



Gateway West Transmission Line Project

October 2016

Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement released

The BLM has released the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Final SEIS) for segments 8 and 9 of the proposed Gateway West Transmission Line Project. The agency has identified Alternative 5, which pairs routes 8G and 9K, as the Preferred Alternative.

Key changes in the Final SEIS

- A new section detailing expected project effects in the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA)
- A fully developed framework for compensatory mitigation in the NCA
- Additional visual impact analysis for the area around the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument
- Updated information on access road construction and improvements needed for each alternative



How to access the Final SEIS and Proposed Land Use Plan Amendments:

Online at <http://on.doi.gov/1sExPBP>

BLM Idaho State Office

1387 South Vinnell Way
Boise, ID 83709

BLM Owyhee Field Office

20 First Avenue West
Marsing, ID 83639

BLM Boise District Office

3948 Development Avenue
Boise, ID 83705

BLM Twin Falls District Office

2878 Addison Avenue East
Twin Falls, ID 83301

Libraries

Full list of reading rooms available online

Ada Library, Victory Branch
Boise Public Library, Main Branch
Bruneau Valley Public Library
Gooding Public Library
Kuna Library
Mountain Home Public Library
Nampa Public Library
Twin Falls Public Library

Request a CD version at

blm_id_gateway_west@blm.gov
or 1-800-380-5828

Mitigation

Mitigation measures for proposed actions are a key component of the Final SEIS analysis, and Appendix K of the Final SEIS contains a fully developed framework for compensatory mitigation in the NCA. The Final SEIS applies the Department of the Interior's Mitigation Hierarchy to address project impacts. The Hierarchy prioritizes **avoidance** of adverse impacts. Any impacts that cannot be avoided should be **minimized** to reduce or eliminate adverse effects over time. If residual impacts still remain, compensatory mitigation may be required for effects to important, scarce or sensitive resources.

Standards for compensatory mitigation depend on the resource that is impacted and its location.

- **Enhancement** is the standard for resources in the NCA.
- **Net conservation gain** is the standard for Greater Sage-grouse.
- **No net loss/net benefit** applies to other important, scarce or sensitive resources outside the NCA, including wetlands, cultural resources and historic trails.

Protest period

A 30-day public protest period on the Gateway West Final SEIS will run from Oct. 7 to Nov. 7, 2016. To be valid, a protest must be filed by someone who has submitted comments or otherwise participated during an earlier phase of the process and who believes they will or may be adversely affected by approval of one or more of the proposed land use plan amendments.

Proposed plan amendments are the only valid subject of protest. Please see the separate insert included with this newsletter for more information about the protest period and a checklist for critical elements of a valid protest.

The BLM Director will either dismiss a protest, grant the protest on the merits of the issue(s) or deny the protest on the merits of the issue(s).

