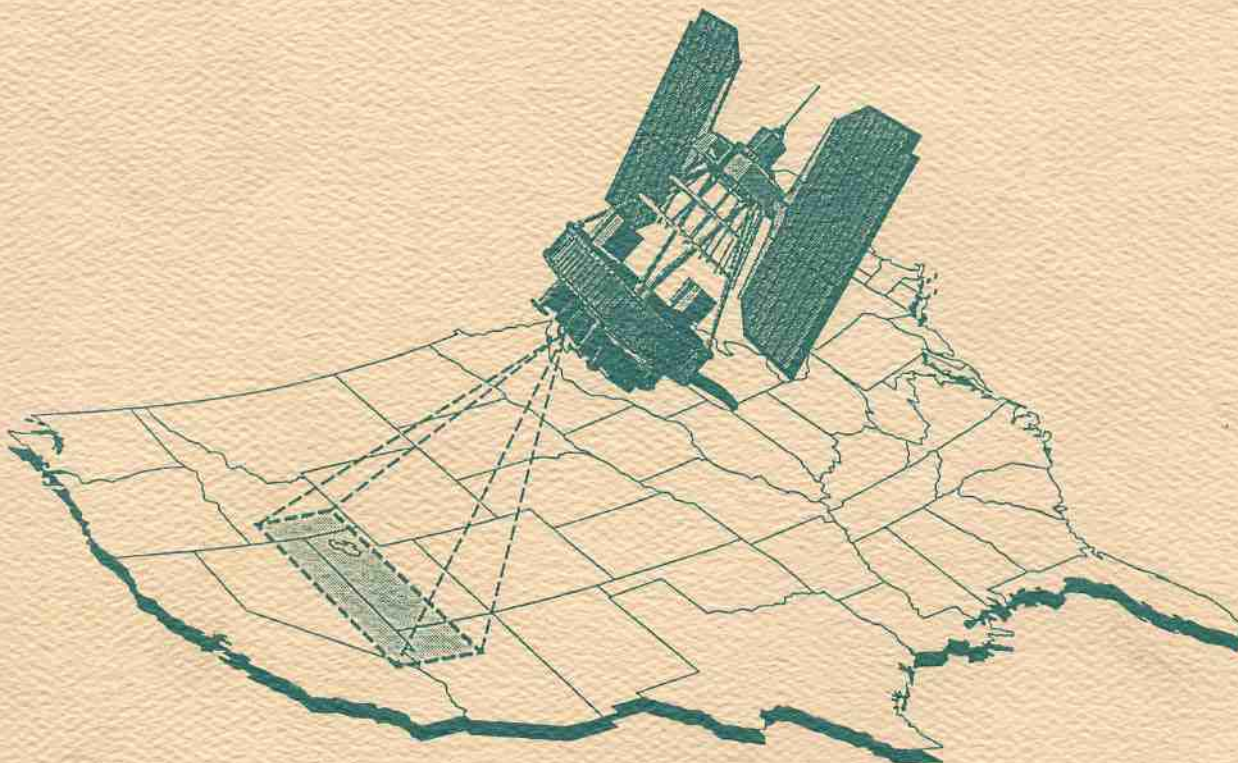


SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT and PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT



Prepared by the:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Burley, Shoshone, and Boise District Offices, Idaho
Elko, Fly, and Las Vegas District Offices, Nevada
Richfield District Office, Utah



In Cooperation with:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Intermountain Region, R-4

U.S. Department of Interior
National Park Service
Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain,
and Western Regions

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Cedar City, Utah

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest, Upper Colorado
and Lower Colorado Regions

July 1993



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318



July 16, 1993

Dear Reviewer:

Enclosed is the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) Final Environmental Impact Statement/Proposed Plan Amendment (FEIS/PPA) on the proposed Idaho Power Company 500kV Transmission Line, the SWIP. This document is in abbreviated format and is to be used in conjunction with the SWIP Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA). The SWIP DEIS/DPA was distributed to the public in June 1992. Chapter 1 of the SWIP FEIS/PPA addresses the Proposed Plan, Chapter 2 reviews Public Participation, Chapter 3 contains Modifications and Additional Studies, Chapter 4 lists errata and corrections to the SWIP DEIS/DPA, and Chapter 5 contains public comments and responses. The SWIP FEIS/PPA has been prepared considering comments received on the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Please note that there are two minor changes to the Agency Preferred Route made in this document in response to public comments on the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The first was made to mitigate potential visual and land use impacts to future land developments in the vicinity of Oasis, Nevada (refer to page 3-36 of this document). The Agency Preferred Alternative in the Oasis area was changed to Links 221 and 223 (refer to Figure 1-1 in Chapter 1 of this document). This routing would also better utilize a BLM designated utility corridor. The second change was made in the Sacramento Pass area to mitigate potential visual impacts to travelers to Great Basin National Park and avoid crossing private lands near Baker, Nevada (refer to page 3-39 of this document). The Agency Preferred Alternative in the Baker area was changed to Links 464, 466, 468, 471, and 473 (refer to Figure 1-1 in Chapter 1 of this document).

This document addresses Idaho Power Company's proposed right-of-way application to construct an approximately 520-mile 500kV transmission line from Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho to a proposed substation northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada, referred to as the Dry Lake Substation site. This segment of the SWIP is referred to as the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment. It also addresses the proposed right-of-way to construct an approximately 160-mile 500kV transmission line from a proposed substation in the Ely, Nevada area to a substation near Delta, Utah. This segment of the SWIP is referred to as the Ely to Delta segment. The proposed right-of-way would also include a series compensation station near Wells, Nevada, a series compensation station in the Delamar Valley in southeastern Nevada, and 13 new microwave communication facilities on the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment.

This document contains the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposal to select a preferred alternative for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and an alternative for the Ely to Delta segment. The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment is a combination of Routes A and G which would cross approximately 406 miles of the BLM lands, 0.5 miles of lands administered by the Bureau of Reclamation, 83.1 miles of private lands, and 5.2 miles of state lands. The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment is the 230kV Corridor Route which

would cross 197.4 miles of the BLM lands and 9.0 miles of lands administered by the Humboldt National Forest.

The National Park Service does not agree with the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment because of visual impacts to Great Basin National Park and to visitors driving to the park. None of the alternatives cross National Park Service lands, and the 230kV Corridor Route is approximately two miles from the northern boundary of the park and approximately six miles from Wheeler Peak. The 230kV Corridor Route was also moved another mile north (i.e., away from the park) in the Sacramento Pass area as referred to above.

The Agency Preferred Alternative is to allow equipment additions to the Midpoint Substation, one proposed substation near Ely, Nevada, a proposed substation in the Dry Lake Valley in southern Nevada, and a proposed substation near Delta, Utah. The specific substation site in the Dry Lake area will depend on the routing decision for the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT) proposed by the Nevada Power Company (refer to page 2-52 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Series compensation stations would also be needed about halfway between the two northern substation sites northeast of Wells, Nevada and in the Delamar Valley in southern Nevada to increase the electrical performance of the transmission system. The series compensation station near Wells, Nevada may be expanded in the future to accommodate switching equipment (i.e., substation).

The Agency Preferred Alternative also proposes to construct microwave communication facilities sites at Hansen Butte, Cottonwood (in Idaho), and Ellen D, Six Mile, Rocky Point, Spruce Mountain, Long Valley, Copper, Cave Mountain, Mount Wilson, Highland Peak, Beaver Dam Mountain, and Glendale (in Nevada).

The decision to implement the selected alternative will be made on National Forest lands by the Regional Forester, by the Bureau of Reclamation on Bureau of Reclamation lands, and on the BLM land by the Idaho, Nevada, and Utah State Directors. This preferred alternative was selected by the BLM, Forest Service, and Bureau of Reclamation as a result of public comments and concerns on the SWIP DEIS/DPA released July 1992.

The SWIP decision document would serve as a plan amendment to Resource Management Plans (RMP) and Management Framework Plans (MFP) where the Agency Preferred Alternative would be outside a designated utility corridor in three of the BLM Districts crossed (refer to Figure 1-2 in Chapter 1 of this document). The Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and Great Basin National Park General Management Plan would not be amended. The Bureau of Reclamation does not have a land use plan to be amended. The BLM RMPs and MFPs, now in effect, that may be amended are as follows:

Utah

- House Range Management Plan (Richfield District) - no plan amendment proposed
- Warm Springs Management Plan (Fillmore District) - no plan amendment proposed

Idaho

- Twin Falls Management Framework Plan (Burley District) - no plan amendment proposed
- Monument Resource Management Plan (Shoshone District) - no plan amendment proposed

Nevada

- Wells Resource Management Plan (Elko District) - plan amendment proposed
- Schell Management Framework Plan (Ely District) - plan amendment proposed
- Egan Resource Management Plan (Ely District) - plan amendment proposed
- Caliente Management Framework Plan (Las Vegas District) - plan amendment proposed
- Stateline Management Framework Plan (Las Vegas District) - plan amendment proposed

The portion of the proposed plan amendment affecting the BLM administered lands may be protested in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-2. Protests must be postmarked no later than August 17th, 1993. The protests must be in writing, and sent to:

Director, BLM (760)
Department of Interior
1848 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Protests must contain: (1) name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest, (2) a statement of the issue(s) being protested, (3) a statement of the part(s) of the plan being protested, (4) a copy 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 or issues were discussed for the record, (5) a concise statement explaining why the proposed plan is believed to be wrong.

At the end of the protest period, the BLM portion of the proposed plan, excluding any portion under protest, shall become final. Approval shall be withheld on any portion of the plan until final action has been completed on such protest. The BLM approval process and the final plan for the BLM is expected to be published with the Record of Decision in the late summer or fall 1993.

The Bureau of Reclamation will issue a separate decision document. The 30 day review period ends August 17th 1993. Written comments may be submitted to:

John Keys, Regional Director
Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Regional Office
1150 N. Curtis Road
Boise, ID 83706

The Forest Service decision on the National Forest portion of the proposed plan is subject to administrative review (appeal) in accordance with the provisions of the Forest Service Appeal Regulations set forth in 36 CFR 217. Any appeal of the Forest Service decision must include the information required by 36 CFR 217.9 (content of a notice of appeal), including the reasons for the appeal. Two (2) copies of the Notice of Appeal must be made in writing and submitted within 45 days of the date of publication of the decision to the Regional Forester:


Gray F. Reynolds, Regional Forester
Intermountain Region (R-4), USDA Forest Service
Federal Building, 324 25th Street
Ogden, Utah 84401

A BLM protest, or Forest Service or Bureau of Reclamation appeal must be filed separately if the reviewer wishes to direct concerns on lands administered by the BLM, Forest Service, or Bureau of Reclamation. Those people not wishing to protest or appeal but wishing to comment may send comments to Bureau of Land Management, Burley District Office at the address below. All comments received will be considered in the preparation of the BLM Record of Decision.

A copy of the SWIP FEIS/PPA will be sent to all persons, organizations, or agencies who received the SWIP DEIS/DPA, or to anyone requesting a copy. Please address requests for copies of the SWIP FEIS/PPA to:

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Sincerely,


Gerald L. Quinn
District Manager

COVER SHEET
Southwest Intertie Project
Final Environmental Impact Statement/Proposed Plan Amendment

() Draft
(X) Final

(X) Administrative
() Legislative

Lead Agency

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management

EIS/PA Contact

Comments on this FEIS/PPA
should be directed to:
Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Cooperating Agencies

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Copies of the FEIS/PPA have been sent
to and comments requested from:
Refer to Appendix B

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

U.S. Department of Interior
National Park Service

**Date FEIS/PPA Mailed to
the Public:**
July 6, 1993

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs

**Date by Which Comments, Protests Must
Be Received or Postmarked By:**
August 17, 1993

Abstract

The Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) is a proposed 500kV electrical transmission line system between the Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho and a proposed substation in Dry Lake Valley, northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada (referred to as the *Midpoint to Dry Lake segment*), and between a proposed substation in the Ely, Nevada area and a proposed substation near Delta, Utah (referred to as the *Ely to Delta segment*). Idaho Power Company proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a 500kV transmission line on the requested right-of-way grant for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and requests that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) assign the right-of-way for the Ely to Delta segment to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The LADWP proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a 500kV transmission line on the Ely to Delta segment on behalf of the participants of the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP).

Equipment additions are proposed to the existing Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho. New substations are proposed near Ely and Las Vegas in Nevada, and near Delta in Utah. Series compensation stations are proposed midway between Midpoint Substation in Idaho and the proposed substation near Ely, Nevada, and in the Delamar Valley between the Ely area and the Dry Lake Valley. New microwave communication facilities are also proposed on the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment.

The Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP would increase the ability to conduct northwest-southwest power exchanges, would increase the capacity and reliability of the interconnected electrical grid in the western U.S., and would enhance competition and economic efficiency of the regional power market. This segment of the SWIP would establish an "open marketplace" for power transfers in the Las Vegas area. Because of the increased capacity to share regional resources, an additional benefit would be deferring new generation facilities and diversifying fuel resources. The Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP would increase the reliability between the existing transmission systems in the Delta area and the planned north-south SWIP system and create a bi-directional transfer path between the Pacific Northwest and intermountain regions and between the intermountain region and southern Nevada.

Alternatives considered for the SWIP include the No-Action, energy conservation, alternative generating sources, alternative transmission systems, alternative transmission technologies, and the proposed action which includes nine routing alternatives on the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment, plus the agency and utility preferred routes, which have slight variations, and four (4) routing alternatives on the Ely to Delta segment:

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment Routing Alternatives

- Route A - 345kV*-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Route
- Route B - 345kV*-Trout Creek-Wendover-Steptoe-Antone Pass-Dry Lake Route
- Route C - 345kV*-Trout Creek-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Route
- Route D - 345kV*-Wells-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Route
- Route E - 345kV*-Thousand Springs-Wendover-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Route
- Route F - Hagerman-Trout Creek-Goshute Valley-Egan Range-Dry Lake Route
- Route G - 345kV*-Cottonwood Creek-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Route
- Utility Preferred Route
- Agency Preferred Route

(* - 345kV refers to the routing alternative being parallel to the Midpoint to Valmy 345kV transmission line)

Ely to Delta Segment Routing Alternatives

- Direct Route
- Cutoff Route
- 230kV Corridor Route (Agency and Utility Preferred)
- Southern Route

This SWIP Final Environmental Impact Statement/Proposed Plan Amendment (FEIS/PPA) assesses the environmental consequences of the federal approval for the project. Impacts of the proposed action would result from the access roads, tower sites, and staging areas required to construct the transmission line and related facilities. Impacts are expected to soils, vegetation, wildlife, cultural resources, scenic resources, and land uses. Electric and magnetic field effects have also been studied for this project.


Because this document is in an abbreviated format, please refer to the SWIP Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA) as a reference for this SWIP FEIS/PPA.

Corrections to the SWIP DEIS/DPA are made in Chapter 4 of this document. Additional studies are found in Chapter 3.

The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment is identified in this document as a combination of Route A and G (as described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA). The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment is the 230kV Corridor Route (as described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

The Agency Preferred Alternative is to allow equipment additions to the Midpoint Substation, one proposed substation near Ely, Nevada, a proposed substation in the Dry Lake Valley in southern Nevada, and a proposed substation near Delta, Utah. The specific substation site in the Dry Lake area will depend on the routing decision for the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT) proposed by the Nevada Power Company (refer to page 2-52 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Series compensation stations would also be needed about halfway between the two northern substation sites northeast of Wells, Nevada and in the Delamar Valley in southern Nevada to increase the electrical performance of the transmission system. The series compensation station near Wells, Nevada may be expanded in the future to accommodate switching equipment (i.e., substation).

The Agency Preferred Alternative would also construct microwave communication facilities at Hansen Butte, Cottonwood (in Idaho), and Ellen D, Six Mile, Rocky Point, Spruce Mountain, Long Valley, Copper, Cave Mountain, Mount Wilson, Highland Peak, Beaver Dam Mountain, and Glendale (in Nevada).



Idaho State Director
Bureau of Land Management



Date

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

Southwest Intertie Project

The Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) is a proposed inter-regional transmission system consisting of two single-circuit 500 kilovolt (kV) alternating current (AC) transmission line segments (nearly 700 miles in total length), associated proposed substation facilities, intermediate series compensation stations, and microwave communication facilities. The transmission line segments are referred to as the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and the Ely to Delta segment. The Ely to Delta segment was also referred to as the Crosstie in the SWIP Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA).

The Idaho Power Company (IPCo) proposes to construct, operate, and maintain the approximately 520 mile Midpoint to Dry Lake segment from the existing Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho interconnecting to a proposed substation in the Ely, Nevada area, and continuing south to a proposed substation site in the Dry Lake Valley northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada. The estimated capacity rating of this segment is 1200 Megawatts (MW). From the Ely, Nevada area the nearly 160 mile Ely to Delta segment is proposed to connect from a proposed substation in the Ely area east to a proposed substation near Delta, Utah. The estimated capacity rating of this segment is 1100 MW.

In 1988 the IPCo applied for a right-of-way grant to construct and operate a transmission interconnection from their 500kV Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho to a proposed substation site in the Delta, Utah area. In the Delta area, the IPCo was proposing to interconnect with and obtain transmission capacity on the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP), a proposed 500kV transmission line from Delta to a proposed substation site located approximately 13 miles southwest of Boulder City, Nevada. The UNTP proposal also included the line segment between Ely and Delta, which was proposed to be developed as a second Phase. The UNTP participants include utilities in Utah, Nevada, and California.

In early 1990, the IPCo determined that the UNTP would be fully subscribed and would not be able to provide the transmission capacity for the SWIP to the proposed substation near Boulder City, Nevada. The IPCo decided that the SWIP would have to be extended south from the Ely area in order to meet the purpose and need for the SWIP project to interconnect in the Las Vegas area. In June 1990 the SWIP studies were expanded to include routes from the Ely, Nevada area to a proposed substation site northeast of Las Vegas in the Dry Lake Valley.

The SWIP Ely to Delta segment was originally a joint SWIP and UNTP Phase II transmission line segment. When the SWIP right-of-way application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was amended in June 1990, the IPCo's need for the Ely to Delta segment changed. However, the Ely to Delta segment remains an important part of the UNTP and the need for it remains unchanged.

The lead federal agency for the SWIP, the BLM, recommended that this transmission segment be retained in the SWIP EIS/PA process. This nearly 160-mile transmission line segment would extend east from the vicinity of Ely, Nevada to near Delta, Utah. The right-of-way for this segment would be granted to the IPCo, who would request that the BLM assign it to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The LADWP would, on behalf of the UNTP participants,

construct, operate, and maintain this portion of the line and the proposed substation near the Intermountain Generating Station near Delta, Utah.

The SWIP Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would be constructed using the following tower types:

- V-guyed (or other guyed) steel lattice or self-supporting steel lattice
- steel pole H-frame in agricultural areas
- self-supporting steel lattice at specific intervals for lateral support

The towers for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment could range from 90-160 feet in height, but would average 120-130 feet. This segment of the project would require a proposed substation near Ely, Nevada, a proposed substation in Dry Lake Valley in southern Nevada, and equipment additions to the existing Midpoint Substation. Series compensation stations would also be needed about halfway between the two northern substation sites northeast of Wells, Nevada, and in the Delamar Valley in southern Nevada to increase the electrical performance of the transmission system. The series compensation station near Wells, Nevada may be expanded in the future to accommodate switching equipment (i.e., substation). A proposed microwave communication system to operate the system would also be required between Midpoint Substation and the proposed substation at Dry Lake. In addition, a fiber optic ground wire may be installed instead of conventional ground wires to serve the needs of commercial communications companies. If installed, access to the fiber optic system would only be allowed upon completion of all environmental permitting activities (e.g., the National Environmental Policy Act) and right-of-way acquisition.

The towers for the Ely to Delta segment could range from 90-160 feet in height, but would average 120-130 feet. The Ely to Delta segment would require a new substation near Delta, Utah. Tower types between Ely to Delta would be constructed using:

- self-supporting steel lattice structures
- steel pole H-Frame for visual mitigation and agricultural areas

An existing microwave communication system between Ely, Nevada, and Delta, Utah would be used with only minor upgrades.

The Agency Preferred Alternative is to grant the IPCo a 200-foot right-of-way across approximately 700 miles of lands administered by the BLM, the Forest Service (FS), and the Bureau of Reclamation. Idaho Power would obtain easements for the portion of the route crossing private lands. This route is a combination of Routes A and G, for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP and the 230kV Corridor Route for the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP (refer to Figure 1-1 for a map of the Proposed Plan and to the Alternative Routes map in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA). The Agency Preferred Alternative also includes five proposed substation or series compensation sites and the 13 sites for microwave communication facilities. The Proposed Plan Amendment is to designate a utility corridor along the Agency Preferred Alternative to accommodate the SWIP 500kV transmission line where this route deviates from agency designated and planning corridors.

