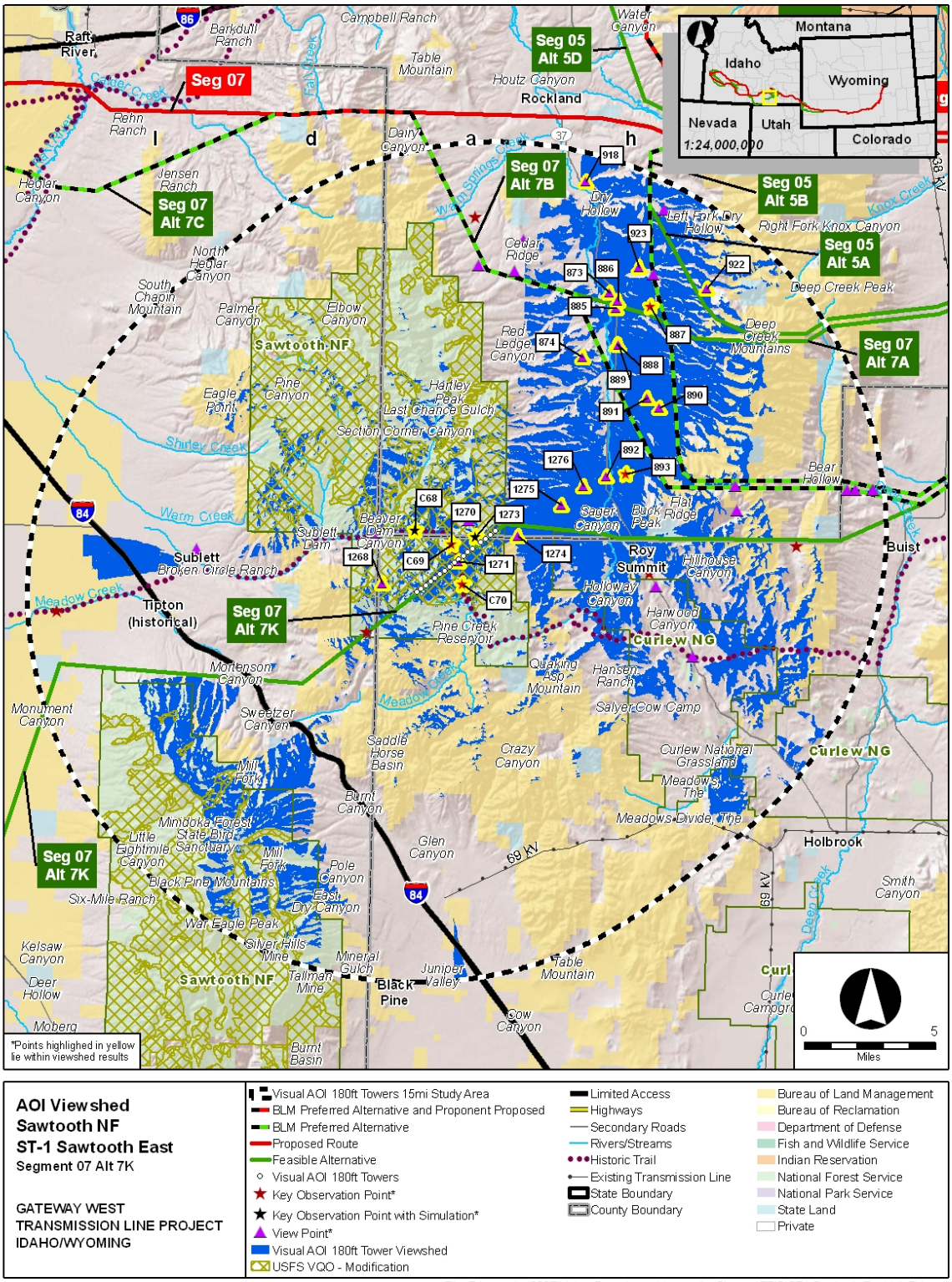


Figure 5.3-4. AOI ST-1 Visual Analysis

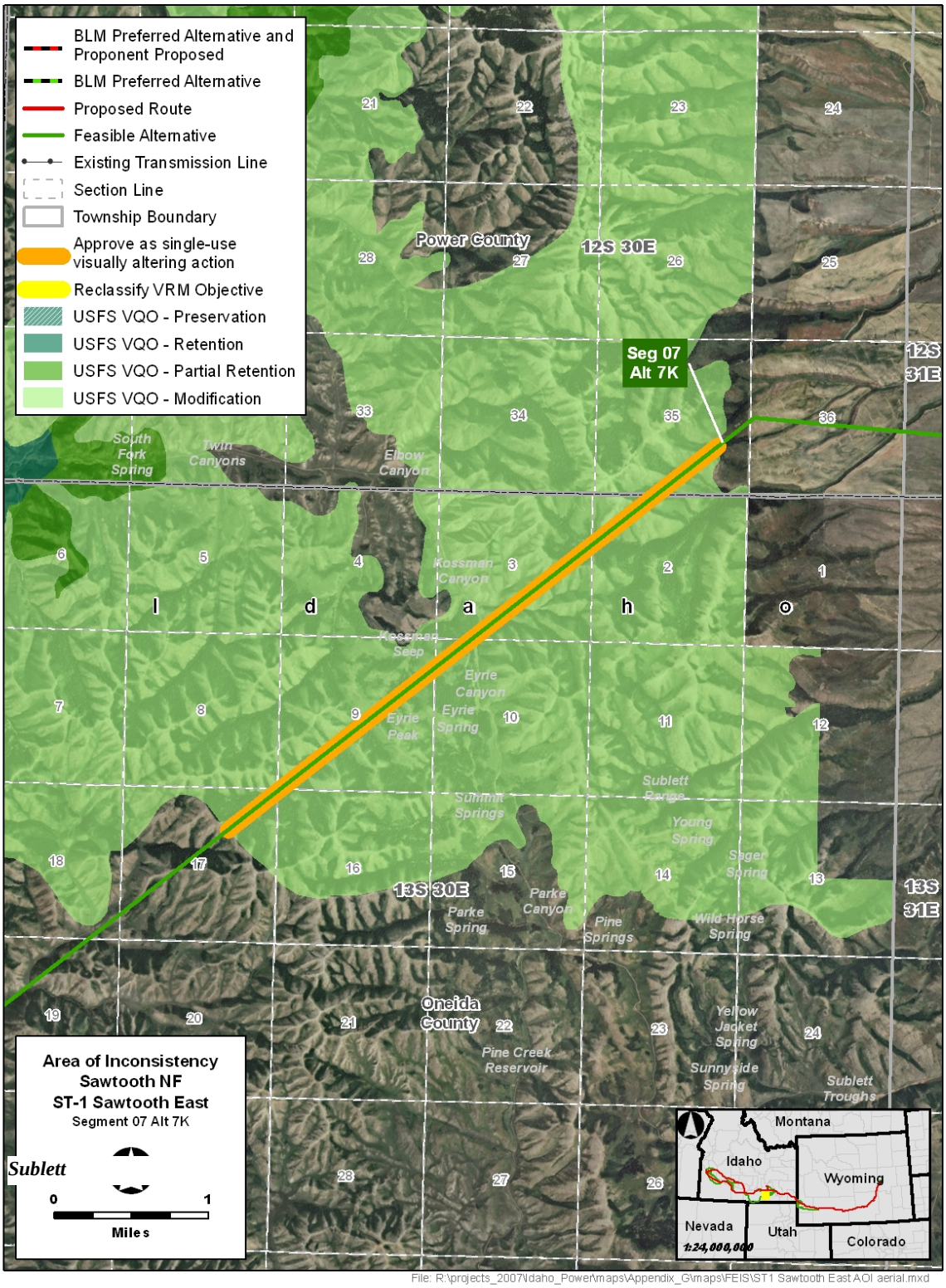


Figure 5.3-5. AOI ST-1 Aerial Map

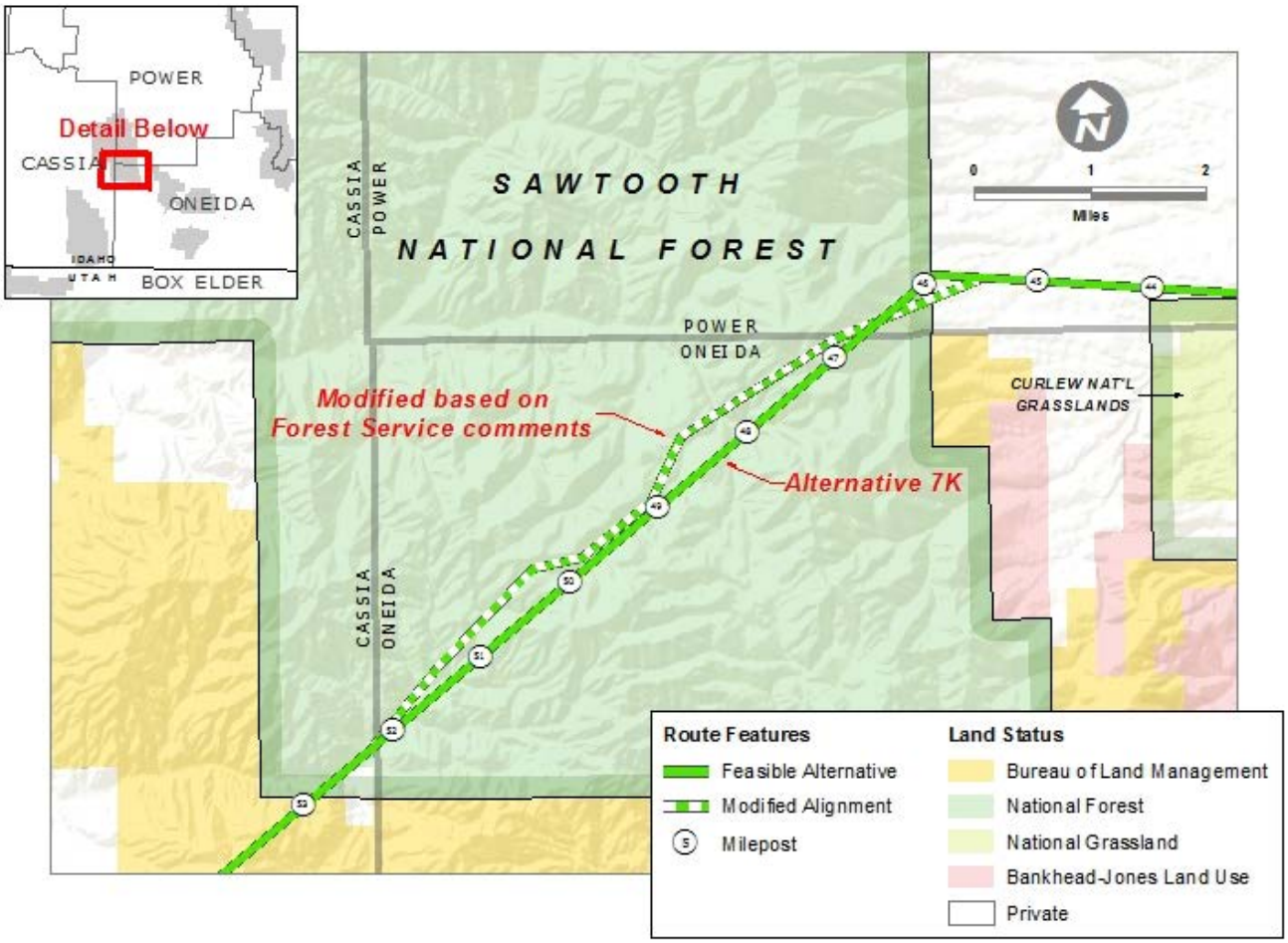


Figure 5.3-6. Proposed Alignment for Alternative 7K Compared to the Modified Alignment That Would Be Built if this Alternative is Selected

6 MITIGATION MEASURES

To minimize or avoid impacts on visual resources, the Proponents have committed to environmental protection measures (EPMs) that would be implemented Project-wide as outlined in this section and in Table 2.7-1 as well as Appendix B of the Final EIS.

The following EPMs were identified by the Sawtooth NF and are required on NFS lands.

VIS-5 To minimize ground disturbance and/or reduce scarring (visual contrast) of the landscape, the alignment of any new access roads or cross-country routes will follow the landform contours in designated areas where practicable, providing that such alignment does not impact resource values additionally or result in new impacts to resources that were previously avoided.

VIS-11 Site-specific “micrositing,” within the limits of standard engineering design, will be required near certain sensitive areas, as identified by the agencies, where proposed transmission facilities would be present and could impact visual quality; these situations include:

- Crossings over major highways
- Crossings of high quality historic trails
- Crossings over the North Platte and Snake Rivers
- Sensitive travelways, use areas, residential areas, recreational facilities as identified by the agencies (including national recreation and scenic trails, campgrounds, recreation areas, and trailheads), and other areas identified by management plans
- To avoid bisecting forest patches within the Sawtooth NF.

The Proponents will consult with the applicable local land management agency during transmission line design.