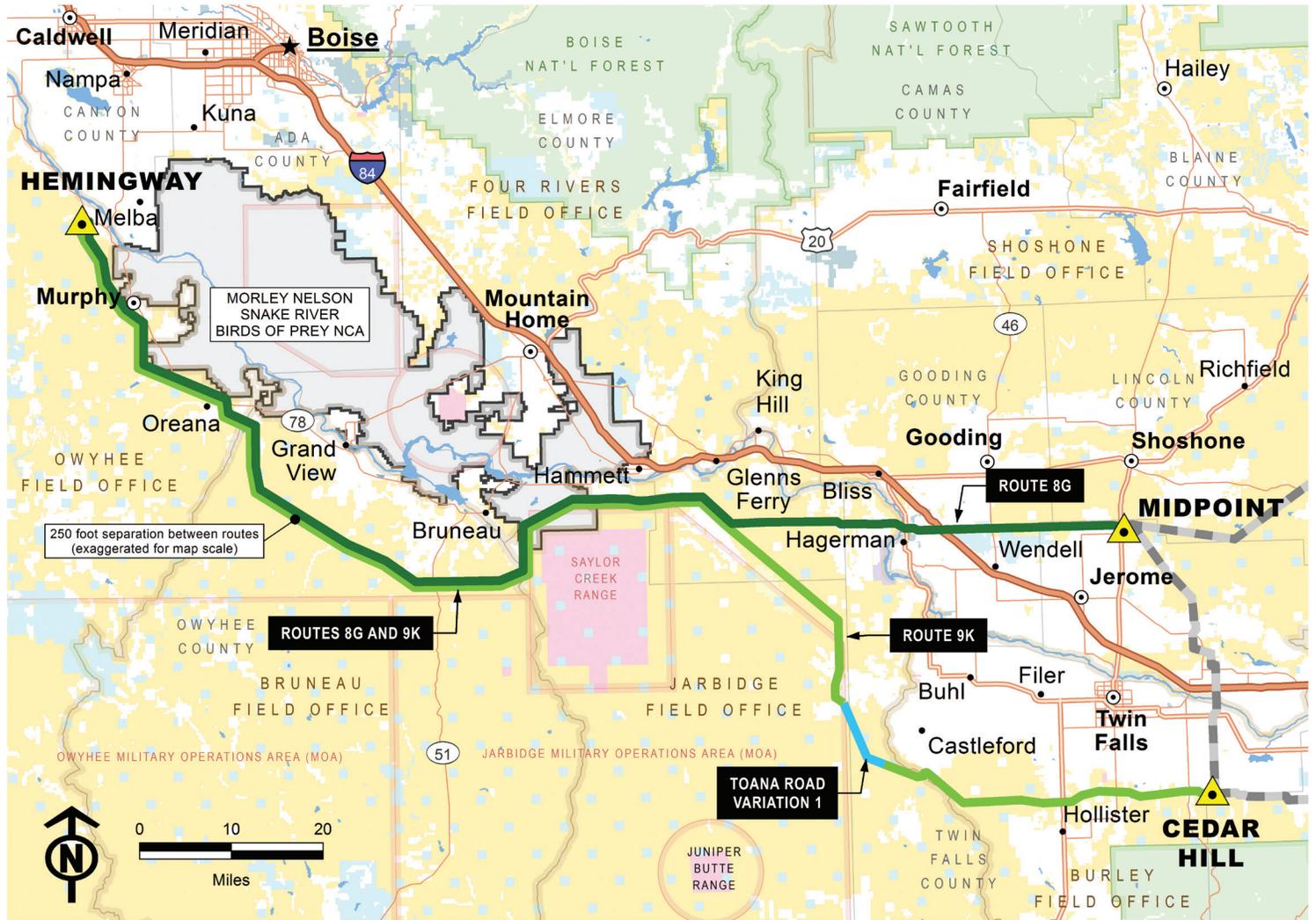
The Agency Preferred Alternative

After thoroughly considering all of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft SEIS, the BLM identified Alternative 5 as the Agency Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 balances many important concerns and responsibilities surrounding granting rights of way for segments 8 and 9.

- This alternative impacts the least amount of private land by avoiding residential areas of Kuna and Melba and private agricultural lands in Owyhee County. Alternative 5 would impact 20 acres of irrigated agricultural land, and three residences lie within 300 feet of the preferred route – the fewest of any of the alternatives.
- Alternative 5 crosses the fewest miles in the NCA.
- Segments in this alternative avoid all priority habitat for Greater Sage-grouse.
- The distance separating the segments in this alternative allows Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power to meet the planning criteria of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council. The 250-foot separation distance for 102 miles of each of the two routes also allows a smaller “footprint” for the project, such as the need to build fewer access roads.



Preferred Alternative map



Project Features

- █ Route 8G
- █ Route 9K
- █ Toana Road Variation 1

- Routes Approved in 2013 ROD
- ▲ Substation

Land Status

- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Forest Service

- Military or Corps of Engineers
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- State Parks/Wildlife



Land crossed by Alternative 5

Land ownership and use (miles)				Total length (miles)	Within the NCA (miles)	Within or adjacent to existing transmission corridor (miles)
BLM	Other Federal	State	Private			
270.7	0.1	18.1	32.7	321.6	17.6	57.1

Protesting the Proposed Land Use Plan Amendments

Is there a public comment period for the Final SEIS?