Purpose and Need

Electrical utilities have a responsibility to provide adequate supplies of reliable and economical electricity to all classes of customers. State and federal regulatory agencies review the proposed actions of utilities to assure electrical customers the lowest possible costs. Utilities focus on least cost planning, which considers conservation equally with new generation options, to provide reliable electrical service at the lowest reasonable infrastructure cost.

The purpose of the SWIP is to meet the goals of least cost planning, to increase transmission capacity and reliability, and to allow for the sharing of the electrical supplies between the regions of the West. The increase in transmission capacity and reliability would benefit electrical consumers by keeping their costs as low as possible in a future electrical market with high demands for conservation, environmental awareness, and cost consciousness.

The need for increased power exchanges in the western United States is particularly evident between the Northwest and the Southwest. Two main avenues of transmission now being used are the Pacific Interties in the West and various smaller lines around the east side of the Great Salt Lake. These major paths are presently unable to accommodate the full need for electric power transfers between the northern and southern portions of the western transmission system. Electrical demand and consumption in the Desert Southwest are greatest in the summer, as opposed to the Pacific Northwest, where they are greatest in the winter. This seasonal diversity between these western regions has been identified to be approximately 3000 MW. This seasonal diversity can be captured by increasing the transmission capacity between the regions of the West.

The proposed addition of the SWIP to the regional power grid is being considered to allow the Northwest, the Southwest, and the Intermountain regions of the country to take advantage of the various load pattern diversities, including variations in electrical demand and supply within the region. It would create an additional bi-directional transfer path between the Pacific Northwest and the Intermountain regions of the West. Currently, these areas are interconnected only by lower voltage transmission lines with limited electric load-carrying capability. It would also create an additional bi-directional transfer path between the Intermountain area and the Southwest including southern Nevada, an area that is rapidly growing and is in need of additional energy and capacity resources to serve its native load.

The proposed addition of the SWIP would provide regional economic benefits by capturing current and future efficiencies within the electric power system of the western United States. It would enable the regions' utilities to realize these efficiencies by interconnecting the systems of the Northwest and Southwest with firm transmission access via the SWIP's proposed "open marketplace" concept. Open access across the SWIP would facilitate creative energy transactions which, driven by the forces of the open market, would take economic advantage of the load and resource diversities between the regions. Transactions on the SWIP would allow interconnected utilities to better use existing internal transmission capacity. These transactions would benefit the wheeling utility by creating revenues that can be applied against its internal system costs, including seasonal exchanges, resource coordination, nonfirm sales and purchases, firm sales and purchases, and reserve sharing. The SWIP would also provide other benefits including improved system reliability and environmental enhancements.

The SWIP would allow utilities in the Northwest and the Southwest to add capacity and reliability to the western electrical system at an economical price. Specifically, the SWIP would fulfill the major needs as outlined below:

Seasonal Exchanges

Seasonal exchanges provide benefits by taking advantage of the load pattern diversities between regions. By directly interconnecting and exchanging power between the winter peaking Northwest and the summer peaking Southwest, both regions would benefit from increased operating efficiencies of existing resources. Seasonal exchange transactions could reduce operating expenses through fuel diversity, as well as reduce capital cost expenditures by deferring costly new generating resources.

The SWIP would allow the Northwest, the Southwest, and the Intermountain areas to take advantage of the various load pattern diversities including variations in electrical demand and supply within the region. The Ely to Delta segment would create an additional bi-directional transfer path between the Northwest and the Intermountain regions of the West. Currently, these areas are interconnected only by lower voltage transmission lines with limited electric load-carrying capability. It would also create an additional bi-directional transfer path between the Intermountain area and the Southwest including southern Nevada. This is an area that is rapidly growing and is in need of additional energy and capacity resources to serve its native load.

Resource Coordination

The SWIP would enable regional resources with diverse generating characteristics to operate jointly in a manner that increases overall operating efficiencies. For example, the Northwest could use the surplus peaking capacity and storage capability of its hydro system in conjunction with the base loaded thermal resources of the Southwest, thus increasing load-carrying capability as well as reducing production costs. Resource coordination agreements, like seasonal exchanges, benefit the utilities by both reducing operating expenses and potentially deferring new generating resources.

Nonfirm Sales and Purchases

Nonfirm sales and purchases provide benefits by lowering the total power production expenses of the parties involved. Nonfirm or economy transactions accomplish this by taking advantage of the diversity in incremental production costs between generating resources, such as displacing oil resources with coal resources or displacing coal with hydro. The purchasing party benefits from lower production expenses than it would have otherwise incurred, while the selling party benefits from the revenues received that are in excess of its incremental production costs. Nonfirm transactions are generally short-term in nature, ranging from the next hour to several months, since incremental costs are very sensitive to the uncertainty of future load requirements, generating unit availability, and fuel costs or availability, such as spot gas prices or winter snow pack.

Firm Sales and Purchases

Firm agreements tend to be longer in term and place a higher level of obligation on both parties. As such, they are included in the utility's long-term planning process. The economic benefits derived from firm sales and purchases are therefore somewhat broader than those of the nonfirm market. Firm transactions benefit the purchaser by deferring large capital outlays associated with the acquisition of a new generating resource. They benefit the seller by sharing the output and the fixed costs of an existing resource until such time as the seller can fully utilize the resource.

Reserve Sharing

Reserve margin is generating capacity that must be available to respond to emergency conditions. Additional transmission capacity between the Northwest and Southwest would enhance the utilities' abilities to meet these reserve margin requirements by using the load and resource diversities that exist between regions. Thus, reserve sharing would benefit the utilities by optimizing the existing and future regional resources in meeting reserve margins.

Refer to Chapter 3 of this document for an expanded Purpose and Need statement and to the Purpose and Need in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Scoping and Project-Related Studies

Scoping Process

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the BLM, the FS, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the National Park Service completed numerous scoping activities. Scoping is an information-gathering process open to the public early in a project, to identify the range or scope of issues to address, in the ensuing environmental studies. Scoping served to identify significant issues to be analyzed, determine the scope with which they were to be treated in the DEIS/DPA, and eliminate issues and alternatives from detailed study where appropriate. Information from the agencies and the public received during scoping provided the basis for identifying alternative routes and developing the work plan for environmental baseline, impact assessment, and mitigation planning for the project.

Scoping activities included:

- reviewing previous studies of transmission projects in the area
- completing a regional siting study, including resource sensitivity analyses, agency contacts, and public scoping meetings
- identifying project issues
- identifying alternative transmission line routes

A Notice of Intent to prepare a DEIS/DPA for a transmission line project between Midpoint Substation, Ely, Nevada, and Delta, Utah, was published in the Federal Register on March 3, 1989 (Vol. 54, No. 41). Public scoping meetings were held during March 1989 in the following locations:

- Twin Falls, Idaho
- Wells, Nevada
- Ely, Nevada
- Delta, Utah

In April 1990, the project was expanded to include a route from the Ely, Nevada area to the Dry Lake Valley area in southern Nevada. A Notice of Intent to expand the scope of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and to tier from the White Pine Power Project EIS was published in the Federal Register on June 4, 1990. Three additional public scoping meetings were held in Las Vegas, Ely, and Caliente, Nevada during June 1990. A public information meeting was held in Moapa, Nevada during December 1990 to discuss the ongoing studies in southern Nevada.

Corridor Studies

Alternative transmission line routes were identified based on previous studies, the regional siting study, and public and agency input. Subsequently the environment was inventoried and the data were compiled along all final alternative routes. This baseline was then used in assessing project-related impacts.

Six public workshops were held in January and April 1991 in the same locations as the scoping meetings to report the results of the environmental studies, present the preliminary alternatives, and gain public input regarding the acceptability of those alternatives.

Alternatives Including The Agency Preferred Alternative

Six general alternatives were evaluated by the IPCo to meet its system needs:

- energy conservation and load management
- new generation sources
- alternative transmission systems
- alternative transmission technologies
- proposed action
- no action

The first four of these alternatives were eliminated from further consideration because they did not meet the system requirements or the stated purpose and need (refer to Chapter 2 of the DEIS/DPA).

The IPCo has developed and implemented numerous energy conservation and load management programs. Conservation, although effective in reducing energy use, cannot be considered an alternative action that would meet the stated need for the project.

The IPCo evaluated many alternative generation sources, including hydroelectric, thermal, solar, wind, cogeneration, solid waste, combustion turbine, fluidized bed, and nuclear fusion. Because these alternatives would not meet the goal of deferring new generation, providing for seasonal exchanges, diversifying fuel resources, and the other stated purposes of the project, this action was eliminated as an alternative.

The IPCo evaluated the feasibility of increasing power purchases from other utilities and wheeling power over the existing transmission system. This alternative is not considered viable because the present system is operated at capacity.

Alternative transmission technologies (e.g., voltages other than the proposed 500kV, direct current [DC] instead of alternating current [AC], underground construction, microwave, laser, super conductors, etc.) were evaluated. However, these technologies were not considered to be viable alternatives due to their substantially higher costs, increased environmental impacts, and/or technological infeasibility.

Advantages of the No-Action alternative would include preclusion of environmental impacts within the project study area and elimination of financial costs associated with construction and operation of a 500kV transmission line. The disadvantages would include environmental, socioeconomic, and electrical service impacts that would result due to other mitigating actions taken to ensure adequate and affordable energy supplies within the western electrical system.

Agency Preferred Alternative

The Agency Preferred Alternative is to allow the IPCo to construct, operate, and maintain a single-circuit, overhead 500kV transmission line between the existing Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho and a proposed substation site in the Dry Lake Valley northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada. A second transmission line segment, the Ely to Delta segment, would also connect about midway along the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment, near Ely, Nevada east to a proposed substation near Delta, Utah. Tower types on the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would be constructed using V-guyed and self-supporting steel lattice structures, and steel pole H-Frame towers in agricultural areas. Tower types on the Ely to Delta segment would be constructed using self-supporting steel lattice structures and steel pole H-Frame for visual mitigation and in agricultural areas. The average span between towers would be approximately 1500 feet.

The Agency Preferred Alternative is to allow equipment additions to the Midpoint Substation, one proposed substation near Ely, Nevada, a proposed substation in the Dry Lake Valley in southern Nevada, and a proposed substation near Delta, Utah. Series compensation stations would also be needed about halfway between the two northern substation sites northeast of Wells, Nevada and in the Delamar Valley in southern Nevada to increase the electrical performance of the transmission system. The series compensation station near Wells, Nevada may be expanded in the future to accommodate switching equipment (i.e., substation).

A new microwave communication system to operate the system would also be required on the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment. Of the 13 microwave communication sites only two are currently undeveloped. These undeveloped sites would be developed without constructing new roads or power facilities. Helicopters would be used to construct and maintain them. Solar panels would

power the five sites with no existing power facilities. The following microwave communication sites are identified on Figure 1-1:

• Hansen Butte	developed site, power supply exists
• Cottonwood	undeveloped site, install solar power system
• Ellen D	developed site, install solar power system
• Six Mile	1/2 mile from developed site, install solar power system
• Rocky Point	developed site, power supply exists
• Spruce Mountain	developed site, install solar power system
• Long Valley	undeveloped site, install solar power system
• Copper	developed site, power supply exists
• Cave Mountain	developed site, power supply exists
• Mount Wilson	developed site, power supply exists
• Highland Peak	developed site, power supply exists
• Beaver Dam Mountain	developed site, power supply exists
• Glendale	developed site, power supply exists

An existing microwave communication system would be used on the transmission line system between Ely, Nevada, and Delta, Utah.

The Midpoint to Dry Lake segment is scheduled to begin construction in 1995 and placed into commercial operation by late 1997. The Ely to Delta segment is scheduled to begin construction in 1996 and placed into operation by late 1998.

The proposed substation in the Dry Lake area would be the southern terminus of the SWIP. In 1990 the BLM asked the IPCo to help coordinate the transmission needs of utility companies with new transmission facilities planned in southern Nevada, particularly those needing transmission access to the McCullough Substation area located south of Boulder City, Nevada. The regional utilities developed a corridor concept which would maximize the capacity of the corridor while minimizing environmental impacts. Subsequent discussions with the Nevada Power Company (NPC) and other utilities resulted in the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT), which is planned to be proposed to the Nevada Public Utility Commission in July 1993 by NPC. This approximately 53 mile project would connect the proposed SWIP substation in the Dry Lake area to a proposed marketplace substation in the McCullough Substation area. Two high capacity 500kV transmission lines would connect the two substations of the "open marketplace". The combined capacity of over 3000 megawatts would allow utilities to interconnect at either substation and conduct transactions.

Although the MAT would be operated by NPC, several other regional utilities would likely be participants in the project. The MAT would provide a major electrical transmission path through the constricted Las Vegas area. This project would also provide capacity for NPC's internal system needs. The combined capacity rating of over 3000 MW would be possible because of the relatively short distance between the two proposed marketplace substations. The high capacity of this system would allow the planned transmission lines to connect on either end, while minimizing the number of lines through this sensitive area. The MAT is proposed to be in service in 1997.

Routing Alternatives

Final routing alternatives for the proposed line were determined through a process of documentation and elimination of alternatives with serious constraints. Alternative routes were eliminated for a number of reasons, including environmental conflicts, public and agency opposition, and system planning/performance criteria.

For routing options remaining, detailed environmental studies were conducted to form the basis for comparing those alternatives. Approximately 2000 miles of alternatives routes were studied in detail. To select routing preferences, the environmental consequences of each route were summarized based on impact assessment results, environmental resource preferences, and agency and public comments. A network of routes was organized into two major routing alternatives:

- the north-south system from Midpoint Substation south to the Dry Lake Valley (the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment)
- the east-west system from Ely, Nevada to Delta, Utah (the Ely to Delta segment)

Each of these contained several routing options. The final routing alternatives are as follows:

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

- **Route A** - 345kV*-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route B** - 345kV*-Trout Creek-Wendover-Steptoe-Antone Pass-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route C** - 345kV*-Trout Creek-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route D** - 345kV*-Wells-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route E** - 345kV*-Thousand Springs-Wendover-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route F** - Hagerman-Trout Creek-Goshute Valley-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route G** - 345kV*-Cottonwood Creek-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Utility - Preferred Alternative** - 345kV*-Cottonwood Creek-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Agency - Preferred Alternative** - 345kV*-Cottonwood Creek-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative

(* - 345kV refers to the SWIP alternative being parallel to the Midpoint to Valmy 345kV transmission line)

Ely to Delta Segment

- **Delta Direct Route**
- **Cutoff Route**
- **230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative and Utility Preferred alternative)**
- **Southern Route**

Affected Environment

The climate of eastern Nevada, southern Idaho, and western Utah is influenced largely by location, regional weather systems, and topographic orientation. The climate throughout much of this area is characterized by hot, dry summers followed by cold, dry winters. Surface winds are channeled through valleys between generally north-south trending mountain ranges. Winds flow predominately in northeasterly or southwesterly directions. Annual precipitation depends largely on elevation. Precipitation occurs primarily in the form of snow at higher elevations during the winter months. The snows maintain high water tables and provide groundwater recharge. Some additional precipitation occurs from thunderstorms produced by daytime heating of air masses in valleys.

Northern segments of the SWIP, within southern Idaho and northeastern Nevada, are in the Snake River Plain section of the Columbia Plateau physiographic province. This section is a vast, relatively flat plain and young lava plateau, which is deeply dissected by the canyons of the Snake River and Salmon Falls Creek, the dominant landscape features within this area. Irrigated agricultural lands, this area's main land use, are found clustered north and south along the Snake River.

To the south, on the Snake River Plain, agricultural areas extend to bordering foothills and mountains in a transitional landscape between the Basin and Range and Columbia Plateau province. This transitional landscape includes foothills, plateaus, mesas, and buttes formed of eroded lava and sedimentary rock layers.

The majority of northeastern and southern Nevada and western Utah, falls within the Basin and Range physiographic provinces. Topographically, this landscape is distinguished by isolated, roughly parallel mountain ranges separated by closed (undrained) desert basins or playas. The mountain ranges often run 50 to 75 miles in length and are generally north-south trending. Surrounding the base of the mountains and extending into the basins, there are often distinctive alluvial areas.

Portions of western Utah also include a transition zone of the Basin and Range province into what is locally referred to as the "West Desert" landscape. This landscape includes portions of the Sevier Desert and Sevier Lake. The topography within this area is extremely flat and includes large playas or mud flat areas, that exhibit little landform diversity. Again, these areas are divided by rugged, rocky mountain ranges.

Earth resource features that have a high sensitivity are landslide hazard areas, areas of high paleontological sensitivity, soils with either a high wind erosion or high water erosion hazard, areas of active mining, perennial streams and lakes, springs, and wetland areas. Significant

paleontological resources are found at the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument near Hagerman, Idaho.

Twelve vegetative communities have been identified in the SWIP study corridors, including shadscale, greasewood, samphire-iodine bush, Great Basin sagebrush, Mojave desert scrub, grassland, wetlands, riparian areas, piñon-juniper, alpine tundra, limber/bristlecone pine, and quaking aspen. These vegetation types support a large variety of mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

Approximately 560 species of vertebrates are likely to occur, over the course of a year in habitats traversed by the alternative routes.

Seventy species of fish are known to occur within aquatic habitats within the study corridors. Native and introduced game fish are present in warm and cold water lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, and in perennial streams and rivers. Others inhabit hot and cold springs and marshes. Approximately 31 percent of the fish fauna occupying waters within the study corridors are introduced.

Fifteen species of amphibians are expected to occur in aquatic, riparian, and wetland habitats in the study corridors. Sixty-two species of reptiles potentially occur in terrestrial habitats within study corridors.

A total of 111 species of mammals are expected to occur within habitats traversed by alternative routes. Small mammals including rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits and hares), bats, and shrews are the most numerous, although not readily observed. Nearly half of the mammals that may occur within the study corridors are rodents (51 species). Large mammals include 19 species of carnivores (e.g., lynx, wolverine, etc.) and five species of native ungulates (e.g., antelope, mule deer, bighorn sheep).

Free roaming horses (*Equus caballus*) and burros (*E. asinus*) occur on public lands in the study corridors. These animals are descendants of horses and burros that escaped from man or were turned out onto the open range.

In recent years, dramatic declines in tortoise population numbers have been observed throughout much of its range, including southern Nevada. A number of factors have contributed to the observed decline, including loss of habitat to development, degradation of habitat from livestock grazing, disease, predation on juveniles by ravens attracted to areas where human refuse accumulates, illegal collection, and off-road vehicle use. The Mojave population of the desert tortoise was formally listed as a federally threatened species by the United States Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service in April 1990. Concern has been expressed for the maintenance of viable populations in Clark County, Nevada, and especially the Las Vegas Valley where rapid commercial and residential development is occurring.

Declines in sage grouse numbers are largely associated with destruction of sagebrush habitat. Conversion of sagebrush to agricultural lands, and attempts to convert sagebrush areas to grassland for livestock grazing are a few of the human developments contributing to the decrease in grouse numbers.

The majority of the lands crossed by the alternative routes are used for cattle grazing and are classified as rangeland. Other significant uses within the study corridors include agriculture, mining, airports and airstrips, utilities, commercial, governmental and other industrial facilities. Residences near urban areas and in remote locations, both occupied and unoccupied are located within the study

corridors. Principal urban areas or residential concentrations in or near the study corridors include the following:

- Hagerman, Eden, and Hansen in Idaho
- Wells, Ely, Currie, Jackpot, Oasis, Baker, and McGill in Nevada
- Delta, Eskdale, and Hinckley in Utah

Several alternative routes in Utah and Nevada could potentially affect military aircraft operations at Hill Air Force Base in Utah and Nellis Air Force Base in southern Nevada.

Approximately half of the lands crossed by the study corridors in Idaho fall into the category of agriculture. The high-desert lands of the Snake River Valley are fertile and productive when irrigated. Many of the lands crossed in Idaho are classified as prime or important farmland by the Soil Conservation Service.

Dispersed recreation occurs throughout these areas in Nevada, Idaho, and Utah. Developed campsites and recreation areas are usually located along perennial streams or reservoirs. Great Basin National Park, near Baker, Nevada is passed by several of the alternative Ely to Delta segment routes. Several wilderness study areas (WSAs) inventoried within the study corridors include portions of Salmon Falls Creek WSA in Idaho and 14 WSAs in Nevada including South Pequop, Bluebell, Goshute Peak, Goshute Canyon, Marble Canyon, Mount Grafton, Fortification Range, Delamar Mountains, Evergreen, Meadow Valley Mountains, Fish and Wildlife 1, 2 & 3, and Arrow Canyon. WSAs within Utah include Howell Peak, King Top, Notch Peak, Fish Springs, Wah Wah Mountains, and Swasey Mountain.

