

**Tri-State Montrose-Nucla-Cahone Transmission Line  
Improvement Project**

**Draft Plan of Development**

**Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel, and Dolores Counties, Colorado**

**Appendix E**

**Draft Visual Resources Plan**

## Appendix E

### Draft Visual Resources Plan

The objective of this Draft Visual Resources Plan is to detail practices designed to address potential impacts from construction of the Tri-State Montrose-Nucla-Cahone Transmission Improvement Project (Project). Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State) has developed this plan as part of the Plan of Development (POD) that accompanies its application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a Right of Way (ROW) grant. If the ROW grant is approved, the final POD and all appendices will be attached to the Decision Record. This plan provides guidance to construction and field personnel on measures identified by Tri-State, BLM and US Forest Service (FS) to minimize effects during construction activities associated with the Project. It will be the responsibility of Tri-State and its project contractors, working with designated environmental inspectors, to comply with measures identified in this plan.

The following Environmental Protection Measures (EPMs) apply:

**Table E-1: Visual Resources Environmental Protection Measures**

Measure	Description
A-1	Tri-State and its contractors shall exercise care to preserve the natural landscape and shall conduct construction operations so as to prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring or defacing of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the work. Except where clearing is required for permanent work, approved temporary or permanent construction roads, staging areas or excavation operations, vegetation shall be preserved and shall be protected from damage by the contractor's construction operations and equipment.
A-2	Tri-State and its contractor(s) shall minimize scarring, defacing, damage, or destruction of the natural landscape resulting from construction operations: any unnecessary or unauthorized disturbance shall be repaired by the contractor to the satisfaction of the agency authorized officer.
A-3	All construction and future maintenance materials, waste, and debris shall be removed from the project area in a timely manner. Burning or burying of waste materials on the ROW or construction sites will not be allowed. All materials resulting from the contractor's clearing operations shall be removed from the ROW.
A-4	Structures and access roads will be located and designed to conform to the terrain and to minimize visual impacts whenever possible. Specifically, visibility from key observation points (KOP) will be considered at the Dolores River crossing. (See A-6). Leveling and benching of the structure sites will be done to the minimum extent necessary to allow for construction and future maintenance operations. Existing cleared or disturbed areas will be used to the extent practicable for staging areas and other temporary use areas.
A-5	Tri-State and its contractor(s) will manage vegetation within the ROW in a manner that reduces the visual effect by only removing non-compatible vegetation that could pose a threat to the transmission line in the next 10 years and leaving compatible vegetation in the ROW. The first priority is to allow Tri-State to meet their federal reliability standards for vegetation management within and adjacent to the transmission ROW.
A-6	In order to minimize visual impacts from the transmission line from a design perspective, Tri-State has committed to utilizing non-specular conductor, applying acid-etched galvanized finish to all steel structures including steel fence, and using non-reflective insulators for all conductor to structure connections.

Measure	Description
A-7	EPM VG-2 through VG-10 (See POD and EA) would minimize visual impacts from project construction and operation by reclaiming areas of temporary disturbance and minimizing vegetation removal to only that required for the safe construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line.
A-8	The alignment of any new access roads will follow the designated area's landform contours where practical, provided that such alignment does not additionally affect resource values. This will minimize ground disturbance and reduce scarring (visual contrast).