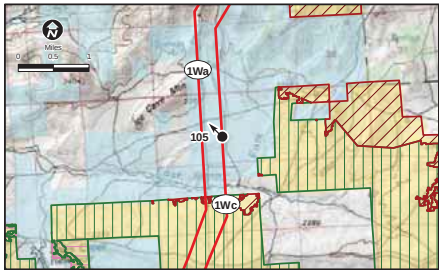
VIS-13 To reduce visual contrast in areas where overstory vegetation is removed for access, tower pads or conductor clearance, specific sections of the right-of-way on federal land will have uneven edges (trees will be removed from the edge of the right-of-way out or away from the right-of-way boundary) to give a natural appearance, where not in conflict with regulatory requirements (e.g., NERC, WECC, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements). This will be a onetime application and conducted with agency approval.

VIS-15 If Alternative 7K is selected, Natina stain (or an equivalent product) will be applied to towers (including lattice towers) placed on NFS lands within the Sawtooth NF to reduce visual effects at the middleground level.

Attachment A
Existing Conditions and Photographic Simulations

List of Figures by Appendix G-2 Sections

Section	AOI/Figure No.	KOP Number	Figure Title
5.1	MB-1a	KOP 105	Existing Conditions
	MB-1b	KOP 105	Photographic Simulation
5.2	CB-1a	KOP 1346	Existing Conditions
	CB-1b	KOP 1346	Photographic Simulation
	CB-1c	KOP 1505	Existing Conditions
	CB-1d	KOP 1505	Photographic Simulation
5.3	ST-1a	KOP 1273	Existing Conditions
	ST-1b	KOP 1273	Photographic Simulation



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	11:59 AM
Date of photograph:	7-17-08
Weather condition:	Partly cloudy
Viewing direction:	Northwest
Latitude:	42°30'38.40"N
Longitude:	106° 9'55.69"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile

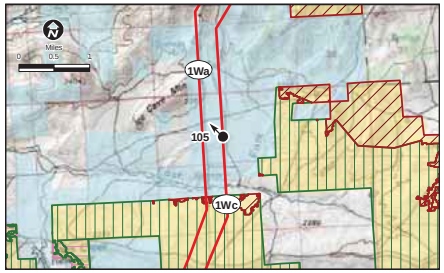
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 105
Segment 1W(a)

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure MB-1a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\2224030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop-105.indd Export Date:06/18/11



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Resource Management

Class I

Class II

Class III

Class IV

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

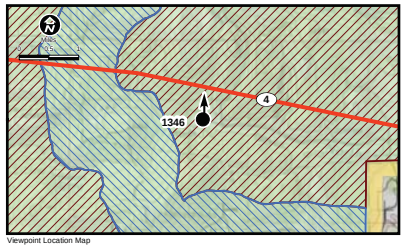
Time of photograph:	11:59 AM
Date of photograph:	7-17-08
Weather condition:	Partly cloudy
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°30'38.40"N
Longitude:	106° 9'55.69"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 105
Segment 1W(a)

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure MB-1b



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Quality Objective

Retention

Partial Retention

Modification

Maximum Modification

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	1:31 PM
Date of photograph:	8-20-10
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°23'46.13"N
Longitude:	111°33'34.39"W
Distance:	0.5 Mile

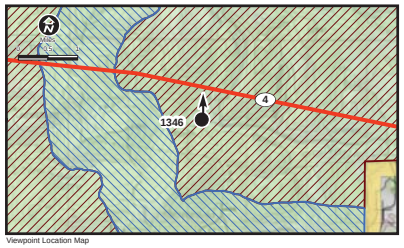
Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1346
Segment 4

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CB-1a

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sims\layouts\kop_1346.indd Export Date 06/18/11



Viewpoint Location Map

Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Quality Objective

Retention

Partial Retention

Modification

Maximum Modification

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

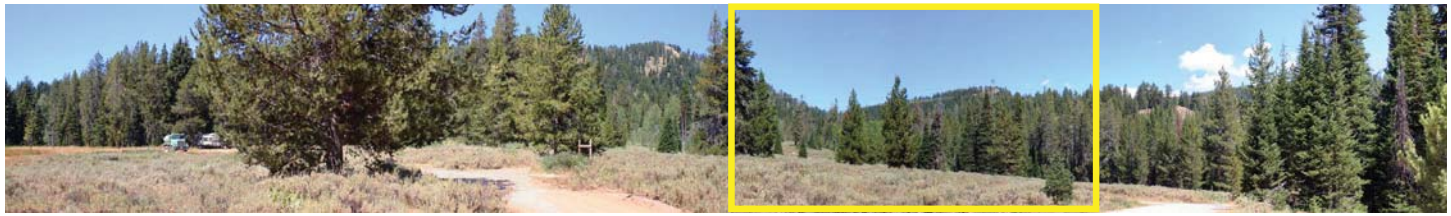
State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	1:31 PM
Date of photograph:	8-20-10
Weather condition:	Clear
Viewing direction:	North
Latitude:	42°23'46.13"N
Longitude:	111°33'34.39"W
Distance:	0.5 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