Cultural resources are historic and traditional cultural properties that reflect our nation's heritage. Federal regulations define such historic properties to include prehistoric and historic sites, buildings, structures, districts, and objects included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as artifacts, records, and remains related to such properties. These regions of Nevada, Idaho, and Utah have been occupied for thousands of years. This section briefly summarizes what is known about this long history of human use of the region. More details are provided in this document and in the technical reports (Rogge 1991).

Prehistory - The project area overlaps portions of two culture areas, the Great Basin and the Colorado Plateau, but the vast majority of the project area is within the "cultural," if not the geographic, Great Basin. The extreme southern portion is along the western margin of the Colorado Plateau. Within the study area three prehistoric cultural stages, Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Formative are represented and local phases or variations within each stage have been defined.

Ethnohistory - During the ethnohistoric era, these regions of Nevada, Idaho, and Utah were occupied by the Northern Shoshone, Bannock, Western Shoshone, Pahvant Ute, and Southern Paiute. Generally speaking, the Northern Shoshone and Bannock inhabited the study corridors in southern Idaho. The Western Shoshone ranged through eastern Nevada and northwestern Utah. The central portion of Utah was occupied by the Pahvant Ute while the Southern Paiute inhabited southwestern Utah and southern Nevada.

History - After the arrival of Europeans in the New World, portions of the study corridors were claimed by Spain, Great Britain, France, Mexico, and Canada, as well as the United States. The earliest European exploration was led by Escalante who skirted the eastern margin of the study area in Utah. After the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Coast in 1804-1806, fur

trappers and mountain men were lured to the Rocky Mountains until the decline of fur trading in about 1840.

Environmental Consequences

The consequences, or impacts, to the environment caused by implementing the SWIP were assessed by considering the existing condition of the environment and the effects of the activities of the SWIP (construction, operation, and maintenance) on the environment. The "initial" impacts were evaluated to determine if mitigation measures would be effective in lessening the impacts. Those impacts remaining after mitigation measures were applied are referred to as "residual" impacts. Many of the identified impacts would be considered to be adverse, direct, and long-term. Some impacts (e.g., visual, cultural, and biological impacts) would be considered adverse, indirect, and long-term.

The principal type of impacts associated with earth resources is the potential for increased erosion hazards, although some short-term soil compaction impacts could occur in agricultural areas and some stream sedimentation could also occur at the crossings of perennial streams.

Typical impacts to biological resources include effects on threatened, endangered, or protected species, rare or unique vegetation types, migration corridors for wildlife, areas of low revegetation potential, or highly productive wildlife habitat. The impacts would generally be associated with the removal of vegetation and habitat cause by construction and operation activities, and from human activity from more access into remote areas. The presence of the transmission towers would increase the potential for long-term predation of sage grouse by golden eagles on adult and immature birds. Adding towers also would provide roost/hunting sites for ravens and magpies, thus increasing the long-term potential for predation on grouse nests.

Land use impacts include those that would displace, alter, or otherwise physically affect any existing or planned residential, commercial, or industrial use or activity, any agricultural use, or any recreational, preservation, educational, or scientific facility or use. Few land use impacts would occur from the construction of the SWIP, although the impacts that would occur would be long-term.

Potential socioeconomic effects could include construction-period impacts to area communities, social and economic impacts along the selected route, and fiscal impacts within local jurisdictions. These effects could be both adverse and beneficial.

Visual impacts would be considered adverse, indirect, and long-term. They include effects to the quality of any scenic resource, the view from any residential or other sensitive land use or travel route, or the view from any recreation, preservation, education, or scientific facility. Potential visual impacts to existing and proposed sensitive viewpoints for Great Basin National Park are a concern. Other visual impacts would be generally associated with residential concentrations or dispersed homes, scenic roads and highways, and recreation viewpoints, including wilderness areas and WSAs.

Direct, adverse physical impacts could occur to cultural resources during construction, while indirect impacts could result after construction due to increased erosion or increased public access to sites

along the transmission line right-of-way. Adverse visual effects may occur to sites with high aesthetic or interpretive values.

Potential electrical, biological, health and safety effects from the Agency Preferred Alternatives were assessed. These include corona effects, electric and magnetic field effects, and public safety.

The Stateline Resource Area is currently preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) which would designate utility corridors. The RMP corridor studies and the SWIP EIS studies have been coordinated, and the preferred alternatives are similar. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 mandates to the extent practical that the BLM consolidate future utility projects within the corridor that is established.

Public Issues and Management Concerns

Need for Project - The public and agencies expressed a concern about the need for the project.

Maximize Use of Public Lands - One of the major public comments was utilizing public lands for routing the transmission line since the line would offer no direct benefit to private landowners and would also interfere with agricultural operations.

Visual Impacts - The study area is characterized by relatively open, uninterrupted views with minimal overstory vegetation cover. Significant concern is expressed over the views from the parks, recreation, residence, and preservation areas, views from highways, scenic routes, sensitive cultural sites, and impacts affecting inherent aesthetic value of the landscape.

Minimize Impacts to Biological Resources - There is a wide variety of both vegetation and wildlife in the project area. A total of twelve vegetation communities were identified within the SWIP study corridors with 73 plant species identified as sensitive on the state and/or federal level. Wetlands do occur in the project area, but would be avoided. Within the project area, there are 560 species of vertebrates, 111 species of mammals, 15 species of amphibians, and 70 species of fish. Issues for wildlife species and important wildlife habitats are related primarily to increased public access into remote areas and/or ground disturbance. Ground disturbance caused by construction of the transmission line could result in habitat loss and destruction. Increased public access may result in more harassment for all wildlife. There is considerable public concern regarding the tortoise hatchlings falling prey to ravens, and raptors colliding with transmission lines.

Cultural Resources - The project area has been occupied for thousands of years, and contains a long history of human use. Thousands of cultural sites have been recorded, but only a few have been formally inventoried. The public and agencies are aware of the archeological sites and are concerned that many of these sites would be impacted due to construction and increased accessibility.

Health and Safety - In recent years there has been growing public concern over the possible effects that electromagnetic fields (EMF) could have on human health. Some studies have shown a statistical association between EMF and certain diseases, while other studies have failed to show this relationship. Ongoing research into EMF has detected no cause-and-effect relationship between EMF and disease. While EMF can produce biological effects, it is unclear whether these effects

would be of any consequence to human health. Please refer to Chapter 3 of this document for a discussion of recent EMF research results.

Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) - One wilderness area and a number of WSAs are found in or near the study corridors for the SWIP. The agencies and the public are concerned about the presence of the transmission line on adjacent lands potentially affecting the designation of WSAs as wilderness.

Minimize Land Use Impacts - The primary issues associated with the construction of the transmission line would be expected to occur from conflicts with the land uses found throughout the project area (i.e., agricultural lands, irrigation systems, airport clear zones, residences, and planned development).

Use Existing Transmission Line Corridors - Both the public and agencies expressed a desire to locate the transmission line along existing transmission corridors, wherever possible, to minimize environmental impacts.

Property Values and Compensation - Private property owners expressed a concern for a decrease in the monetary value of their property as a result of the proposed transmission line, and whether or not they would receive adequate compensation for property loss.

Effects of Alternatives on Agency Land Management Plans - The BLM plans and designates corridors for linear utility use. Portions of the Agency Preferred Alternatives (Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and Ely to Delta segment), evaluated along with other alternatives in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in this document, would not follow designated or planning utility corridors. Several BLM resource management plans would be amended by approval of this document (refer to Proposed Plan Amendments in Chapter 1).

Route Comparisons

The comparative environmental consequences are summarized below for each of the final alternative routes. This summary compares only a few of the many resources evaluated. For a complete comparison, see Table 1-1 and 1-2 in this document.

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

- Route A:
- crosses 131.1 miles within Military Operating Areas (MOAs) of Hill and Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 35.2 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 15.3 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.3 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses 24.1 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses 39.0 miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses 58.8 miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - 370.4 miles in designated or planning corridor
 - 142.6 miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses 18.4 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses 95.2 miles of private land
- Route B:
- crosses 182.9 miles within MOAs of Hill and Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 36.8 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses most (32.8) miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.4 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses least (7.2) miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses most (53.1) miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses 58.9 miles of potential high wind erosion soil
 - 363.1 miles in designated or planning corridor
 - 153.0 miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses 19.3 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses 97.3 miles of private land
- Route C:
- crosses 131.1 miles within MOAs of Hill and Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 30.7 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 16.3 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.3 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses 16.2 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses 44.4 miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses 58.8 miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - 337.0 miles in designated or planning corridor
 - 169.9 miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses 17.2 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses 104.6 miles of private land

- Route D:
- crosses 129.5 miles within MOAs of Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 34.1 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses least (5.8) miles bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.3 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses 34.9 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses least (35.5) miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses 52.1 miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - 377.1 miles in designated or planning corridor
 - 136.4 miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses 20.5 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses 98.7 miles of private land
- Route E:
- crosses 182.9 miles within MOAs of Hill and Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 36.3 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 18.2 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.3 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses 18.6 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses 48.6 miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses 64.3 miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - 365.6 miles in designated or planning corridor
 - 158.1 miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses 18.4 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses 88.5 miles of private land
- Route F:
- crosses 131.1 miles within MOAs of Hill and Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 32.8 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 16.3 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.3 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses 16.5 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses 47.8 miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses most (73.3) miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - least (329.1) miles in designated or planning corridor
 - most (194.9) miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses least (11) miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses most (115.6) miles of private land
 - visual impacts to Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument
 - impacts airstrip used by agricultural spraying operations
- Route G:
- crosses 131.1 miles within MOAs of Hill and Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 40.6 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 19.6 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.4 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses 39.7 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses 36.4 miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses 46.7 miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - most (379.4) miles in designated or planning corridor

- least (125.3) miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses most (20.6) miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses 85.3 miles of private land
 - reduces visual impacts to U.S. Highway 93
- Utility:
- crosses 131.1 miles within MOAs of Hill and Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses most (42.2) miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 19.6 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.4 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses 39.7 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses 36.4 miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses least (44.1) miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - 376.3 miles in designated or planning corridor
 - least (125.3) miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses 20.5 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses 87.0 miles of private land
 - reduces visual impacts to U.S. Highway 93
- Agency Preferred Alternative:
- crosses 146.6 miles within MOAs of Nellis Air Force Bases
 - crosses 37.2 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 6.0 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - crosses 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat
 - crosses 1.3 miles near ferruginous hawk nests
 - crosses most (43.2) miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses 37.3 miles of potential high water erosion soils
 - crosses least (49.5) miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - 370.4 miles in designated or planning corridor
 - 132.7 miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses 18.4 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses least (83.1) miles of private land
 - reduces visual impacts to U.S. Highway 93

Ely to Delta Segment

- Direct Route:
- crosses 55.1 miles within R-6405 Restricted Area
 - crosses 130 miles within restricted air space and MOAs of Utah Testing and Training Range (UTTR)
 - crosses 7.9 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
 - crosses 7.0 miles of bald eagle habitat
 - does not cross ferruginous hawk nesting areas
 - crosses least (56.5) miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
 - crosses least (6.8) miles of potential high wind erosion soils
 - least (14.3) miles in designated or planning corridor
 - 115.8 miles outside designated or planning corridor
 - crosses least (0.8) miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
 - crosses least (0.0) miles of private land

- shortest route and crosses least public and private land
- avoids visual impacts to Great Basin National Park
- crosses wetlands known as the Leland-Harris Spring Complex

Cutoff Route:

- crosses 104.2 miles within MOAs of UTTR
- crosses 6.8 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
- crosses 8.4 miles of bald eagle habitat
- does not cross ferruginous hawk nesting areas
- crosses 70.1 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
- crosses 12.7 miles of potential high wind erosion soils
- 75.5 miles in designated or planning corridor
- 78.4 miles outside designated or planning corridor
- crosses least (0.8) miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
- crosses least (0.0) miles of private land
- insignificant visual impacts to viewpoints within Great Basin National Park

230kV Corridor
Route:
(Agency Preferred
Alternative)

- crosses 102.5 miles within MOAs of UTTR
- crosses 7.1 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
- crosses most miles (17.8) of bald eagle habitat
- crosses 4.5 miles of ferruginous hawk nests
- crosses 71.5 miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
- crosses 19.2 miles of potential high wind erosion soils
- most (145.9) miles in designated or planning corridor
- least (14.9) miles outside designated or planning corridor
- crosses most (8.0) miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
- crosses (10.2) miles of private land
- utilizes existing 230kV corridor
- crosses most private and national forest lands
- insignificant visual impacts to viewpoints within Great Basin National Park

Southern Route:

- crosses least amount of MOAs of UTTR
- crosses 11.8 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range
- does not cross bald eagle habitat
- crosses the most (10.1) miles of ferruginous hawk nests
- crosses most (85.7) miles of crucial pronghorn habitat
- crosses most miles (40.0) miles of potential high wind erosion soils
- 49.5 miles in designated or planning corridor
- most (161.5) miles outside designated or planning corridor
- crosses 6.0 miles of predicted high sensitivity cultural zones
- crosses (1.6) miles of private land
- highest overall environmental impacts
- longest route

Preferred Alternative Selection

Based upon review of potential impact characterizations, significant, unavoidable adverse effects, agency and public comments, and cumulative environmental consequences of the alternative routes, the preferred routes were identified (refer to Identification of Preferred Alternatives in Chapter 2 in the DEIS/DPA and page 1-9 of this document).

Route A is the Environmentally Preferred Route for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment. The least impact route on the Ely to Delta segment is the Cutoff Route, however the 230kV Corridor Route would cause similar environmental impacts and would be environmentally acceptable. Because of the utilities future need to interconnect with the 230kV system in the Ely area, the potential cumulative environmental effects from the Cutoff Route would be more significant than the cumulative effects from the 230kV Corridor Route (refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3 of this document). Therefore, because the 230kV Corridor Route would likely cause fewer future cumulative effects in the Ely area, this route is environmentally preferred.

The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment is a combination of Route A and Route G. The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment is the 230kV Corridor Route. The Agency Preferred Alternative substation sites include: Site #4 of the Thousand Springs siting area, Site #10 of the Robinson Summit siting area, Site #14 of the Intermountain siting area and in the Dry Lake siting area, all of the potential substation sites are environmentally acceptable and will be determined through the analysis of the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project. The Agency Preferred Alternative proposes to construct microwave communication facilities at Hansen Butte, Cottonwood, Ellen D, Six Mile, Rocky Point, Spruce Mountain, Long Valley, Copper, Cave Mountain, Mount Wilson, Highland Peak, Beaver Dam Mountain, and Glendale.

The IPCo prefers the Agency Preferred Alternative route for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment with two important modifications:

- prefer Link 102 over Links 715 and 713 near Contact, Nevada
- prefer Link 280 over Link 291 north of the Robinson Summit Substation site

The Utility Preferred Route on the Ely to Delta segment is the 230kV Corridor Route.

The significant, unavoidable adverse effects of the Agency Preferred Alternative involve biological, visual, and cultural resources only, as summarized below:

<u>Resource Category</u>	<u>Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts</u>
Biological Resources	On the routes between Midpoint Substation and Dry Lake, Route A would potentially cross 3.2 miles of riparian habitat (although none is actually expected to be disturbed), 52.1 miles of sensitive desert tortoise habitat, and 35.2 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range. Route G would potentially disturb 4.8 miles of riparian habitat, a similar disturbance to desert tortoise, and 40.6 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range.

Resource Category

Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

On the Ely and Delta segment, the Cutoff Route would potentially cross 1.2 miles of riparian habitat (although none is actually expected to be disturbed) and 6.8 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range. The 230kV Corridor Route would potentially disturb 0.9 miles of riparian habitat and 7.1 miles of sage grouse leks and wintering range.

Although riparian areas and desert tortoise are significant issues, the impacts would be largely mitigated. Impacts to sage grouse habitat would be significant where there are no existing transmission lines.

Visual Resources

On the Midpoint Substation and Dry Lake segment, Route A would potentially result in 13.5 miles of significant impacts to the area's visual resources. Significant impacts are predicted to approximately 83 residences within one mile of the route, and to one scenic highway. The route would cross 7.3 miles of the BLM and the FS lands managed to retain visual quality (VRM Class II and VQO Retention, respectively). Route G would potentially result in 14.7 miles of high impacts to the area's visual resources. Impacts are predicted to approximately 93 residences within one mile of the route, and to one scenic highway crossed.

On the Ely and Delta segment, the Cutoff Route would potentially result in 1.2 miles of significant impacts to the area's visual resources. Significant impacts are predicted to 2 residences within one mile of the route. The 230kV Corridor Route would potentially result in 7.3 miles of high impacts to the area's visual resources. Impacts are predicted to approximately 26 residences within one mile of the route.

Cultural Resources

On the routes between Midpoint Substation and Dry Lake, Route A would potentially result in 6.8 miles of significant impacts to cultural resources. Among the 454 sites identified within one mile, 53 are historic, 13 are ethnohistoric, and 388 are prehistoric. Route G would potentially result in 7.3 miles of significant impacts to cultural resources. Among the 474 sites identified within one mile, 61 are historic, 14 are ethnohistoric, and 399 are prehistoric.

On the Ely to Delta segment, the Cutoff Route would potentially result in 4.6 miles of significant impacts to cultural resources. Among the 39 sites identified within one mile, 5 are historic, 8 are ethnohistoric, and 26 are prehistoric. The 230kV Corridor Route would potentially result in 5.5 miles of significant impacts to cultural resources. Among the 100 sites identified within one mile, 12 are historic, 8 are ethnohistoric, and 80 are prehistoric.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROPOSED PLAN

INTRODUCTION	1-1
THE PROPOSED PLAN	1-2
Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment	1-2
Ely to Delta Segment	1-4
Selecting the Proposed Plan	1-6
Process for Selecting the Environmentally Preferred Alternative	1-6
Differences Between the Agency Preferred Alternative and the Environmentally Preferred Alternative	1-9
Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment	1-9
Ely to Delta Segment	1-10
Consistency With Other Plans	1-11
Comparative Analysis	1-11
Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment	1-12
Ely to Delta Segment	1-12
Public Issues and Management Concerns	1-13
Issue 1 - Need for Project	1-13
Issue 2 - Maximize Use of Public Lands	1-14
Issue 3 - Minimize Visual Impacts	1-14
Issue 4 - Minimize Impacts to Biological Resources	1-14
Issue 5 - Minimize Impacts to Cultural Resources	1-15
Issue 6 - Health and Safety	1-15
Issue 7 - Wilderness Areas/Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)	1-16
Issue 8 - Minimize Land Use Impacts	1-16
Issue 9 - Use Existing Transmission Line Corridors	1-16
Issue 10 - Property Values and Compensation	1-17
Issue 11 - Effects on Agency Land Management Plans	1-17
Affected Environment	1-17
Environmental Consequences	1-20
Cumulative Effects	1-22
Issue Comparison by Alternative	1-22
Issue 1 - Need for Project	1-22
Issue 2 - Maximize Use of Public Lands	1-23
Issue 3 - Visual Impacts	1-25
Issue 4 - Minimize Impacts to Biological Resources	1-26
Issue 5 - Minimize Impacts to Cultural Resources	1-27
Issue 6 - Health and Safety	1-27
Issue 7 - Wilderness Areas/Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)	1-28
Issue 8 - Minimize Land Use Impacts	1-29
Issue 9 - Use Existing Transmission Line Corridors	1-30
Issue 10 - Property Values and Compensation	1-31

Issue 11 - Effects on Agency Land Management Plans	1-31
Proposed Plan Amendments	1-32
Plan Amendment Determinations	1-33
Factors of Analysis	1-33
Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan	1-34

CHAPTER 2 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION	2-1
PUBLIC INFORMATION	2-1
STEERING COMMITTEE	2-2
FORMAL PUBLIC MEETINGS	2-3