No, there is no public comment period on the Final SEIS because it does not contain any substantial revisions to the range of alternatives, the impact analysis or the proposed land use plan amendments associated with the deferred segments (8 and 9) that were part of the Draft SEIS. The BLM accepted public comments on the Draft SEIS for 90 days (March 11 – June 9, 2016).

What is the difference between a protest and a comment?

The BLM takes comments during scoping for an EIS and when it publishes a Draft EIS. Protests relate to a Final EIS with proposed plan amendments. Anyone may submit comments during scoping or on any part of the Draft EIS, and comments may be supportive or critical of the action or analysis presented in the EIS. Protests may only be filed by someone who has participated in developing the EIS (i.e., submitted comments during earlier phases of the process) and who believes they will or may be adversely affected by approval of the proposed land use plan amendment(s).

BLM responses to scoping comments are reflected in the Draft EIS, and responses to comments on the Draft EIS are reflected in the Final EIS. Resolutions of protests may affect the provisions in the Record of Decision on the project that relate to land use plan amendments.

What can I protest about the Gateway West Final SEIS?

Protests must relate to an interest that is or may be adversely affected by the approval of the proposed land use plan amendments identified in the Final SEIS.

What is the deadline for filing a protest?

You must file your protest by November 7, 2016.

What information does my protest need to contain?

Each protest must be in writing and contain this information:

- Your name, mailing address and telephone number
- Your interest in filing the protest
- A statement of the issue(s) you are protesting
- A statement of the part(s) of the plan amendment(s) you are protesting

- A copy of all documents addressing the issue(s) that you submitted during the process or an indication of the date(s) the issue(s) were discussed for the record.
- A concise statement explaining why you believe the proposed plan amendment is wrong.

A checklist of critical elements for a valid protest is provided on the reverse side of this page.

Where do I send my protest letter?

All protests must be mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail

Director (210)
Attn: Protest Coordinator
P.O. Box 71383
Washington, D.C. 20024-1383

Overnight Mail

Director (210)
Attn: Protest Coordinator
20 M Street SE, Rm 2134LM
Washington, D.C. 20003

Can I submit my protest by email?

You may email an electronic copy of your protest as advance notice to protest@blm.gov, but you must also send the original, written protest – postmarked by the close of the protest period – to one of the addresses specified above in order for it to receive full consideration.

What will the BLM do with protests that are received timely?

The BLM Director will render prompt decisions on each protest – either dismissing the protest, granting the protest based on the merits of the protest issues or denying the protest based on the merits of the protest issues.

How will I know what the BLM's response to my protest is?

Decisions will be sent to respective protesting parties by certified mail, return receipt requested. Responses to protest issues will also be compiled in a Director's Protest Resolution Report made available at the same time as decisions are mailed.

If I disagree with the BLM's response, is there a way to appeal it?

The decision of the BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior on each protest.



Resource Management Plan Protest Critical Item Checklist

**The following items *must* be included to constitute a valid protest
whether using this optional format, or a narrative letter.**

(43 CFR 1610.5-2)

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your **protest**, be advised that your entire **protest**--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your **protest** to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

Resource Management Plan (RMP) or Amendment (RMPA) being protested:

Name:

Address:

Phone Number: ()

Your interest in filing this protest (how will you be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of this plan?):

Issue or issues being protested:

Statement of the part or parts of the plan being protested:

Chapter:

Section:

Page:

(or) Map:

Attach copies of all documents addressing the issue(s) that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party, OR an indication of the date the issue(s) were discussed for the record.

Date(s):

A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decisions is believed to be wrong:

Gateway West Transmission Line Project

1387 South Vinnell Way

Boise, ID 83709

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Final Supplemental Environmental Impact
Statement for segments 8 and 9 released

Gateway West Transmission Line Project

About the project

The Gateway West Transmission Line Project is jointly proposed by Rocky Mountain Power and Idaho Power to build, operate and maintain approximately 1,000 miles of new 230 kilovolt (kV) and 500 kV electric transmission lines across southern Wyoming and southern Idaho.



For more information

- Go online to <http://on.doi.gov/1sExPBP>
- Email blm_id_gateway_west@blm.gov
- Call our information line for up-to-date information at **1-800-380-5828**