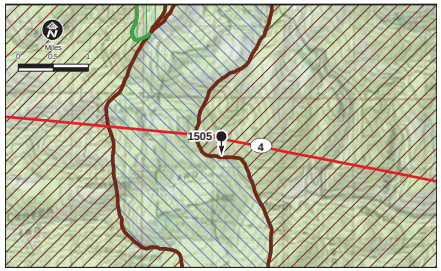


Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1346
Segment 4

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CB-1b

Above photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Quality Objective

M - Modification

MM - Maximum Modification

P - Preservation

PR - Partial Retention

R - Retention

Photograph Information

Time of photograph: 2:18 PM

Date of photograph: 7-19-12

Weather condition: Cloudy

Viewing direction: South

Latitude: 42°24'26.106"N

Longitude: 111°34'53.665"W

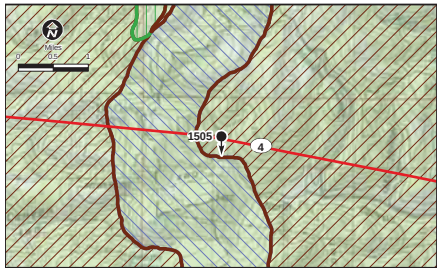
Distance: 0.5 mile

Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1505
Segment 4

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CB-1c

Above photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Quality Objective

M - Modification

MM - Maximum Modification

P - Preservation

PR - Partial Retention

R - Retention

Photograph Information

Time of photograph: 2:18 PM

Date of photograph: 7-19-12

Weather condition: Cloudy

Viewing direction: South

Latitude: 42°24'26.106"N

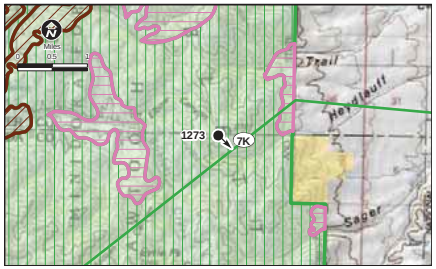
Longitude: 111°34'53.665"W

Nearest tower in view: 0.31 Mile

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1505
Segment 4

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure CB-1d



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Quality Objective

Retention

Partial Retention

Modification

Maximum Modification

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	6:40 PM
Date of photograph:	10-18-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°19'38.01"N
Longitude:	112°55'38.78"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.

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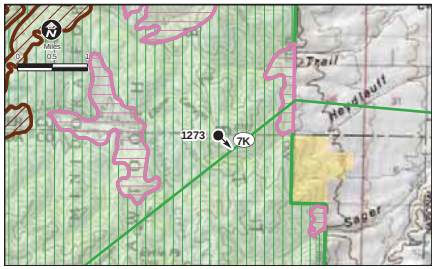
Existing Conditions
from Key Observation Point 1273
Alternative 7K

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure ST-1a

Photograph is intended to be viewed 12 inches from viewer's eyes when printed on 11x17 paper. The photograph below has been cropped top and bottom to show a wide angle of view with the above photograph's area shown in yellow.



Legend

Key Observation Point

Transmission Line Routes

Proposed

Alternative

Visual Quality Objective

Retention

Partial Retention

Modification

Maximum Modification

Surface Ownership

Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

National Park Service

Bureau of Reclamation

Department of Defense

State

Private

State Boundary

County Boundary

Photograph Information

Time of photograph:	6:40 PM
Date of photograph:	10-18-09
Weather condition:	Partly Cloudy
Viewing direction:	Southeast
Latitude:	42°19'38.01"N
Longitude:	112°55'38.78"W
Distance:	0.2 Mile

Photographic Simulation
from Key Observation Point 1273
Alternative 7K

Gateway West
500kV Transmission Project

Figure ST-1b

P:\ENVPLANNING\IdahoPower\22240030_Gateway_West\sim\layouts\kop-1273.indd