CHAPTER 3 - MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONAL STUDIES

PURPOSE AND NEED	3-1
Introduction	3-1
Diversity Between Regions of the WSCC	3-1
Northwest Power Pool	3-2
Rocky Mountain Power Area	3-2
Arizona-New Mexico Power Area	3-3
Diversity Benefits from Interconnections	3-3
Conservation and Demand-Side Management	3-4
Utility Cost Minimization Initiatives	3-4
Environmental and Consumer Benefit Tests	3-5
Generation vs. Transmission	3-5
Construction Costs	3-6
Transmission System Reliability	3-7
Regional Economic Benefits of the SWIP	3-8
Seasonal Exchanges	3-8
Resource Coordination	3-8
Nonfirm Sales and Purchases	3-9
Firm Sales and Purchases	3-9
Reserve Sharing	3-9
Existing and Future Generation	3-9
Bonanza Generating Station (Bonanza)	3-10
Intermountain Generating Station (IGS)	3-10
White Pine Power Project (WPPP)	3-10

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS	3-12
Anticipated Utility Projects in the Ely Area	3-12
Scenario 1 - Cutoff Route to North Steptoe/Robinson Summit	3-12
Scenario 2 - Cutoff Route to North Steptoe Substation	3-12
Scenario 3 - 230kV Corridor Route to Robinson Summit	3-13
Environmental Comparison of the Scenarios	3-13
The Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project	3-14
Potential Fiber Optic Ground Wire	3-15
ADDITIONAL STUDIES AND INFORMATION	3-16
Analysis of the No-Action Alternative	3-16
Biology	3-16
Cultural Resources	3-17
Visual Resources	3-17
Land Uses	3-17
Soils/Geology/Paleontology	3-18
Recreation Resources	3-18
Wilderness/WSAs	3-18
Electric and Magnetic Field Effects	3-18
Socioeconomics	3-18
Grazing	3-18
Recent EMF Research Results	3-19
Right-of-Way	3-19
Right-of-Way Width Requirement and Grounding	3-19
Right-of-Way Separation between the SWIP and the UNTP	3-20
Military Air Space	3-22
Affected Environment	3-23
Environment Consequences	3-25
Effects to Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and Instant Study Areas	3-26
Potential Effects	3-27
Idaho	3-28
Nevada	3-28
Utah	3-30
Recreation Effects	3-31
Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment	3-32
Ely to Delta Segment	3-34
Herd Management Areas	3-35
Affected Environment	3-35
Environmental Consequences	3-36
Mitigation	3-36
Impacts in the Oasis Area	3-36
Subroute Comparison	3-37
Conclusions	3-38
Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds	3-38
Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute	3-39
Affected Environment	3-39
Earth and Water Resources	3-40

Biological Resources	3-41
Land Use	3-43
Visual Resources	3-44
Cultural Resources	3-45
Environmental Consequences	3-48
Earth and Water Resource	3-48
Biological Resources	3-49
Land Use	3-50
Visual Resources	3-51
Cultural Resources	3-52
Environmentally Preferred Subroute	3-53
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	3-54
Introduction	3-54
Affected Environment	3-54
Methods	3-54
Results	3-55
Vegetative Communities	3-55
Wildlife	3-57
Aquatic/Riparian Habitats	3-59
Special Status Species - Plants	3-60
Special Status Species - Wildlife	3-64
Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment	3-66
Ely to Delta Segment	3-71
Environmental Consequences	3-73
Introduction	3-73
Methods	3-73
Mitigation Planning	3-74
Results	3-75
Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment	3-75
Ely to Delta Segment	3-85
Avian Collision Hazards	3-89
Potential Raptor Electrocution Hazard	3-91
Leland Harris Spring Complex	3-91

CHAPTER 4 - ERRATA

COVER SHEET	4-1
SUMMARY	4-1
CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION	4-2
CHAPTER 2 - ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION	4-4

CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	4-8
CHAPTER 4 - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES	4-11
TABLE 4-4	4-14
Estimated County Tax Revenues ¹ by Alternative Route	4-14
CHAPTER 5 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION	4-15
CHAPTER 6 - PREPARERS AND CONTRIBUTORS	4-15
REFERENCES	4-15
APPENDICES FOR THE SWIF DEIS/DPA	4-16
Appendix C	4-16
Appendix D	4-16
Appendix F	4-16
Appendix G	4-17
Appendix H	4-17
MAP VOLUME	4-18
TECHNICAL REPORTS	4-19
Volume II - Natural Environment	4-19
Earth Resources	4-19
Biological Resources	4-19
Volume IV - Cultural Environment	4-20
Appendix CR-11	4-23
DATA TABLES FOR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	4-24
Biological Resources	4-24
DATA TABLES FOR HUMAN ENVIRONMENT - LAND USE RESOURCES	4-24
Impacts to Military Operating Areas	4-24
DATA TABLES FOR HUMAN ENVIRONMENT - VISUAL RESOURCES - VOLUME 2, ...	4-24
Compliance with Agency Visual Management	4-24

CHAPTER 5 - COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO THE DEIS/DPA

INDEX OF INDIVIDUALS RESPONDING TO THE DEIS/DPA BY LETTER	5-1
INDEX OF ORGANIZATIONS RESPONDING TO THE DEIS/DPA BY LETTER	5-4
INDEX OF AGENCIES RESPONDING TO THE DEIS/DPA BY LETTER	5-6

INDEX OF COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED AFTER THE SWIP DEIS/DPA COMMENT PERIOD 5-8

INDEX OF COMMENTORS AT THE FORMAL PUBLIC MEETINGS 5-9

COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES FROM INDIVIDUALS

COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES FROM ORGANIZATIONS

COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES FROM AGENCIES

COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED AFTER THE SWIP DEIS/DPA COMMENT PERIOD

FORMAL PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

REFERENCES

INDEX

APPENDICES (Separate Volume)

APPENDIX A - Glossary, Acronyms & Abbreviations

APPENDIX B - List of Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals Receiving the FEIS/PPA

APPENDIX C - Biological Opinion

APPENDIX D - Committed Mitigation for the Proposed Action

APPENDIX E - Data Tables - Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>Follows Page</u>
1-1 Proposed Plan	1-2
1-2 Proposed Plan Amendment	1-34
3-1 WSCC Seasonal Diversity Potential for the Year 2000	3-2
3-2 Scenario 1 - Cutoff Route to North Steptoe/Robinson Summit	3-12
3-3 Scenario 2 - Cutoff Route to North Steptoe Substation	3-12
3-4 Scenario 3 - 230kV Corridor Route to Robinson Summit	3-14
3-5 Locations of Shorter Towers in Utah Testing and Training Range	3-26
3-6 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Earth Resources	3-40
3-7 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Biological Resources	3-42
3-8 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Landcover	3-42
3-9 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Jurisdiction	3-44
3-10 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Land Use Resources	3-44
3-11 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Visual Resources	3-44
3-12 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Cultural Resources	3-48
3-13 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Simulation Subroute 1 - Existing Conditions	3-52
3-14 Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Simulation Subroute 1 - Simulation	3-52

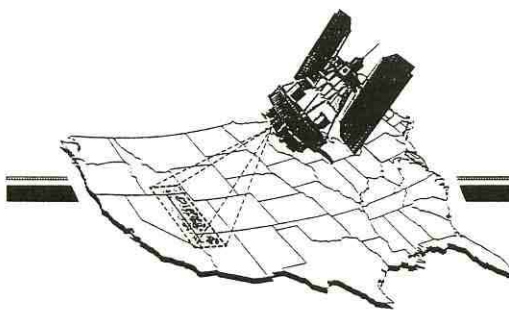
3-15	Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Simulation Subroute 2 - Existing Conditions	3-52
3-16	Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Simulation Subroute 2 - Simulation	3-52
3-17	Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Simulation Subroute 3 & 4 - Existing Conditions	3-52
3-18	Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Simulation Subroute 3 - Simulation	3-52
3-19	Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Simulation Subroute 4 - Simulation	3-52
3-20	Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Alternative Routes	3-54
3-21	Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute Subroute Comparison	3-54
4-1	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 2 - Alternative Routes	4-18
4-2	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 3 - Alternative Routes	4-18
4-3	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 4 - Alternative Routes	4-18
4-4	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 2 - Land Use Resources	4-18
4-5	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 3 - Land Use Resources	4-18
4-6	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 4 - Land Use Resources	4-18
4-7	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 4 - Land Use Resources	4-18
4-8	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 5 - Land Use Resources	4-18
4-9	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 5 - Land Use Resources	4-18

4-10	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 4 - Jurisdiction	4-18
4-11	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 2 - Visual Resources	4-18
4-12	Errata for Map Volume: Panel 3 - All Resource Maps	4-18

LIST OF TABLES

- 1-1 Route Comparison Table - Midpoint to Dry Lake Routes
- 1-2 Route Comparison Table - Ely to Delta Routes
- 1-3 Summary of Selectively Committed Mitigation For the Proposed Action - Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment
- 1-4 Summary of Selectively Committed Mitigation For the Proposed Action - Ely to Delta Segment
- 1-5 Selectively Committed Mitigation Measures
- 1-6 Generic Mitigation Measures Included in the Project Description
- 3-1 Mileage of Alternative Routes in Military Airspace
- 3-2 Miles Near Wilderness Areas and WSAs - Midpoint to Dry Lake Alternative Routes
- 3-3 Miles Near Wilderness Areas and WSAs - Ely to Delta Alternative Routes
- 3-4 Miles Through Herd Management Areas - Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment
- 3-5 Miles Through Herd Management Areas - Ely to Delta Segment
- 3-6 Cultural Resource Data by Link
- 3-7 Cultural Resources Recorded Along the Sacramento Pass Subroutes
- 3-8 Cultural Resources Along the Sacramento Pass Subroutes
- 3-9 Summary of Cultural Resource Impacts

NOTE: All tables are located at the end of their respective chapters.



CHAPTER 1

PROPOSED PLAN

CHAPTER 1

PROPOSED PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Power Company (IPCo) proposes to construct, operate, and maintain the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP), a single-circuit, overhead 500kV transmission line between the existing Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho, and a proposed substation site in the Dry Lake Valley northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada. The line would be supported by V-guyed and self-supporting steel-lattice, and steel-pole H-frame structures placed an average of 1500 feet apart.

The IPCo is also proposing the construction, operation, and maintenance of a single-circuit, overhead 500kV transmission line to connect from a point near Ely, Nevada, east to a proposed substation near Delta, Utah. This segment of the SWIP is referred to in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA) as the Crosstie (hereafter referred to as the Ely to Delta segment). The line would be supported by self-supporting steel-lattice and steel-pole H-frame structures placed an average of 1500 feet apart. Land rights for the Ely to Delta segment would be obtained in the name of the IPCo. The IPCo has entered into an agreement with Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) to convey this segment of the right-of-way grant with the approval of the BLM to the LADWP on behalf of the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP). This is referred to as the "Delta Grant" in the agreement. The agreement further states that the IPCo would conduct the necessary environmental permitting for the Delta Grant and then request that the BLM assign it to the LADWP for construction, operation, and maintenance. The UNTP participants include utilities in Utah, Nevada, and California.

In 1988, the IPCo applied for a right-of-way grant to construct and operate a transmission interconnection from their 500kV Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho to a proposed substation site in the Delta, Utah area. In the Delta area, the IPCo was proposing to interconnect with and obtain transmission capacity on the UNTP, a proposed 500kV transmission line from Delta to a proposed substation site located approximately 13 miles southwest of Boulder City, Nevada. The proposal also included the line segment between Ely and Delta, which was proposed to be developed as a second phase of the UNTP.

In early 1990, the IPCo determined that the UNTP would be fully subscribed and would not be able to provide the transmission capacity for the SWIP to reach the proposed substation near Boulder City, Nevada. The IPCo decided that the SWIP would have to be extended south from the Ely area in order to meet the purpose and need for the SWIP project to interconnect in the Las Vegas area. In June 1990, the SWIP studies were expanded to include routes from the Ely, Nevada area to a proposed substation site northeast of Las Vegas in the Dry Lake valley.

The SWIP Ely to Delta segment was originally a joint SWIP and UNTP transmission line segment. When the SWIP right-of-way application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was amended in June 1990, the IPCo's need for the Ely to Delta segment changed. However, the Ely to Delta segment remains an important part of the UNTP and the need for it remains unchanged.

The lead federal agency for the SWIP, the BLM, recommended that this transmission segment be retained in the SWIP Environmental Impact Statement/Plan Amendment (EIS/PA) process. This

nearly 160-mile transmission line segment would extend east from the vicinity of Ely, Nevada, to near Delta, Utah. The right-of-way for this segment would be granted to the IPCo, who would request that the BLM assign it to the LADWP. The LADWP would, on behalf of the UNTP participants, construct, operate, and maintain this portion of the line and a proposed substation near the Intermountain Generating Station near Delta, Utah.

The IPCo proposes to assign the Ely to Delta portion of the right-of-way grant, if approved, to the LADWP. The LADWP has been involved in all aspects of the EIS process. The BLM Ely (Nevada) and Richfield (Utah) District have also participated in every step of the EIS process, and will be involved in the decision process with the rest of the potentially affected BLM districts. If a right-of-way grant is assigned for the SWIP Ely to Delta segment, the BLM would coordinate directly with the UNTP participants during development of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plans, as well as the actual construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. Also refer to the expanded discussion of Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document.

THE PROPOSED PLAN

The Agency Preferred Alternative is to grant the IPCo a 200-foot right-of-way across nearly 700 miles of lands administered by the BLM, Forest Service (FS), Bureau of Reclamation, and private owners. This route is a combination of Routes A and G, for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP and the 230kV Corridor Route for the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP (refer to Figure 1-1 for a map of the Proposed Plan and to the Alternative Routes map in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA). The Agency Preferred Alternative also includes four proposed substations or series compensation sites, expansion of the Midpoint Substation in southern Idaho, a series compensation station in the Delamar Valley in southeastern Nevada (exact site not yet selected and subject to additional environmental permitting) and the 13 sites for microwave communication facilities. The Proposed Plan Amendment is to designate a utility corridor along the Agency Preferred Alternative to accommodate the SWIP 500kV transmission line where this route deviates from agency designated and planning corridors.

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

The SWIP Midpoint to Dry Lake segment is proposed as a 500,000-volt (500kV) alternating current (AC) transmission line with an estimated capacity rating of 1200 megawatt (MW). The over 500-mile long line would extend from the existing Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho to a proposed substation near the Dry Lake Valley northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada.

The towers for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would range from 90-160 feet in height, but would average 120-130 feet. Towers would be spaced approximately 1200-1500 feet apart depending upon terrain and other construction factors. The SWIP Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would be constructed generally using the following tower types:

- V-guyed (or other guyed) steel lattice or self-supporting steel lattice
- steel-pole H-frame in agricultural areas
- self-supporting steel lattice at specific intervals for lateral support

The Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would involve crossing several districts of the BLM in Idaho and Nevada. The section of this chapter - Proposed Plan Amendments lists the BLM Districts and Resource Area land use plans that would be affected by the Plan Amendment. Figure 1-1 illustrates the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment in relation to the alternatives compared in the SWIP DEIS/DPA (a combination of Routes A and G) that would utilize Links 10, 20, 41, 40, 50, 70, 711, 714, 101, 715, 713, 110, 130, 150, 151, 152, 200, 221, 223, 212, 230, 241, 242, 244, 270, 291, 293, 310, 340, 362, 363, 669, 670, 672, 673, 675, 690, 700, and 720 (also refer to Figure 1-1 in this document or the Alternative Routes map in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume).

The Agency Preferred Alternative would require equipment additions to the Midpoint Substation, one proposed substation near Ely, Nevada, and a proposed substation in the Dry Lake Valley in southern Nevada. A Series compensation station would be needed to increase the electrical performance of the system northeast of Wells, Nevada, which is about halfway between the two northern substation sites. This series compensation station near Wells may be expanded to accommodate switching equipment (substation) in the future. Another series compensation station would be required in the Delamar Valley in southern Nevada.

The proposed substation and series compensation sites for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment include:

- Site 4 at the Thousand Springs Series Compensation Siting Area northeast of Wells, Nevada
- Site 10 at the Robinson Summit Substation Siting Area near Ely, Nevada
- Delamar Valley Series Compensation Siting Area (If this facility is required the specific location would be determined later with a separate Environmental Assessment prior to construction.)
- One of the three proposed substation sites (Site 17, 18, or 20) at the Dry Lake Substation Siting Area (Site selection would depend on the final routing decision for the Marketplace-Allen Transmission (MAT) Project. If the MAT is routed south through the Apex Industrial Area the Agency Preferred Alternative site would be either Site 17 or 18. If the MAT is routed south and east of the Dry Lake Range the Agency Preferred Alternative site would either be Site 18 or 20).

A new microwave communication system to operate the system would also be required between Midpoint Substation and the proposed substation at Dry Lake. The 13 proposed microwave communication sites for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment include:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| • Hansen Butte | developed site, power supply exists |
| • Cottonwood | undeveloped site, install solar power system |
| • Ellen D | developed site, install solar power system |
| • Six Mile | 1/2 mile from developed site, install solar power system |
| • Rocky Point | developed site, power supply exists |
| • Spruce Mountain | developed site, install solar power system |
| • Long Valley | undeveloped site, install solar power system |
| • Copper | developed site, power supply exists |
| • Cave Mountain | developed site, power supply exists |

- Mount Wilson developed site, power supply exists
- Highland Peak developed site, power supply exists
- Beaver Dam Mountain developed site, power supply exists
- Glendale developed site, power supply exists

The microwave communication sites would be located on developed sites to the extent possible. No ground disturbing activities would occur at three of these sites: Hansen Butte, Beaver Dam Mountain, and Glendale. At these sites, changes would consist of the addition of some equipment and a dish at the existing microwave communication facilities.

Ground wire having fiber optic capability may be installed rather than traditional ground wire to serve the needs of commercial communication companies. If this is done the fiber optic network could also be used to facilitate project communication needs. If installed, access to the fiber optic ground wire by a commercial communications company would only be allowed upon completion of all environmental permitting activities (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act) and obtaining the right-of-way. Regeneration stations would be needed at 20-40 mile intervals along the transmission line right-of-way and are typically small concrete buildings approximately 10 feet by 10 feet. They would likely be placed on or immediately adjacent to the SWIP right-of-way (also refer to Potential Fiber Optic Ground Wire in the Cumulative Effects section of Chapter 3 of this document and Right-of-Way Acquisition and Communication Facilities in the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

Where the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would parallel the UNTP, the rights-of-way of the SWIP and the UNTP would need sufficient separation to meet reliability and outage criteria of the Western States Coordinating Council (WSCC) (also refer to page 1-2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the section on Right-of-Way in Chapter 3 of this document). The UNTP and the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP would converge near Robber's Roost Hills (Link 675 - milepost 12), and would travel parallel for approximately 88.5 miles (Links 690, 700, and 720 - milepost 15) into Coyote Spring Valley in southern Nevada, where the UNTP would continue south and the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP would cross through the southern end of the Arrow Canyon Range into the Dry Lake Valley. The involved regional utilities would coordinate with the Las Vegas District of the BLM on the final configuration of this corridor (i.e., tower spacing, separation, crossings, etc.)

The Midpoint to Dry Lake segment, with its proposed southern connection to the Dry Lake substation, would require interconnection with the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT). The Notice to Proceed for construction of the SWIP, from Ely to Dry Lake, would be contingent on approval of the MAT or a similar transmission facility which would interconnect the proposed Dry Lake Substation to the proposed marketplace substation (also refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3).

The Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP is scheduled to begin commercial operation by late 1997. Construction would begin in 1995. Refer to Table 1-1 of this document for a comparison of environmental impacts between routes.

Ely to Delta Segment

The SWIP Ely to Delta segment is proposed as a 500kV AC transmission line with an estimated capacity rating of 1100 MW. The nearly 160-mile long line would extend from a proposed

substation near the Intermountain Power Facilities near Delta, Utah, to a proposed substation located in the vicinity of Ely, Nevada (same substation near Ely as for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment).

The Ely to Delta segment is a joint effort between the UNTP participants and the SWIP participants. Idaho Power Company, on behalf of the SWIP, is responsible for the licensing and permitting. The LADWP on behalf of the UNTP, would construct and operate the SWIP Ely to Delta segment.

The towers for the Ely to Delta segment would range from 90-160 feet in height, but would average 120-130 feet. Towers would be spaced approximately 1200 to 1500 feet apart, depending upon terrain and other construction factors. The Ely to Delta segment would be constructed using:

- self-supporting steel lattice structures
- steel pole H-Frame structures for visual mitigation and agricultural areas

The Ely to Delta segment would cross three different BLM Districts in Utah and Nevada and a portion of the Humboldt National Forest in Nevada. The section on Proposed Plan Amendments later in this chapter lists the BLM Districts and Resource Areas that would be affected by the proposed Plan Amendment. Figure 1-1 illustrates the 230kV Corridor Route as the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment, which includes Links 350, 351, 352, 370, 380, 460, 461, 462, 464, 466, 468, 470, 471, 473, 540, 571, 572, 580, 581, and 582 (also refer to the Alternative Routes map in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

The Agency Preferred Alternative would require a proposed substation near Ely, Nevada, and a proposed substation near Delta, Utah. The proposed substation sites for the Ely to Delta segment include:

- Site 14 at the Intermountain Substation Siting Area near Delta, Utah
- Site 10 at the Robinson Summit Substation Siting Area near Ely, Nevada (same as above for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment)

With some minor modifications the Agency Preferred Alternative route from the proposed substation in the Ely area to the proposed substation near Delta is the same as the 230kV Corridor Route described and analyzed on pages 2-56 through 2-58 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. A localized modification was made to the 230kV Corridor Route in response to public comment received on the SWIP DEIS/DPA (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute in Chapter 3 of this document).

The Agency Preferred Alternative would utilize utility corridors in accordance with the direction in the BLM's House Range Resource Management Plan (RMP), the Warm Springs RMP, and the Schell Management Framework Plan (MFP). Because the 230kV Corridor Route and the Cutoff Route have similar environmental impacts (refer to environmentally preferred route discussion in Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, and Table 1-2 and the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3 of this document) and this route best fulfills Federal Land Policy and Management Act's (FLPMA) mandate to consolidate corridors where possible, the BLM favors the 230kV Corridor Route as the agencies' preferred routing alternative. In addition, the 230kV Corridor Route is preferred environmentally because this route and substation would best minimize environmental impacts from the reasonably foreseeable future construction of the White Pine Power Project and from the interconnections with the 230kV transmission system in the Ely area. Refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3 of this document for the discussion of "buildout" scenarios for the Ely area.

An existing microwave communication system may be used on the transmission line system between Ely, Nevada, and Delta, Utah.

The Ely to Delta segment is scheduled to begin commercial operation in 1998. Construction would begin in 1996.

Selecting the Proposed Plan

The Proposed Plan was selected by the BLM as the lead agency and the Forest Service, the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Bureau of Reclamation as cooperating agencies. After reviewing the recommendations of the various District Managers, the Idaho State Director approved the Proposed Plan with consideration of several criteria:

- the issues and concerns identified during scoping and throughout the planning process
- oral comments received during formal public meetings and written comments received during the public review of the SWIP DEIS/DPA
- formal consultation and coordination with other agencies
- the results of the impact analysis of the Agency Preferred Alternative and other alternatives compared in the SWIP DEIS/DPA
- the decision criteria developed and considered by management, including 1) provide capacity for future utilities, 2) minimize new access roads needed for construction and operation, 3) public preferences expressed during the process, 4) avoid agricultural lands to the degree possible, 5) use existing utility and planning corridors, 6) minimize visual impacts, 7) minimize impacts to environmental resources (e.g., wildlife, cultural, and historical resources), 8) minimize conflicts with military airspace, and 9) allow for good transmission system reliability

The National Park Service does not agree with the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment. Because of visual impacts to Great Basin National Park and to visitors driving to the park, the National Park Service recommends rejection of the 230kV Corridor Route.

Process for Selecting the Environmentally Preferred Alternative

From the beginning of the environmental studies for the SWIP, a geographic information system (GIS) was used to help compile, organize, evaluate, and summarize environmental data. Opportunity and constraints analysis conducted using GIS during the regional environmental studies helped planners identify the alternative transmission line corridors in Phase I of the SWIP EIS process (refer to the SWIP Regional Environmental Report, April 1989).

In Phase II, a set of "assumed centerlines" for alternative routes were identified within the regional study corridors. These assumed centerlines were sited to avoid sensitive resource features and values identified during the regional environmental study and to respond to public concerns

identified during scoping. Interdisciplinary resource data were collected and input into GIS for a corridor from 1/2 to 3 miles (depending on the resource) on either side of these assumed centerlines for the detailed analysis reported in the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Project planners used the GIS to perform impact assessment models developed to evaluate the following:

- the effects of ground disturbance during construction, operation, and maintenance
- potentially increased public accessibility into remote areas
- visual contrast of the project with the existing environment

These impact assessment models formed the basis for quantifying the potential effects of the construction and operation of the proposed 500kV transmission line. A total of 21 impact assessment models were developed to identify and document potential resource impacts.

The GIS was also used to assist planners in summarizing the environmental data during inventory and impact assessment/mitigation planning process. Data summaries and maps assisted resource specialists and project reviewers in identifying specific resources issues and potential impacts, as well as providing decision makers with the information for comparing routing alternatives.

Identifying Alternative Transmission Line Routes A network of over 140 individual routing segments or "links" were identified and studied in detail for the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires that "reasonable and feasible" alternatives be compared in EIS/Pas. The number of possible routing alternatives that could be assembled from the numerous links would easily number in the hundreds, and would not be easy to compare in an EIS. Subsequently, it was necessary to determine environmental preferences for localized routing alternatives by what is termed the *subroute evaluation process*.

Each *subroute* is composed of individual links or combinations of several links that begin and end at common junction points in localized areas. A total of 25 subroute sets were evaluated (refer to Appendix D of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). The potential impacts of each subroute within a set were summarized from the detailed impact data of the five major resource disciplines: biological resources, earth resources, visual resources, land uses, and cultural resources. Project planners and resource specialists analyzed and compared the impact data and then ranked each subroute for environmental preference.

The links selected as the environmentally preferred subroutes narrowed down the number of possible link combinations, or routes, to a reasonable number to compare in an EIS. Links in areas where no other localized alternatives occurred, are termed "connectors". Connectors combined with the preferred link combinations of selected subroutes were used to assemble the alternative routes.

The environmentally preferred subroutes and their connectors were further evaluated in a GIS process that determined the path of least impact for each resource discipline (e.g., visual, biology, etc.). The GIS searched the environmental database containing the results of the impact assessment for a particular resource and tabulated the miles of impacts along the possible route segments searching for the route with the least significant impacts to that resource.

The identification of *resource preferred routes* for visual resources, biological resources, land use, earth resources, and cultural resources and the *subroute evaluation process* assisted project planners to assemble seven alternative routes on the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and four alternative routes on the Ely to Delta segment for comparison in the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Substation and Series Compensation Stations Substations, series compensation stations, and microwave communication facility sites were evaluated as part of the environmental studies for the alternative routes. Siting areas for substation and series compensation station facilities were inventoried by the same methods and for the same resource categories as the routing alternatives (study corridors).

Alternative sites were selected for substations and series compensation stations using environmental and engineering criteria and the GIS to generate opportunities and constraints mapping. Composite constraints and opportunity maps were analyzed to identify potential locations for facility sites where the potential for impacts would be minimized. Impacts were then assessed and mitigation planned for each alternative site (also refer to Appendix E of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

A total of twenty (20) sites were compared for the construction and operation of the five proposed substations and series compensation stations. Selection of the environmentally preferred route was also considered during the final selection of the substation and series compensation station sites.

Microwave Communication Facilities Alternative microwave communication facility sites were identified through a review of existing developed microwave communication sites provided by the district offices of the BLM, and a review of other potential sites that met some or all of the following engineering and operational criteria: line of sight between sites (with a specified clearance), good access, available power source, 35 to 40 miles between sites, and a 1/4 acre of relatively flat ground. A total of 17 sites were identified.

Similar to the substation and series compensation station analysis, impacts for each of the alternative microwave communication facilities sites was assessed. A string of microwave communication facilities sites were then assembled into two (2) alternative microwave communication paths to facilitate the remote operation of the proposed substation and series compensation station sites (also refer to Appendix F of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Selecting individual microwave communication facility sites included consideration of the engineering criteria described above (e.g., line-of-sight), as well as the potential environmental effects. The selection of the preferred microwave communications path depended on the final substation and series compensation station sites selected with the environmentally preferred route.

Selecting an Environmentally Preferred Route The seven alternative routes for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and the four alternative routes on the Ely to Delta segment were compared and the environmental, agency, and utility preferred route(s) for each segment were identified in the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

The environmentally preferred route was selected based on a comparison of the miles of potential impacts to resource features and values, and their significance nationally, regionally, and locally. Each alternative route was evaluated based on the following criteria to determine the environmentally preferred route:

- minimizes potential impacts to environmental resources (e.g., biological resources, visual resources, land use, earth resources, cultural resources)

- minimizes ground disturbance and an increased level of public access (e.g., miles of new access roads needed)
- ability to meet the purpose and need
- responds to public issues and concerns
- compliance with agency management plans (e.g., uses existing utility and planning corridors)

Considering these criteria, the environmentally preferred route was selected by evaluating and comparing each alternative route by: 1) the environmental resource data and miles of potential residual impacts (summarized in Tables 1-1 and 1-2 at the end of this chapter), and 2) evaluating cumulative effects associated with each alternative route.

Differences Between the Agency Preferred Alternative and the Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

The Agency Preferred Alternative and the Environmentally Preferred Route (as described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA) for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP are the same, with a few minor variations, and both are environmentally sound. Differences occur where the Agency Preferred Alternative considers the BLM's specific knowledge of localized situations. Difference occurs in the area of Jackpot, Nevada where Link 72 is environmentally preferred because it parallels the Midpoint-Valmy 345kV transmission line across Salmon Falls Creek, minimizing visual impacts to recreational users on the creek. The Agency Preferred Alternative would use Links 711 and 714 to reduce visual impacts by crossing Salmon Falls Creek at a narrower portion of the canyon roughly parallel and to the west of the existing 138kV transmission line. These links would also cross a smaller portion of the Salmon Falls Creek Special Recreation Management Area.

A second difference occurs in the vicinity of Contact, Nevada where Link 102 is environmentally preferred because it would parallel the Midpoint-Valmy 345kV transmission line reducing visual impacts associated with structure contrast and minimize visual impacts to residences in the Contact area. The Agency Preferred Alternative in this area utilizes Links 715 and 713 because the crossing of U.S. Highway 93 would better screen towers adjacent to the highway from the views of highway travelers. However, one tower on Link 713 would cause high visual impacts to views from a nearby residence.

A third difference occurs in the vicinity of the Winecup Ranch northeast of Wells, Nevada. Links 160, 161, 162, and 1612 are environmentally preferred because they would parallel the existing Upper Salmon to Wells 138kV transmission line (except Link 1612) which would reduce visual contrasts along U.S. Highway 93 and minimize potential predation impacts to sage grouse. The Agency Preferred Alternative would utilize Links 150 and 151 because they would minimize visual impacts to highway travelers (greater distance from the highway). Further, it would cross the California National Historic Trail near the Winecup Ranch minimizing visual impacts to the trail (due to existing visual contrasts of the ranch operations).

During the formal public meetings for the SWIP DEIS/DPA in Wells, Nevada on August 4, 1992, residents of Oasis opposed the preferred alternatives in the SWIP DEIS/DPA that would pass west of Oasis along the base of the Pequop Mountains (Link 211). Their opposition was based on

proposed development plans by Northern Holdings, Inc. and CSY Investments. Previously, Link 211 was preferred because it would be a less visually intrusive crossing of Interstate 80, a low visibility corridor designated by the Elko District of the BLM and managed under VRM Class II (refer to Visual Resources section in Chapter 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). With the dark colors of the Pequop Mountains as a backdrop, Link 211 would result in weaker visual contrast to travelers on Interstate 80. Links 221 and 223 would better utilize the BLM utility planning corridor which follows the railroad corridor through the center of Goshute Valley.

In response to the public comments and the planned developments of CSY Development and Northern Holdings, Inc., the Agency Preferred Alternative through this area was revised to use Links 221 and 223 along the railroad corridor through the center of Goshute Valley. These links would completely avoid future potential conflicts with the planned developments for Northern Holdings properties and would minimize impacts to significant portions of the planned developments of CSY Investments. Cumulative effects have been identified for these foreseeable future actions (refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3 of this document).

The last difference occurs at the Elko-White Pine county line. In this area, Links 250, 259, and 260 are environmentally preferred because they would avoid a known cultural site and cause fewer mile of moderate impacts to pronghorn antelope, long-billed curlew, and sandhill crane habitat. The Agency Preferred Alternative would use Links 241, 243, and 245 because they are within the BLM designated utility corridor in accordance with the Wells Resource Management Plan.

The Agency Preferred Alternative and the Environmentally Preferred Route are the same for the remainder of the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP.

Ely to Delta Segment

The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP is the 230kV Corridor Route and the least impact route is the Cutoff Route (as described in the DEIS/DPA). Links 350, 351, 352, 370, 380, 460, and 461 of the 230kV Corridor Route and Links 262, 263, 265, 266, 267, and 268 of the Cutoff Route have similar environmental impacts (refer to Environmentally Preferred Alternative in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and Table 1-2 at the end of this chapter - formerly Table 2-5 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA). The remainder of these routes (Links 462, 470, 540, 571, 572, 580, 581, and 582) in Utah are the same.

Because of the utilities future need to interconnect with the 230kV system in the Ely area, the potential cumulative environmental effects from the Cutoff Route would be more significant than the cumulative effects from the 230kV Corridor Route (refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3 of this document). Therefore, because the 230kV Corridor Route would likely cause fewer future cumulative effects in the Ely area, this route is environmentally preferred (refer to Cumulative Effects in Chapter 3 of this document).

The Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP is the 230kV Corridor Route (described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA) because the 230kV Corridor Route would parallel two existing 230kV transmission lines for its entire length. This route would best meet the mandate of Section 503 of FLPMA to utilize existing utility corridors where possible, and would utilize utility corridors in accordance with the BLM's House Range Resource Management Plan (RMP), the Warm Springs RMP, and the Schell Management Framework Plan (MFP).

Environmental concerns expressed by the public about the Cutoff Route include potential impacts to biological, cultural, land uses, and visual resources. Concerns about the 230kV Corridor Route include proximity to homes, health effects, land use conflicts, effects on property values, and visual impacts to views from Great Basin National Park. Although the Cutoff Route was found to have slightly fewer significant environmental effects, when cumulative effects are considered the 230kV Corridor Route would be environmentally preferred (refer to the Cumulative Effects section on page 3-12 in Chapter 3 of this document).

Comments received at the public meetings and comment letters on the SWIP DEIS/DPA generally expressed favor for the placement of new lines in existing utility corridors to minimize adverse impacts and to maintain open space values in previously undeveloped areas. The Cutoff Route was favored by some of the public because it would be located in more remote areas and would not be seen by tourists and visitors to Great Basin National Park.

Several letters were received on the SWIP DEIS/DPA expressing concerns about the crossing of private lands and crossing of the U.S. Highway 6/50 in the Sacramento Pass area by the 230kV Corridor Route. These comments led to identifying and studying several reroute alternatives to mitigate the potential impacts to agricultural uses and private lands, and to evaluate alternative crossings of the highway leading to Great Basin National Park (U.S. 6/50). Further, the Ely District of the BLM is developing a campground and recreation area in this area. Resource inventory data were collected for the three mitigation reroute alternatives during February 1993. These data were incorporated into the GIS database and impacts were assessed. The affected environment and environmental consequences of these mitigation reroute alternatives are described (including maps, tables, and photo simulations) under the Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute section in Chapter 3 of this document. Because Subroute 3 (Links 464, 466, 468, 471, and 473) would avoid crossing private lands and minimize visual impacts to views from U.S. Highway 6/50, it is the environmentally preferred mitigation reroute through the Sacramento Pass. The Agency Preferred Alternative is also the subroute using Links 464, 466, 468, 471, and 473. The remainder of the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment is same as the Environmentally Preferred Route described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Consistency With Other Plans

There are no known inconsistencies or conflicts between the Proposed Plan and officially approved and adopted resource-related policies and programs of the BLM, the FS, the NPS, the BIA, the Bureau of Reclamation, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes. However, the NPS has stated its preference for the No-Action, the Cutoff Route, or the Direct Route on the Ely to Delta segment instead of the Agency Preferred Alternative (230kV Corridor Route) selected by the BLM and the other cooperating agencies. The NPS favors an action that would minimize or eliminate visual impacts to the Great Basin National Park.

Comparative Analysis

The No-Action alternative and approximately 2,000 miles of alternative corridors were studied in detail. To select environmental preferences, the environmental consequences of each alternative were summarized and compared, and agency and public comments were considered. The network

of routes was organized into the north-south alternatives from Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and the east-west alternatives from Ely to Delta segment. Nine routing options were compared for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment, and four alternatives were evaluated on the Ely to Delta segment. The final alternatives are illustrated in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA, in Figure 1-1 of this document, and are described as follows:

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

- **Route A** - 345kV*-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route B** - 345kV*-Trout Creek-Wendover-Steptoe-Antone Pass-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route C** - 345kV*-Trout Creek-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route D** - 345kV*-Wells-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route E** - 345kV*-Thousand Springs-Wendover-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route F** - Hagerman-Trout Creek-Goshute Valley-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Route G** - 345kV*-Cottonwood Creek-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Utility Preferred Route**
- **Agency Preferred Alternative**

(* - 345kV refers to the SWIP alternative being parallel to the Midpoint to Valmy 345kV transmission line)

In addition, sixteen alternative substation sites in seven substation siting areas were evaluated and compared for the four proposed substations and series compensation stations the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment (including five sites in the Ely area that were also evaluated for the Ely to Delta segment), and two microwave communication paths (17 sites) were evaluated and compared.

Ely to Delta Segment

- **Delta Direct Route**
- **Cutoff Route**
- **230kV Corridor Route**
- **Southern Route**

In addition, nine alternative substation sites in six substation siting areas were evaluated and compared for the two proposed substations for the Ely to Delta segment (including five sites in the Ely area that were also evaluated for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment).

Public Issues and Management Concerns

To aid the federal agencies' decision-making process, and to help evaluate the significance of changes in the various RMPs and MFPs for the BLM Districts and Resource Areas and the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for the Humboldt National Forest, the following public issues and management concerns identified during the public scoping process and in the public meetings and workshops have been analyzed in the following section.

Issue 1 - Need for Project

The IPCo has proposed to construct, operate, and maintain a 500kV transmission facility from the existing Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho to a proposed substation near Dry Lake (northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada) and from Ely, Nevada to Delta, Utah to:

- provide seasonal exchanges between the Northwest and the Southwest
- increase the reliability and capacity of the transmission system in the western U.S.
- increase competition and economic efficiency by increasing transmission access
- allow for mutually beneficial transactions to northwest and southwest utilities at an open marketplace
- increase wheeling capacity for other utilities
- furnish access to the economy energy market
- provide access to long-term purchases and sales
- diversify fuel resources used to generate electrical power
- contribute to the reliability of the UNTP Phase I (the Delta to Marketplace line)
- allow for the bidirectional transfer of bulk power bought, sold, and/or exchanged in the marketplace between utilities in Utah, southern Nevada, and Idaho
- create a bidirectional transfer path between the Pacific Northwest and the intermountain regions of the West
- create a bidirectional transfer path between the intermountain region and southern Nevada

The public has expressed concern about the need for the SWIP. The public questioned the rationale for new construction, the demand for additional generating facilities, and the long-term demand and need. There was significant concern for utilities to consider utilizing alternative generating resources such as geothermal and solar. An expanded purpose and need for the SWIP is found in Chapter 3 of this document.

Issue 2 - Maximize Use of Public Lands

One of the major public comments was utilizing public lands for routing the transmission line since the line would offer no direct benefit to private landowners and would also interfere with agricultural operations. Within the project study area (i.e., study corridors) the land ownership is split between federal (BLM 79 percent and FS 11 percent), state (2 percent), and private (8 percent), approximately. In response to this issue the route selection process attempted to locate the line on public lands to the degree possible within environmental and engineering constraints. Where there was a choice of crossing public or private land, the private land was avoided.

Issue 3 - Minimize Visual Impacts

The scenic resources of the southern Idaho, eastern Nevada, and west central Utah are unique in many respects, largely because of the predominance of the north-south trending mountain ridges and large undeveloped valley expanses. The study area is characterized by relatively open, uninterrupted views with minimal overstory vegetation cover. Land ownership is predominantly BLM with the remaining lands divided between private, state, and national forest. The federal agencies have management policies to protect their lands from unnecessary degradation of scenic resources. State and private lands have no specific policies regarding visual resources protection. Significant concern has been expressed by the agencies and the public over the views from the parks, recreation areas, residences, preservation areas, highways, scenic routes, and sensitive cultural sites, and impacts affecting the scenic value of the landscape.

The NPS is concerned about potential visual impacts from the Great Basin National Park's (GBNP) key viewpoints (e.g., scenic overlook points, the visitor center, etc.), visual impacts to highway travelers approaching the park's entrance, and to the interpretive facilities proposed in GBNP's Final General Management Plan/Development Concept Plans/EIS to be located in the basins outside of the park's boundaries. Also the NPS is concerned about the visual integrity of the basins surrounding the park.

Issue 4 - Minimize Impacts to Biological Resources

A total of eleven vegetation communities were identified within the SWIP study corridors with 73 plant species identified as sensitive on the state and/or federal level. Also within the project area, there are 560 species of vertebrates, 111 species of mammals, 15 species of amphibians, and 70 species of fish.

The region contains excellent habitat for big game, including mule deer, elk, and pronghorn. A number of sensitive raptors occur near or within the study area, including ferruginous hawk, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon. Numerous other raptors also nest in the region.

Throughout northeastern Nevada sage grouse are an important upland game species. There is concern that raptors perching in transmission towers would prey on the sage grouse during their spring breeding period.

The desert tortoise in southern Nevada was recently listed as a threatened species by the United States Department of Interior-Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). The concern for constructing a transmission line through sensitive habitats is that ground disturbing activities (e.g., road building) during construction could destroy habitat. Also, there is a concern that any roads kept open through these areas could lead to tortoise being destroyed by off-highway vehicles.

Some riparian habitats occur within the region and are highly sensitive because of their very limited occurrence and very high value as wildlife and rare plant habitat.

Wetlands and aquatic habitats, like riparian habitats, are generally associated with the springs and mountain drainages in the region. These aquatic and wetland habitats are important because of their position in a notably arid portion of the United States, and because of the habitat they provide to numerous animal and plant species, some of which are listed among the threatened, endangered, or otherwise sensitive biota of the United States and the states of Idaho, Nevada, and Utah.

The planning process, described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, responded to the issue by avoiding the most sensitive areas to the degree possible on all routing alternatives. Surveys would be conducted during preparation of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan to help minimize adverse impacts.

Issue 5 - Minimize Impacts to Cultural Resources

The project area has been occupied for thousands of years, and contains a long history of human use. Thousands of cultural sites have been recorded, but only a few have been formally inventoried. Many of these sites are low to moderate sensitivity resources. With the exception of the agricultural areas along the Snake River plain, the project area remains largely rural. All major known cultural resources were avoided, where possible, during alternative route selection as described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act would be done to mitigate adverse effects to cultural resources.

Issue 6 - Health and Safety

Concerns have been expressed about the potential health impacts that electromagnetic fields (EMFs), as well as shock hazards.

In recent years there has been growing public concern over the possible effects that EMFs could have on human health. Because EMF research is inconclusive and sometimes contradictory,

definitive answers are still years away. The IPCo attempts to site facilities in areas that avoid or minimize human exposure to EMF. This policy tends to minimize visual impacts as well.

The IPCo would also provide grounding to reduce the potential of shock hazard. The National Electric Safety Code requires grounding "...as one of the means of safeguarding employees and the public from injury that may be caused by electric potential."

Issue 7 - Wilderness Areas/Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

A wilderness area and many WSAs are found in or near the study corridors for the SWIP. The agencies and the public are concerned about the presence of the transmission line on lands adjacent to WSAs potentially affecting the designation of the area as wilderness.

Issue 8 - Minimize Land Use Impacts

A transmission line which directly impedes an area's current or planned use constitutes a land use impact. Land uses found throughout the study area include ranch headquarters, agricultural operations, and planned development. The study corridors for the alternatives crossing through southern Idaho pass through large areas of irrigated agricultural lands. There was also concern by both Hill Air Force Base (AFB) and Nellis AFB for their military operating areas (MOAs), low-flight areas where the Air Force does training and testing. The Direct Route on the Ely to Delta segment also crosses through the R-6405 Restricted Air Space area on the Utah Training and Testing Range (UTTR) for Hill AFB.

Many recreational areas (e.g., trails, scenic byways, special recreation management areas, parks, etc.) are also located in or adjacent to the study corridors for the various alternatives. Great Basin National Park is one of the nation's newest national parks, and is Nevada's only national park.

Issue 9 - Use Existing Transmission Line Corridors

Both the public and the agencies expressed a desire to locate the transmission line along existing transmission corridors, wherever possible, to minimize environmental impacts. One way is to maximize the miles that the transmission line would parallel existing transmission lines or other linear utilities. Several of the alternative routes paralleled existing transmission facilities to the extent possible.

The public and the agencies were also concerned about minimizing the miles of transmission line outside of designated or planning corridors wherever possible. The alternative routes were sited to the degree possible using these corridor designations from agency management plans.

Issue 10 - Property Values and Compensation

Private property owners expressed a concern for a decrease in the monetary value of their property as a result of the proposed transmission line and whether or not they would receive adequate compensation for property loss. Transmission lines potentially affect existing or future property values, through there is no conclusive evidence to suggest this. Landowners would be compensated, based on fair market value of the land, for an easement or purchase of their land. There are some differences, although none considered substantial, between the effects to private property owners for the various alternative routes.

Issue 11 - Effects on Agency Land Management Plans

The BLM plans and designates corridors for linear utility use. However, it does not presently recognize a corridor for much of the Agency Preferred Alternative that has been evaluated, along with the other alternatives, in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and this document. Included in the Environmental Impact Statement and plan amendment process is a determination of what public lands, if any, should be designated as a utility corridor. The end results would be amended agency plan(s) to allow for a utility corridor and the right-of-way for the SWIP. This issue developed when the IPCo filed an application for a right-of-way grant. As part of this plan amendment process, the BLM, the FS, and the other cooperating agencies involved the public, other federal agencies, and state and local governments.

Affected Environment

Three primary environmental systems were examined:

- the natural environment - air, soils, geology, mineral resources, wildlife, and botanical resources
- the human environment - land uses, visual resources, socioeconomics, electrical effects
- the cultural environment - archaeological, historic, and Native American resources

The inventory results established the baseline for the No-Action alternative. Following identification of the preliminary corridor locations, a study area (study corridors) was then defined for the various resource investigations.

The climate of eastern Nevada, southern Idaho, and western Utah is influenced largely by location, regional weather systems, and topographic orientation. The climate throughout much of this area is characterized by hot, dry summers followed by cold, dry winters. Surface winds are channeled through valleys between generally north-south trending mountain ranges. Winds flow predominately in northeasterly or southwesterly directions. Annual precipitation depends largely on elevation. Precipitation occurs primarily in the form of snow at higher elevations during the winter months. The snows maintain high water tables and provide groundwater recharge. Some additional precipitation occurs from thunderstorms produced by daytime heating of air masses in valleys.

Northern segments of the SWIP, within southern Idaho and northeastern Nevada, are in the Snake River Plain section of the Columbia Plateau physiographic province. This section is a vast, relatively flat plain and young lava plateau, which is deeply dissected by the canyons of the Snake River and Salmon Falls Creek, the dominant landscape features within this area. Irrigated agricultural lands, this area's main land use, are found clustered north and south along the Snake River.

To the south, on the Snake River Plain, agricultural areas extend to bordering foothills and mountains in a transitional landscape between the Basin and Range and Columbia Plateau provinces. This transitional landscape includes foothills, plateaus, mesas, and buttes formed of eroded lava and sedimentary rock layers.

The majority of northeastern and southern Nevada and western Utah, falls within the Basin and Range physiographic provinces. Topographically, this landscape is distinguished by isolated, roughly parallel mountain ranges separated by closed (undrained) desert basins or playas. The mountain ranges often run 50 to 75 miles in length and are generally north-south trending. Surrounding the base of the mountains and extending into the basins, there are often distinctive alluvial areas.

Portions of western Utah also include a transition zone of the Basin and Range province into what is locally referred to as the "West Desert" landscape. This landscape includes portions of the Sevier Desert and Sevier Lake. The topography within this area is extremely flat and includes large playas or mud flat areas, that exhibit little landform diversity. Again, these areas are divided by rugged, rocky mountain ranges.

Earth resource features that have a high sensitivity are landslide hazard areas, areas of high paleontological sensitivity, soils with either a high wind erosion or high water erosion hazard, areas of active mining, perennial streams and lakes, springs, and wetland areas. Significant paleontological resources are found at the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument near Hagerman, Idaho.

Eleven vegetative communities have been identified in the SWIP study corridors, including shadscale, greasewood, samphire-iodine bush, Great Basin sagebrush, Mojave desert scrub, grassland, wetlands, riparian areas, piñon-juniper, alpine tundra, limber/bristlecone pine, and quaking aspen. These vegetation types support a large variety of mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

Approximately 560 species of vertebrates are likely to occur, over the course of a year in habitats traversed by the alternative routes.

Seventy species of fish are known to occur within aquatic habitats within the study corridors. Native and introduced game fish are present in warm and cold water lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, and in perennial streams and rivers. Others inhabit hot and cold springs and marshes. Approximately 31 percent of the fish fauna occupying waters within the study corridors are introduced.

Fifteen species of amphibians are expected to occur in aquatic, riparian, and wetland habitats in the study corridors. Sixty-two species of reptiles potentially occur in terrestrial habitats within study corridors.

A total of 111 species of mammals are expected to occur within habitats traversed by alternative routes. Small mammals including rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits and hares), bats, and shrews are the most numerous, although not readily observed. Over one half of the mammals that may occur within the study corridors are rodents (51 species). Large mammals include 19 species of carnivores (e.g., lynx, wolverine, etc.) and five species of native ungulates (e.g., antelope, mule deer, bighorn sheep).

Free roaming horses (*Equus caballus*) and burros (*E. asinus*) occur on public lands in the study corridors. These animals are descendants of horses and burros that escaped from man or were turned out onto the open range.

In recent years, dramatic declines in desert tortoise population numbers have been observed throughout much of its range, including southern Nevada. A number of factors have contributed to the observed decline, including loss of habitat to development, degradation of habitat from livestock grazing, disease, predation on juveniles by ravens attracted to areas where human refuse accumulates, illegal collection, and off-road vehicle (ORV) use. The Mojave population of the desert tortoise was formally listed as a federally threatened species by the FWS in April 1990. Concern has been expressed for the maintenance of viable populations in Clark County, Nevada, and especially the Las Vegas Valley where rapid commercial and residential development is occurring.

Declines in sage grouse numbers are largely associated with destruction of sagebrush habitat. Conversion of sagebrush to agricultural lands, and attempts to convert sagebrush areas to grassland for livestock grazing are a few of the human developments contributing to the decrease in grouse numbers.

The majority of the lands crossed by the alternative routes are used for cattle grazing and are classified as rangeland. Other significant uses within the study corridors include agriculture, mining, airports and airstrips, utilities, commercial, governmental and other industrial facilities. Residences near urban areas and in remote locations, both occupied and unoccupied are located within the study corridors. Principal urban areas or residential concentrations in or near the study corridors include:

- Hagerman, Eden, and Hansen in Idaho
- Wells, Ely, Curry, Jackpot, Oasis, Baker, and McGill in Nevada
- Delta, Eskdale, and Hinckley in Utah

Several of the alternative routes in Utah and Nevada could potentially affect military aircraft operations at Hill Air Force Base in Utah and Nellis Air Force Base in southern Nevada.

Approximately half of the lands crossed by the study corridors in Idaho fall into the category of agriculture. The high-desert lands of the Snake River Valley are fertile and productive when irrigated. Many of the lands crossed in Idaho are classified as prime or important farmland by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

Dispersed recreation occurs throughout these areas in Nevada, Idaho, and Utah. Developed campsites and recreation areas are usually located along perennial streams or reservoirs. Great Basin National Park, near Baker, Nevada, is passed by several of the alternative Ely to Delta segment routes. Several WSAs inventoried within the study corridors include portions of Salmon Falls Creek WSA in Idaho and fourteen WSAs in Nevada including South Pequop, Bluebell, Goshute Peak, Goshute Canyon, Marble Canyon, Mount Grafton, Fortification Range, Delamar

Mountains, Evergreen, Meadow Valley Mountains, Fish and Wildlife 1, 2 & 3, and Arrow Canyon. WSAs within Utah include Howell Peak, King Top, Notch Peak, Fish Springs, Wah Wah Mountains, and Swasey Mountain. The boundary of the Mt. Moriah Wilderness area is also within the study corridors of one of the Ely to Delta segment alternative routes.

Cultural resources are historic and traditional cultural properties that reflect our nation's heritage. Federal regulations define such historic properties to include prehistoric and historic sites, buildings, structures, districts, and objects included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as well as artifacts, records, and remains related to such properties. These regions of Nevada, Idaho, and Utah have been occupied for thousands of years. This section briefly summarizes what is known about this long history of human use of the region. More details are provided in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, in this document, and in the technical reports (Rogge 1991).

Prehistory - The project area overlaps portions of two culture areas, the Great Basin and the Colorado Plateau, but the vast majority of the project area is within the "cultural," if not the geographic, Great Basin. The extreme southern portion is along the western margin of the Colorado Plateau. Within the study area three prehistoric cultural stages, Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Formative are represented and local phases or variations within each stage have been defined.

Ethnohistory - During the ethnohistoric era, these regions of Nevada, Idaho, and Utah were occupied by the Northern Shoshone, Bannock, Western Shoshone, Pahvant Ute, and Southern Paiute. Generally speaking, the Northern Shoshone and Bannock inhabited the study corridors in southern Idaho. The Western Shoshone ranged through eastern Nevada and northwestern Utah. The central portion of Utah was occupied by the Pahvant Ute while the Southern Paiute inhabited southwestern Utah and southern Nevada.

History - After the arrival of Europeans in the New World, portions of the study corridors were claimed by Spain, Great Britain, France, Mexico, and Canada, as well as the United States. The earliest European exploration was led by Escalante who skirted the eastern margin of the study area in Utah. After the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Coast in 1804-1806, fur trappers and mountain men were lured to the Rocky Mountains until the decline of fur trading in about 1840.

Environmental Consequences

Environmental consequences from the Agency Preferred Alternative would be the residual impacts remaining after mitigating measures have been applied to initial (unmitigated) impacts. The process involved assessing impacts based on a comparison of the proposed project with the pre-project environment, determining mitigation that would reduce or eliminate impacts, and identifying residual impacts.

Additions and changes made to Tables 2-4 and 2-5 summarizing and comparing impacts in the SWIP DEIS/DPA was updated and reprinted in this document (refer to Tables 1-1 and 1-2). The majority of the changes to these tables occur in the Military Operating Areas, the Wildlife Section, and Visual Resources.

The consequences, or impacts, to the environment caused by implementing the proposed project were assessed by considering the existing condition of the environment and the effects of the

activities of the proposed project (construction, operation, and maintenance) on the environment. The "initial" impacts were evaluated to determine if mitigation measures would be effective in lessening the impacts. Those impacts remaining after mitigation measures were applied are referred to as "residual" impacts. Many of the identified impacts are considered to be adverse, direct, and long-term. Some impacts (e.g., visual, some cultural and biological impacts) are considered adverse, indirect, and long-term.

The principal type of impacts associated with earth resources is the potential for increased erosion hazards. Some short-term soil compaction impacts could occur in agricultural areas. Some stream sedimentation could also occur at the crossings of perennial streams.

Typical impacts to biological resources include effects on threatened, endangered, or protected species, rare or unique vegetation types, migration corridors for wildlife, areas of low revegetation potential, or highly productive wildlife habitat. The impacts would be generally associated with the removal of vegetation and habitat caused by construction and operation activities, and from human activity from more access into remote areas. The presence of the transmission towers would increase the potential for long-term predation of sage grouse by golden eagles on adult and immature birds. Adding towers also would provide roost/hunting sites for ravens and magpies, thus increasing the long-term potential for predation on grouse nests. No wetlands or riparian areas would be expected to be impacted.

Land use impacts include those that would displace, alter, or otherwise physically affect any existing or planned residential, commercial, or industrial use or activity, any agricultural use, or any recreational, preservation, educational, or scientific facility or use. Few land use impacts would occur from the construction of the SWIP, although the impacts that would occur would be long-term.

Potential socioeconomic effects could include construction-period impacts to area communities, social and economic impacts along the selected route, and fiscal impacts on local jurisdictions. These effects could be both adverse and beneficial.

Visual impacts are considered adverse, in-direct, and long-term. They include effects to the quality of any scenic resource, the view from any residential or other sensitive land use or travel route, or the view from any recreation, preservation, education, or scientific facility. Potential visual impacts to existing and proposed sensitive viewpoints for GBNP are a concern. Other visual impacts would be generally associated with residential concentrations or dispersed homes, scenic roads and highways, and recreation viewpoints, including wilderness areas and WSAs.

Direct, adverse physical impacts could occur to cultural resources during construction, while indirect impacts could result after construction due to increased erosion or increased public access to sites along the transmission line right-of-way. Adverse visual effects may occur to sites with high aesthetic or interpretive values.

Potential electrical, biological, and health and safety effects from the Agency Preferred Alternative were assessed. These include corona effects, electric and magnetic field effects, and effects on cardiac pacemakers, agriculture, and public safety.

The Stateline Resource Area has released its DEIS/RMP which, when finalized, would designate utility corridors. The RMP corridor studies and the SWIP EIS studies have been coordinated, and

the Agency Preferred Alternatives are similar. FLPMA of 1976 mandates to the extent practical that the BLM consolidate future utility projects within the corridor that is established.

Committed mitigation measures for the Agency Preferred Alternative are listed by milepost in Appendix D and summarized in Tables 1-3 and 1-4 in this document. Table 1-5 describes these selectively committed mitigation measures. Table 1-6 describes generically committed mitigation measures that will be applied throughout the project.

Cumulative Effects

The potential future "buildout" in the Ely area (i.e., interconnection with the 230kV system and the White Pine Power Project) are described in the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3 of this document.

Throughout sections of the Agency Preferred Alternative several transmission lines would be paralleled. From Midpoint Substation to south of Contact, Nevada the Agency Preferred Alternative route would parallel the Midpoint to Valmy 345kV transmission line a point about ten miles south of Contact. From a point just north of the Idaho-Nevada state line, the Upper Salmon to Wells 138kV line would be paralleled by the Agency Preferred Alternative to the same point south of Contact. The Agency Preferred Alternative would also parallel the Lincoln County 69kV line and the UNTP for 88.5 miles from the Delamar Valley northwest of Caliente, Nevada to the Hidden Valley northeast of Las Vegas, although it would be separated from the UNTP by a mile or more along U.S. Highway 93 south of Pahranaagat Wash. The UNTP would terminate at the proposed marketplace substation south of Boulder City, Nevada.

The SWIP's southern connection to the proposed Dry Lake Substation would require an interconnection with the proposed marketplace substation. The Notice to Proceed for the construction of the SWIP, from Ely to Dry Lake, would be contingent on the approval of a transmission facility between the Dry Lake Substation and the proposed marketplace substation. The Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT) has been proposed by Nevada Power Company to meet this and other interconnection needs.

The SWIP may be built in phases if market or financial conditions warrant. The portion of the SWIP from Midpoint Substation to Ely (Midpoint to Dry Lake segment) may be the first phase developed.

Also refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 3 of this document and Chapter 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Issue Comparison by Alternative

Issue 1 - Need for Project

If successful, the IPCo, along with other participants, intends to construct the SWIP from Midpoint to Dry Lake to satisfy its need to meet regional utility responsibilities to provide adequate supplies

of reliable and economical electricity to the western system electrical customers. The proposed project would allow for power exchanges from the Southwest to the Northwest, increase the reliability and capacity of the transmission system in the western U.S., increase competition and economic efficiency by increasing transmission access, create open marketplace substations, and other benefits. All routing alternatives would serve the project's purpose and need. The No-Action alternative would not satisfy the purpose and need.

If successful, the IPCo is proposing that BLM transfer the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP right-of-way grant to the LADWP on behalf of the UNTP participants for construction, operation, and maintenance. The Ely to Delta segment would allow the LADWP and their participants to satisfy their need to meet regional utility responsibilities to provide adequate supplies of reliable and economical electricity to their electrical customers. The proposed project would create a bi-directional transfer path between the Northwest and the intermountain regions of the West, create a bi-directional transfer path between the intermountain region and southern Nevada, contribute to reliability of the UNTP and the SWIP Midpoint to Dry Lake line, and allow for the bi-directional transfer of bulk power bought, sold, and/or exchanged in the marketplace between utilities in Utah, Nevada, and Idaho.

The SWIP would conform to the utilities' efforts to perform least cost planning:

- consider conservation equally with other resource options to achieve lowest cost to electrical consumers
- contribute to adding competition in the generation marketplace
- contribute to efforts to establish values for air emissions from power plants

The SWIP would allow diversity of supplies and markets to merge together to maximize cost economies:

- diversity of area and use - reducing the amount of generation required
- market diversity - access to the transmission grid to all suppliers of generation and conservation should drive down the cost of future resource options
- fuel and supply diversity - enhance environmental mitigation between regions

Electrical utilities are responsible for providing adequate supplies of reliable, economic electricity to their customers. The present load growth in the western U.S., coupled with the expense and difficulties of building new generating facilities, reinforces the need to provide for inter-regional transfer of energy.

Issue 2 - Maximize Use of Public Lands

The following table shows the land ownership/jurisdiction in miles crossed for each routing alternative. Alternatives were also ranked from the least miles of private land crossed to the most miles of private land crossed:

**LAND JURISDICTION - MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE
(miles)**

<u>Route</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Private</u>
A	413.0	5.2	95.2
B	414.1	5.2	97.3
C	397.6	5.2	104.6
D	410.1	5.2	98.7
E	430.5	5.2	88.5
F	406.1	2.3	115.6
G	415.0	5.2	85.3
Agency Preferred Alternative	406.5	5.2	83.1

**LAND JURISDICTION - ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT
(miles)**

<u>Route</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Private</u>
Direct	125.7	7.2	0.0
Cutoff	143.4	10.5	0.0
230kV*	133.5	10.4	10.2
Southern	197.4	12.0	1.6

* The 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment.

The Midpoint to Dry Lake alternative routes rank as follows: (1) Agency Preferred Alternative (2) Route G, (3) Route E, (4) Route A, (5) Route B, (6) Route C, (7) Route D, (8) Route F. The Ely to Delta segment alternative routes rank as follows: (1) Direct Route and Cutoff Route, (2) Southern Route, (3) 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative).

Issue 3 - Visual Impacts

The following table summarizes the Visual Resource Management Class II landscapes crossed, scenic quality class A landscapes crossed, and miles of routes visible within one mile of a residence.

VISUAL RESOURCE SUMMARY - MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE (miles crossed)

<u>Route</u>	<u>VRM Class II</u>	<u>Scenic Quality A</u>	<u>Miles of Route Visible From Residences within 1 Mile</u>	<u>Residences within 1 Mile</u>
A	7.3	0.9	65.7	83
B	17.8	0.9	52.3	78
C	5.6	0.9	57.1	80
D	10.0	0.9	61.9	83
E	19.5	0.9	64.1	83
F	7.5	5.0	56.9	94
G	8.1	0.5	59.9	93
Agency Preferred Alternative	6.7	0.5	63.1	96

VISUAL RESOURCE SUMMARY - ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT (miles crossed)

<u>Route</u>	<u>VRM Class II</u>	<u>Scenic Quality A</u>	<u>Miles of Route Visible From Residences within 1 Mile</u>	<u>Residences within 1 Mile</u>
Direct	0.0	0.0	3.3	2
Cutoff	0.0	4.2	5.1	3
230kV*	0.0	4.2	23.9	26
Southern	2.0	0.0	4.8	7

* The 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment.

Review by the BLM and the FS has found changes to visual management objectives to be acceptable as a result of the project. Detailed definitions of the visual management classes, locations and extent of management class changes, and location and extent of visual impacts to viewers and to scenic resources are found in the Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for locations where this document can be reviewed).

The ranking of alternatives is relative. All alternatives would have some adverse effect on the scenic resource. The Midpoint to Dry Lake segment alternative routes rank as follows: (1) Routes A, D, and E, (2) Routes B, C, G, and Agency Preferred Alternative, (3) Route F. The Ely to Delta

segment alternatives routes rank as follows: Direct Route, Cutoff Route, Southern Route, 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative).

Issue 4 - Minimize Impacts to Biological Resources

The following table describes the extent of occurrence of special-status species and riparian crossing for each alternative:

SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL SPECIES - MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE (miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Desert Tortoise</u>	<u>Bald Eagle</u>	<u>Peregrine Falcon</u>	<u>Ferruginous Hawk</u>	<u>Sage Grouse</u>	<u>Riparian</u>
A	52.1	15.3	0.0	1.3	35.2	3.2
B	52.1	32.8	23.1	1.4	36.8	3.2
C	52.1	16.3	0.0	1.3	30.7	3.7
D	52.1	5.8	0.0	1.3	34.1	5.3
E	52.1	18.2	23.0	1.3	36.3	3.3
F	52.1	16.3	0.0	1.3	32.8	3.8
G	52.1	19.6	0.0	1.4	40.6	4.8
Agency Preferred Alternative	52.1	6.0	0.0	1.3	37.2	5.1

SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL SPECIES - ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT (miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Desert Tortoise</u>	<u>Bald Eagle</u>	<u>Peregrine Falcon</u>	<u>Ferruginous Hawk</u>	<u>Sage Grouse</u>	<u>Riparian</u>
Direct	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	7.9	1.6
Cutoff	0.0	8.4	0.0	0.0	6.8	1.2
230kV*	0.0	17.8	0.0	4.5	7.1	0.9
Southern	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.1	11.8	0.1

* The 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment.

Alternatives when ranked from the least miles of impact to the most miles of impact are as follows: The Midpoint to Dry Lake alternative routes rank as follows: (1) Routes A and D, (2) Routes E and F, (3) Route C, (4) Agency Preferred Alternative, (5) Route C, (6) Routes B and G. The Ely to Delta segment alternatives routes rank as follows: (1) 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative), (2) Cutoff Route and Direct Route, (3) Southern Route. The No-Action would result in no impacts to biological resources.

Issue 5 - Minimize Impacts to Cultural Resources

The following table summarizes archaeological, historical, and Native American resources sensitivity for each routing alternative.

CULTURAL RESOURCES - MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE (occurrences and miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Historic Sites w/in 1 mile</u>	<u>Ethnohistoric Sites w/in 1 mile</u>	<u>Prehistoric Sites w/in 1 mile</u>	<u>Predicted High Sensitivity Zone</u>
A	53	13	388	18.4
B	46	16	413	19.3
C	50	14	408	17.2
D	68	12	430	20.5
E	46	15	386	18.4
F	54	16	510	11.0
G	61	14	399	20.6
Agency Preferred Alternative	53	14	388	18.4

CULTURAL RESOURCES - ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT (occurrences and miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Historic Sites w/in 1 mile</u>	<u>Ethnohistoric Sites w/in 1 mile</u>	<u>Prehistoric Sites w/in 1 mile</u>	<u>Predicted High Sensitivity Zone</u>
Direct	4	8	21	0.8
Cutoff	5	8	26	0.8
230kV*	12	8	80	8.0
Southern	8	10	66	6.0

* The 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment.

Alternatives when ranked from the least miles of potential high and moderate impact to the most potential miles of high and moderate impacts are as follows for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment: (1) Route C, (2) Agency Preferred Alternative, (3) Routes D and A, (4) Routes B, E, and G, (5) Route F. The Ely to Delta segment alternatives routes rank as follows: (1) Direct Route, (2) Cutoff Route, (3) 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative), (4) Southern Route. The No-Action would result in no impacts to cultural resources.

Issue 6 - Health and Safety

Electromagnetic field (EMF) is an especially difficult issue and conclusive results may not be known for years. The many studies that have been conducted on EMF demonstrate that we are all affected by everyday life. Electromagnetic fields exist from microwaves, lights, waterbed heaters,

hair dryers, etc. The right-of-way width of 200 feet is intended to minimize these effects. Outside of the right-of-way the field levels would be expected to be no higher than normally occur in household appliances. There is no substantial difference between any of the routing alternatives. The No-Action alternative would have no EMF effects.

Safety would be a primary concern in the design of the SWIP. An alternating current (AC) transmission line would be protected with power circuit breakers and related line relay protection equipment. If conductor failure occurs, power would be automatically removed from the line. Lightning protection would be provided by overhead ground wires along the line. Electrical equipment and fencing at the substation would be grounded. All fences, metal gates, pipelines, etc. that cross or would be within the transmission line right-of-way would be grounded to prevent electrical shock. If applicable, grounding outside of the right-of-way may also occur. There is no substantial difference between any of the routing alternatives. The No-Action alternative would have no safety concerns.

Issue 7 - Wilderness Areas/Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

No significant and direct adverse effects were identified to any recreational resource, although indirect visual impacts were documented. No wilderness areas or WSAs would be crossed by the Agency Preferred Alternative, although there would be visual impacts from dispersed locations along the boundaries of several areas.

WILDERNESS AREAS/WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS - MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE (areas passed and miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Wildernesses passed</u>	<u>WSAs passed</u>	<u><1/4 mi.</u>	<u>1/4 to 1 mi.</u>	<u>1 to 3 mi.</u>
A	0	5	41.3	26.5	21.1
B	0	6	44.3	28.5	31.2
C	0	5	41.3	26.5	21.1
D	0	5	41.3	26.5	21.1
E	0	6	44.3	28.5	31.2
F	0	6	45.6	32.3	29.2
G	0	6	41.3	28.0	26.9
Agency Preferred Alternative	0	6	41.3	28.0	32.2

WILDERNESS AREAS/WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS - ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT
(areas passed and miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Wildernesses passed</u>	<u>WSAs passed</u>	<u><1/4 mi.</u>	<u>1/4 to 1 mi.</u>	<u>1 to 3 mi.</u>
Direct	0	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cutoff	1	4	9.4	4.3	12.0
230kV*	0	3	9.4	3.9	3.0
Southern	0	5	7.8	6.5	16.0

* The 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment.

Alternatives when ranked from the least miles of crossing near wilderness areas or WSAs to the most potential miles of crossing near wilderness areas or WSAs are as follows for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment: (1) Route A, C, and D (2) Route G and Agency Preferred Alternative, (3) Routes B and E, (4) Routes F. The Ely to Delta segment alternatives routes rank as follows: (1) Direct Route, (2) 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative), (3) Cutoff Route, (4) Southern Route. The No-Action would result in no impacts to adjacent wilderness areas or WSAs.

Issue 8 - Minimize Land Use Impacts

The following table shows various land uses by alternative route.

LAND USE - MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE
(miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Hill AFB MOA</u>	<u>Hill AFB Restricted</u>	<u>Nellis AFB MOA</u>	<u>Agricultural Lands</u>	<u>Range Allotments</u>	<u>Mining Claims</u>
A	1.6	0.0	129.0	16.8	491.9	38.0
B	42.4	11.0	129.0	16.8	493.0	65.2
C	1.6	0.0	129.0	16.8	485.8	39.5
D	0.0	0.0	129.0	16.8	492.4	48.3
E	42.4	11.0	129.0	16.8	502.6	61.0
F	1.6	0.0	129.0	22.0	507.3	32.5
G	0.0	0.0	129.0	16.8	473.2	36.8
Agency Preferred Alternative	16.3	0.0	129.0	16.8	470.4	37.3

LAND USE - ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT
(miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Hill AFB MOA</u>	<u>Hill AFB Restricted</u>	<u>Agriculture Lands</u>	<u>Prime/Unique Farmlands</u>	<u>Range Allotments</u>	<u>Mining Claims</u>
Direct	44.1	55.1	0.0	0.0	135.1	7.8
Cutoff	123.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	153.9	6.9
230kV*	79.0	0.0	2.1	1.2	151.9	28.7
Southern	102.5	0.0	0.1	0.0	211.0	1.9

* The 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment.

Alternatives when ranked from the least land use impacts to the most land use impacts are as follows for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment: (1) Route A, C, and G, (2) Agency Preferred Alternative, (3) Route D, (4) Routes B, E, and F. The Ely to Delta segment alternatives routes rank as follows: (1) Cutoff Route, (2) Southern Route, (3) 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative), (4) Direct Route. The No-Action would result in no impacts to land uses.

Issue 9 - Use Existing Transmission Line Corridors

Existing transmission lines and designated utility corridors would be paralleled by each of the alternatives routes as follows:

EXISTING CORRIDORS - MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE
(miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Parallel to existing transmission lines</u>	<u>Miles in Designated or Planning Utility Corridor</u>	<u>Miles Outside Designated or Planning Utility Corridor</u>
A	204.0	370.4	142.6
B	162.5	362.2	153.9
C	162.5	337.0	169.9
D	214.8	377.1	136.4
E	204.0	364.7	159.0
F	172.7	329.1	194.9
G	172.1	379.4	125.3
Agency Preferred Alternative	172.1	350.4	162.4

EXISTING CORRIDORS - ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT
(miles)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Parallel to existing transmission lines</u>	<u>Miles in Designated or Planning Utility Corridor</u>	<u>Miles Outside Designated or Planning Utility Corridor</u>
Direct	13.2	14.3	115.8
Cutoff	74.2	75.5	78.4
230kV*	153.9	160.8	0.0
Southern	31.8	49.5	161.5

* The 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Ely to Delta segment.

Alternatives were ranked from the most miles parallel to the least miles parallel to an existing transmission line as follows for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment: (1) Route D, (2) Routes A and E, (3) Routes F and G and Agency Preferred Alternative, (4) Routes B and C. The routes rank as follows for the Ely to Delta segment: (1) 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative), (2) Cutoff Route, (3) Southern Route, (4) Direct Route.

Alternatives were ranked from the least miles inside a designated or planning corridor to the most miles outside a designated or planning corridor for the Midpoint to Dry Lake Routes as follows: (1) Route G, (2) Route D, (3) Route A, (4) Route B, (5) Route E, (6) Agency Preferred Alternative, (7) Route C, (8) Route F. The Ely to Delta segment ranks as follows: (1) 230kV Corridor Route (Agency Preferred Alternative), (2) Cutoff Route, (3) Direct Route (4) Southern Route.

Issue 10 - Property Values and Compensation

While various studies have been conducted, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that transmission lines would reduce property values. Some studies have found no substantial decrease in value attributable to transmission lines, while others have shown the market value of property to be reduced. Potential visual impacts could possibly attribute to alterations of property values.

Landowners would be compensated for an easement on or purchase of their land. Compensation is based on the fair market value of the land, as in the case where an easement is acquired based on the extent to which the use of the land is limited by the right-of-way.

Issue 11 - Effects on Agency Land Management Plans

The BLM - Under FLPMA of 1976, the BLM must manage public lands under the principle of multiple use, managing the various resources to best meet the needs of the public and our society. The conflict in the BLM's mission is to protect the quality of the land resources, environment, and public values while permitting development and use in a cost effective manner, such as a transmission line, which would help meet society's needs. The effects of the Management Framework Plans/Resource Management Plans (MFP/RMP) are addressed in accordance with the

BLM's planning regulations (43 CFR 1600 Subpart 1610.5). The MFP/RMPs that would be affected are listed in the Plan Amendment section below.

The Record of Decision would result in amending the plans (listed in the Proposed Plan Amendments section below) to allow for the granting of a 200-foot right-of-way for the SWIP. It would also allow for granting the substation sites and microwave communication facilities.

Road management planning would dictate access for construction and maintenance. Detailed road design would be completed following surveying and staking of the line in the field. Road designs would conform with planning standards of the BLM, FS, or other land managing agencies, as well as individual private landowners, prior to issuance of the Notice to Proceed to construct the line. The federal agencies would define the limits of construction and rehabilitation based upon transportation and road management objectives. In some cases, roads would have locked gates, be blocked, or be completely obliterated, depending upon the management policy for an increase of road access into a specific area. Access roads are part of the project description and, as such, were considered in the impact assessment for each environmental resource.

Proposed Plan Amendments

Both the BLM and FS have an inherent stated mission to protect the quality of the lands under their jurisdiction, while balancing the need for development when a need is shown. The impacts to goals and objectives of the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Burley District and Shoshone District MFPs, the RMPs of the BLM Resource Areas in the Boise and Shoshone District in Idaho, the RMPs of the Elko and Ely Districts in Nevada, and the RMPs for the Richfield District in Utah, and the Las Vegas District MFP are not considered significant for the following resources: range, recreation, timber, wildlife, wild horses and burrows, riparian/wetlands, minerals, and cultural resources.

Some of the alternative routes would deviate from the BLM designated or planning corridors established during the land use planning process. Some of the corridor deviations would be due to environmental issues along the established corridors and other deviations would be the result of project requirements. The SWIP DEIS/DPA is a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment. This document is termed a FEIS/PPA or Final Environmental Impact Statement/Proposed Plan Amendment. The SWIP decision document would serve as a plan amendment to RMPs and MFPs where the Agency Preferred Alternative would be outside a designated corridor in the three BLM Districts crossed. The plans now in effect that may be amended are:

Utah

- House Range Management Plan (Richfield District) - no plan amendment proposed
- Warm Springs Management Plan (Fillmore District) - no plan amendment proposed

Idaho

- Twin Falls Management Framework Plan (Burley District) - no plan amendment proposed
- Monument Resource Management Plan (Shoshone District) - no plan amendment proposed

Nevada

- Wells Resource Management Plan (Elko District) - plan amendment proposed
- Schell Management Framework Plan (Ely District) - plan amendment proposed
- Egan Resource Management Plan (Ely District) - plan amendment proposed
- Caliente Management Framework Plan (Las Vegas District) - plan amendment proposed
- Stateline Management Framework Plan (Las Vegas District) - plan amendment proposed

Plan Amendment Determinations

Figure 1-2 illustrates the location of the Agency Preferred Alternative which would also amend planning documents (listed above) to designate a utility corridor. The right-of-way for the Agency Preferred Alternative would be 200 feet in width. Future utility rights-of-way proposed for these same linear locations would be placed as near as practical immediately adjacent to the SWIP right-of-way. The corridor established through this plan amendment would be no wider than corridors previously established through the planning document of the affected land management agency. Establishing this corridor in this FEIS/PPA complies with designation criteria set forth in Section 503 of the FLPMA, 43 CRF 2806.2, and the BLM Manual Section 2801.11.

Critical resources, termed avoidance areas, would be crossed by various portions of the Agency Preferred Alternative. These avoidance areas are identified as high impacts and are identified in the Map Volume of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, described in Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, and in revised maps and narrative sections in Chapter 3 of this document. There are no exclusion areas, or those areas set aside and designated for sole protection of a resource (e.g., wilderness area or WSA), crossed by the Agency Preferred Alternative.

All other designated or planning corridors established through a public land planning and EIS process would remain intact. All areas not included as a designated or planning corridor, an avoidance area, or an exclusion area would remain open to right-of-way use, but not as preferred locations. Site-specific clearances for cultural resources, threatened or endangered plants or animals, along with other required site-specific examinations which precede the right-of-way grant or notice to proceed with construction would be done prior to construction.

The BLM in Nevada designates utility corridors through their Resource Management Plan (RMP) process. The BLM in Idaho and Utah recognize existing utility lines as corridors. The Stateline Resource Area is currently preparing a RMP which would designate utility corridors. The Stateline Resource Area has released its Draft EIS/RMP. The RMP corridor studies and the SWIP EIS studies have been coordinated, and the preferred alternatives are similar. FLPMA of 1976 mandates to the extent practical, that the BLM consolidate future utility projects within the corridors that are established.

Factors of Analysis

Existing Facilities - Existing transportation and utility facilities are illustrated in the Map Volume and described on pages 3-33 through 3-50 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Need - The Agency Preferred Alternative and proposed designation of this route as a corridor is not known to conflict with any current right-of-way applications, mineral explorations activities, or long range corridor studies.

Compatibility - Although many significant and insignificant impacts would result from construction of the SWIP along the Agency Preferred Alternative route, the corridor to be designated is compatible with intent to designate utility corridors.

Feasibility - The SWIP could be reasonably constructed within the proposed corridor.

Potential Impacts - The potential impacts of establishing a corridor along the Agency Preferred Alternative have been documented in Chapter 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume, in the Technical Report, and in Chapter 3 of this document.

Results of Coordination - Coordination with agencies and the public is documented in Chapter 5 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, in the planning record, and in Chapter 2 of this document.

Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan

The Construction, Operation, and Maintenance (COM) Plan would include developing engineering plans and specifications (including centerline survey and tower locations), construction access plans, detailed rehabilitation plans, construction materials, environmental monitoring and control measures, preconstruction surveys for sensitive plants and/or wildlife species, cultural surveys and clearance procedures, and procedures for handling hazardous materials. The COM plan would be developed as a condition of the right-of-way grant and prior to any Notice to Proceed with construction. This plan would specify stipulations for construction, operation, and maintenance and responsibilities of the BLM, utility companies, and contractors.

The COM Plan would also address specifically how the project would be constructed within the 200 foot right-of-way. Additional NEPA documentation may be tiered to this EIS to evaluate alternative methods of construction that would be based on the specific methods proposed in the COM Plan (e.g., helicopter construction vs. conventional ground erection vs. a combination, etc).

In surveying the centerline of the selected route, the BLM would work closely with the utility to assure that the location relative to existing facilities is appropriate to meet electrical codes and to minimize impact to sensitive features. The precise centerline can only be determined once the engineering design and specific environmental survey activities are developed and coordinated. During the EIS process the centerline was a corridor approximately 1/4 mile either side of the "assumed centerline" drawn on the project maps for each of the alternative routes. This assumed centerline was not an engineered design. This centerline corridor width was agreed upon to allow the consideration of construction and design factors (e.g., topography) and the specific environmental resources that would be located during preconstruction surveys (e.g., cultural surveys, rare plant locations, tortoise burrows, etc.)

The BLM would monitor the construction, operation and maintenance of the SWIP. The BLM would perform periodic compliance checks after the lines would be put in operation to assure continued compliance to the terms and conditions of the right-of-way grant and to monitor environmental impacts associated with the project. If the selected route crosses lands administered

by other agencies (e.g., Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation), these agencies would assign their personnel to the project

TABLES

TABLE 1-1
Route Comparison Table - Midpoint to Dry Lake Routes

(Formerly Table 2-4 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA)

	Route A*	Route B	Route C	Route D	Route E	Route F	Route G	Utility Preferred	Agency Preferred
Construction Access Levels (miles crossed)									
Agricultural lands	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	22.0	16.8	16.8	16.8
Existing access with spur roads	211	215.1	208.1	212.6	213.1	210.7	207.0	206.8	206.9
New access roads in flat (0-8%) terrain	152.5	130.1	151.0	155.6	134.2	157.0	163.2	162.7	163.8
New access roads in rolling (8-35%) terrain	92.4	109.1	91.4	89.6	111.4	89.4	85.1	84.8	82.4
New access roads in steep (35-65%) terrain	40.3	45.0	39.6	38.9	48.2	36.9	32.6	30.5	33.1
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT									
WILDLIFE (miles crossed)									
Desert tortoise habitat	53.2	53.2	53.2	53.2	53.2	53.2	53.2	53.2	52.1
Bald eagle habitat	15.3	32.8	16.3	5.8	18.2	16.3	19.6	19.6	6.0
Peregrine falcon	0	23.1	0	0	23	0	0	0	0
Ferruginous hawk nest	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3
Sage grouse leks or winter range	35.2	36.8	30.7	34.1	36.3	32.8	40.6	42.2	37.2
Crucial Elk habitat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bighorn sheep habitat and movement corridor	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Crucial pronghorn habitat	24.1	7.2	16.2	34.9	18.6	16.5	39.7	39.7	43.2
Critical Mule deer habitat	22.8	27.4	24.4	25.1	25.8	24.4	22.7	22.7	22.7
Wildlife Habitat Disturbed in acres - permanent (temporary)									
Desert tortoise habitat	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)	78.5 (54.5)
Bald eagle nesting	14.0 (50.1)	37.1 (80.6)	15.8 (15.1)	6.3 (16.6)	17.6 (56.2)	15.8 (51.1)	25.2 (38.8)	25.2 (38.8)	7.4 (15.4)
Peregrine falcon	0 (0)	13.2(91.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	13.2 (91.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Ferruginous hawk nest	3.5 (1.3)	2.1 (1.4)	3.5 (1.3)	3.5 (1.3)	3.5 (1.3)	3.5 (1.3)	2.1 (1.4)	2.1 (1.4)	3.5 (1.3)
Sage grouse leks or winter range	50.0 (78.9)	56.7 (69.7)	51.6 (59.6)	50.8 (74.0)	51.0 (86.6)	54.3 (64.1)	52.9 (92.6)	58.1 (94.2)	51.3 (95.5)
Crucial Elk habitat	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Bighorn sheep habitat and movement corridor	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)	9.0 (8.5)
Crucial pronghorn habitat	31.9 (50.5)	7.7 (19.2)	20.7 (34.6)	57.0 (53.7)	23.0 (42.6)	20.7 (35.5)	66.8 (62.2)	66.8 (62.2)	70.9 (69.7)
Critical Mule deer habitat	32.2 (70.0)	33.6 (90.8)	30.6 (83.0)	35.7 (72.3)	35.3 (77.8)	30.6 (83.0)	33.4 (64.3)	33.4 (64.3)	33.4 (64.3)
VEGETATION (miles crossed)									
Rare plants	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	4.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
Grasslands	109.1	97.3	96.3	97.3	116.3	110.2	97.8	98.6	103.5
Sage scrub	314.3	331.2	320.6	319.8	320.0	317.4	312.4	308.8	304.6
Mojave desert scrub	55.8	55.8	55.8	55.8	55.8	55.8	55.8	55.8	55.8
Woodland/mountain shrub/grasses	3.6	4.1	3.7	3.6	3.6	1.9	4.1	4.1	3.7
Riparian	3.2	3.2	3.7	5.3	3.3	3.8	4.8	4.5	5.1

* Environmentally Preferred Route

Table 1-1, Route Comparison Table - Midpoint to Dry Lake Routes (Continued)

(Formerly Table 2-4 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA)

	Route A*	Route B	Route C	Route D	Route E	Route F	Route G	Utility Preferred	Agency Preferred
EARTH RESOURCES (miles crossed, except as noted)									
Prime/Unique farmland	21.4	21.2	21.2	21.4	21.4	32	21.1	21.1	21.1
High water erosion potential soils	39.0	53.1	44.4	35.5	48.6	47.8	36.4	36.4	37.3
High wind erosion potential soils	58.8	58.9	58.8	52.1	64.3	73.3	46.7	44.1	49.5
Flood hazard areas	6.2	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1	1.8	3.1	3.1	3.1
Landslide hazard areas	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	0	0	0
High paleontological sensitivity areas	23.8	38.6	35.3	21.9	25.5	37.4	30.6	19.4	20.5
Number of springs within 1/2 mile of route	42	20	20	45	17	17	45	45	45.0
Number of perennial streams crossed	26	27	23	22	22	8	27	20	20.0
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT									
LAND JURISDICTION (miles crossed)									
Bureau of Land Management	412.5	413.6	397.1	409.6	430.0	406.1	414.5	409.4	406.0
Forest Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	2.3	5.2	5.2	5.2
Private	95.2	97.3	104.6	98.7	88.5	115.6	85.3	87.0	83.1
Bureau of Reclamation	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
LAND USE (miles crossed, except as noted)									
Miles within 1 mile of wilderness study areas	32.8	50.6	32.6	47.3	50.6	42.3	32.8	32.8	32.8
Approximate number of residences within 1 mile	83	78	80	83	83	94	93	92	96
Miles parallel to H-frame 69kV transmission line	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.9
Miles parallel to H-frame 138kV transmission line	52.0	10.5	10.5	62.8	52.0	10.5	26.0	26.0	26.0
Miles parallel to H-frame 230kV transmission line	13.7	13.7	13.7	13.7	13.7	28.2	13.7	13.7	13.7
Miles parallel to 345kV transmission line	97.2	74.0	74.0	97.2	97.2	10.5	78.9	78.9	78.9
Miles parallel to 500kV transmission line (incl. UNTP)	88.5	88.5	88.5	88.5	88.5	116.0	88.5	88.5	88.5
Total miles parallel to transmission lines	204.0	162.5	162.5	214.8	204.0	172.7	172.1	172.1	172.1
Miles in designated or planning utility corridor	370.4	362.2	337.0	377.1	364.7	329.1	379.4	377.6	350.4
Miles outside designated or planning utility corridor	142.6	153.9	169.9	136.4	159.0	194.9	125.3	132.1	162.4
Miles in Military Operating Areas of Hill AFB	1.6	42.4	1.6	0	42.4	1.6	0	0	16.3
Miles in R-6405 Restricted Area of Hill AFB	0	11.0	0	0	11.0	0	0	0	0
Miles in Military Operating Areas of Nellis AFB	129.0	129.0	129.0	129.0	129.0	129.0	129.0	129.0	129.0
Agricultural lands	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	22.0	16.8	16.8	16.8
Range allotments	515.9	527.4	505.5	506.1	520.8	519.6	501.7	491.6	485.0
Mining claims	38.0	65.2	39.5	48.3	61.0	32.5	36.8	36.6	37.3
Number of tanks and wells along centerline	11	10	11	12	11	10	10	10	10
Number of corrals along centerline	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
VISUAL RESOURCES (miles crossed, except as noted)									
Crossings of scenic highways and byways	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
Miles of route visible from residences within 1 mile	65.7	52.3	57.1	61.9	64.1	56.9	59.9	59.9	63.1
Scenic quality Class A landscapes	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	5.0	0.5	0.5	0.5
VRM Class II landscapes	7.3	17.8	5.6	10.0	19.5	7.5	8.1	8.1	6.7

* Environmentally Preferred Route

Table 1-1, Route Comparison Table - Midpoint to Dry Lake Routes (Continued)

(Formerly Table 2-4 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA)

(Formerly Table 2-4 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA)																					Utility			Agency																																																									
																					Preferred			Preferred																																																									
CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT																																																																																	
CULTURAL RESOURCES																																																																																	
Number of historic sites within 1 mile of route	53			46			50			68			46			54			61			61			53																																																								
Number of ethnohistoric sites within 1 mile of route	13			16			14			12			15			16			14			14			14																																																								
Number of prehistoric sites within 1 mile of route	388			413			408			430			386			510			399			388			388																																																								
Number of other sites within 1 mile of route	9			8			7			12			11			6			9			10			9																																																								
Miles through predicted high sensitivity zones	18.4			19.3			17.2			20.5			18.4			11			20.6			20.5			18.4																																																								
Oregon Trail crossings	1			1			1			1			1			1			1			1			1																																																								
California Immigrant Trail crossings	3			1			2			3			2			3			2			3			3																																																								
Pony Express Trail crossings	1			2			1			1			1			1			1			1			2																																																								
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES																					Utility			Agency																																																									
																					Preferred			Preferred																																																									
																					Preferred			Preferred																																																									
Impact Value	High			Mod			Low			High			Mod			Low			High			Mod			Low			High			Mod			Low																																															
VISUAL RESOURCES	13.5			72.7			427.0			14.5			62.6			439.2			14.5			66.8			425.8			13.5			68.5			431.4			13.5			71.7			438.7			19.5			71.0			433.7			14.7			65.4			424.9			14.9			67.5			419.5			14.9			69.1			419.4		
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	15.0			36.5			200.3			26.2			24.2			204.2			20.4			25.6			181.7			13.5			48.4			214.6			17.8			34.8			221.2			17.8			27.2			177.7			24.8			41.0			191.7			25.6			45.0			206.4			22.5			42.5			207.0		
CULTURAL RESOURCES	6.8			104.0			131.6			7.4			117.4			142.2			5.9			106.1			138.5			6.6			124.8			140.2			7.8			122.2			134.5			8.2			103.9			143.2			7.3			105.0			132.5			7.5			102.1			261.9			6.9			109.1			135.9		
LAND USE RESOURCES	0			73.3			88.8			0			75.2			129.6			0			64.1			88.9			0			73.3			87.6			0			75.5			129.5			0			73.3			101.2			0			73.3			88.4			0			63.8			71.0			0			63.8			86.4		
EARTH RESOURCES	0			46.7			454.3			0			50.6			453.5			0			45.0			449.9			0			46.9			452.4			0			54.6			455.3			0			45.4			465.4			0			40.9			456.4			0			23.3			473.7			0			25.6			471.3		
COMMENTS																																																																																	
Route A*								Route D								Route G																																																																	
- low impacts to ferruginous hawks								- crosses most miles of riparian habitat								- reduces visual impacts to U.S. Highway 93																																																																	
- crosses least miles of riparian habitat								- crosses least miles of bald eagle nesting areas								- crosses least miles of private land																																																																	
- crosses most miles of sage grouse habitat								- crosses high mileage of sage grouse habitat								- crosses high mileage of crucial pronghorn habitat																																																																	
Route B								Route E								Utility Preferred Route																																																																	
- crosses least miles of riparian habitat								- crosses most BLM-administered lands								- crosses least steep terrain																																																																	
- crosses most miles of bald eagle nesting areas								- crosses high mileage of sage grouse habitat								- reduces visual impacts to U.S. Highway 93																																																																	
- most miles of high water erosion potential soils								- high impacts to peregrine falcon								- crosses most miles of sage grouse leks																																																																	
- least mileage visible from residences																																																																																	
Route C								Route F								Proposed Action																																																																	
- crosses least miles of sage grouse habitat								- visual impacts to Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument								- reduces visual impacts to U.S. Highway 93																																																																	
- crosses least miles of BLM-administered lands								- crosses most agricultural land								- crosses most miles of crucial pronghorn habitat																																																																	
- crosses least miles of VRM Class II landscapes								- crosses most private lands								- crosses high mileage of sage grouse habitat																																																																	
								- most cultural sites within one mile								- most number of residents in 1 mile																																																																	
								- most miles of high wind erosion potential soils																																																																									
																					Utility			Agency																																																									
																					Preferred			Preferred																																																									
Estimated cost (x millions)	248			251			245			248			254			253			244			242			243																																																								
Total Route Mileage	513.0			516.1			506.9			513.5			523.7			524.0			504.7			503.1			501.6																																																								
ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ROUTE																																																																																	
Ranking	1			4			2			2			2			5			3			3			3																																																								

* Environmentally Preferred Route

TABLE 1-2
Route Comparison Table - Ely to Delta Routes
 (Formerly Table 2-5 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA)

	<i>Direct Route**</i>	<i>Cutoff Route**</i>	<i>230kV Corridor Route*</i>	<i>Southern Route</i>
Construction Access Levels (miles crossed)				
Agricultural lands	0	0	0.9	0
Existing access with spur roads	35.0	39.9	59.1	55.7
New access roads in flat (0-8%) terrain	38.5	50.2	49.1	73.3
New access roads in rolling (8-35%) terrain	44.8	46.4	34.9	60.8
New access roads in steep (35-65%) terrain	17.5	17.4	15.6	21.2
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT				
WILDLIFE (miles crossed)				
Desert tortoise habitat	0	0	0	0
Bald eagle nesting	7.0	8.4	17.8	0
Peregrine falcon	0	0	0	0
Ferruginous hawk nest	0	0	4.5	10.1
Sage grouse leks or winter range	7.9	6.8	7.1	11.8
Crucial Elk habitat	0	0	5.5	0
Bighorn sheep habitat and movement corridor	0	0	0	0
Crucial pronghorn habitat	56.5	70.1	71.5	85.7
Critical Mule deer habitat	12.3	11.0	14.1	12.5
Wildlife Habitat Disturbed in acres - permanent (temporary)				
Desert tortoise habitat	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Bald eagle nesting	2.6 (36.8)	2.6 (43.8)	16.6 (43.1)	0 (0)
Peregrine falcon	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Ferruginous hawk nest	0 (0)	1.1 (1.2)	10.4 (16.7)	25.4 (25.1)
Sage grouse leks or winter range	8.5 (21.1)	7.6 (17.6)	15.7 (16.7)	32.9 (11.8)
Crucial Elk habitat	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.7 (29.7)	0 (0)
Bighorn sheep habitat and movement corridor	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Crucial pronghorn habitat	62.2 (129.9)	85.6 (162.7)	83.9 (160.0)	106.0 (188.7)
Critical Mule deer habitat	9.5 (50.1)	10.3 (40.2)	14.8 (43.1)	11.7 (35.9)
VEGETATION (miles crossed)				
Rare plants	0	0	0	3.0
Grasslands	27.3	33.2	34.0	27.0
Sage scrub	83.3	100.9	109.6	155.0
Woodland/mountain shrub/grasses	0.6	0.5	3.6	7.0
Riparian	1.6	1.2	0.8	0.1

* Proposed Action, Environmentally and Agency/Utility Preferred Routes

1 of 3

** Preferred by the National Park Service

Table 1-2, Route Comparison Table - Ely to Delta Routes (Continued)

(Formerly Table 2-5 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA)

	<i>Direct Route**</i>	<i>Cutoff Route**</i>	<i>230kV Corridor Route*</i>	<i>Southern Route</i>
<i>EARTH RESOURCES (miles crossed, except as noted)</i>				
Miles of high water erosion hazard soils crossed	14.4	22.1	31.3	17.1
Miles of high wind erosion hazard soils crossed	8.6	12.6	19.2	40.1
Number of springs within 1/2 mile of route	2	2	6	12
Number of perennial streams crossed	0	0	4	3
Miles of flood hazard areas crossed	0	0	0	0
Miles of landslide hazard areas crossed	0	0	0.6	0
Areas of high paleontological sensitivity	55.5	55.6	64.9	84.7
<i>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</i>				
<i>LAND JURISDICTION (miles crossed)</i>				
Bureau of Land Management	125.7	143.4	133.5	197.4
Forest Service	0	0	9.0	0
State	7.2	10.5	10.4	12.0
Private	0	0	10.2	1.6
<i>LAND USE (miles crossed, except as noted)</i>				
Miles of route wilderness/WSA within 1 mile	0	13.8	12.3	14.1
Number of residences within 1 mile	2	3	26	7
Miles parallel to H-frame 69kV transmission line	0	0	70.0	0
Miles parallel to H-frame 230kV transmission line	13.2	74.2	139.0	20.6
Miles parallel to 500kV transmission line	13.2	20.6	20.8	31.8
Total miles parallel to transmission lines	13.2	74.2	139.0	31.8
Miles in designated or planning utility corridor	14.3	75.5	145.9	49.5
Miles outside designated or planning utility corridor	115.8	78.4	14.9	161.5
Miles in Military Operating Area of Hill AFB	44.1	123.0	79.0	102.5
Miles in R-6405 Restricted Area of Hill AFB	55.1	0	0	0
Agricultural lands	0	0	0.9	0.1
Prime/Unique farmlands	0	0	0	0
Range allotments	135.1	153.9	152.8	211.0
Mining claims	7.8	6.9	25.8	1.9
Number of tanks and wells along route	1	0	1	0
Number of corrals along route	0	0	0	0
<i>VISUAL RESOURCES (miles crossed, except as noted)</i>				
Crossings of scenic highway or byways	0	0	1	3
Miles of route visible from residences within 1 mile	3.3	5.1	23.6	4.8
Scenic quality Class A landscapes crossed	0	4.2	4.2	0
VRM Class II landscapes crossed	0	0	0	2.0

* Proposed Action, Environmentally and Agency/Utility Preferred Routes

2 of 3

** Preferred by the National Park Service

Table 1-2, Route Comparison Table - Ely to Delta Routes (Continued)

(Formerly Table 2-5 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA)

	Direct Route**	Cutoff Route**	230kV Corridor Route*	Southern Route
CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT				
<i>CULTURAL RESOURCES (miles crossed, except as noted)</i>				
Number of historic sites within 1 mile of route	4	5	12	8
Number of ethnohistoric sites within 1 mile of route	8	8	8	10
Number of prehistoric sites within 1 mile of route	21	26	91	66
Number of other cultural sites within 1 mile of route	1	1	1	1
Miles through predicted high cultural sensitivity zones	0.8	0.8	8.0	6.0
Pony Express Trail crossings	1	1	0	0

	Direct Route**			Cutoff Route**			230kV Corridor Route*			Southern Route		
SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES												
Impact Value	High	Mod	Low	High	Mod	Low	High	Mod	Low	High	Mod	Low
VISUAL RESOURCES	0.6	6.4	128.1	1.2	13.7	139.0	7.3	31.6	121.8	4.1	22.5	183.1
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	4.7	5.1	82.2	5.8	7.7	94.1	0.4	12.4	117.3	10.3	17.7	120.8
CULTURAL RESOURCES	4.6	19.1	16.3	4.6	32.7	21.4	5.5	39.7	44.5	11.6	41.7	48.0
LAND USE RESOURCES	0.0	65.3	38.9	0.0	0.0	123.0	0.0	0.0	80.9	0.0	0.0	103.2
EARTH RESOURCES	0.0	8.4	125.9	0.0	7.8	144.0	0.0	6.9	152.7	0.0	2.4	200.2
COMMENTS												

Direct Route**

- shortest route
- avoids visual impacts to Great Basin National Park
- crosses Leland-Harris spring complex
- crosses through R-6405 Restricted Area of UTTR
- crosses least agricultural lands
- crosses least miles of crucial pronghorn habitat

Cutoff Route**

- crosses least agricultural lands
- avoids visual impacts to Great Basin National Park
- crosses least mileage of sage grouse habitat

230kV Corridor Route*

- best utilizes the existing utility corridor
- crosses most miles of bald eagle nesting areas
- crosses high mileage of crucial pronghorn habitat
- most residences within 1 mile
- crosses most national forest lands and private lands

Southern Route

- longest route and most miles in steep terrain
- highest overall environmental impacts
- crosses most BLM-administered lands
- least miles in military operating areas of UTTR

	Direct Route**	Cutoff Route**	230kV Corridor Route*	Southern Route
Estimated cost (x million)	66	72	77	100
Total Route Mileage	132.9	153.9	160.8	211.0
ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ROUTE				
Ranking	3	1	2	3

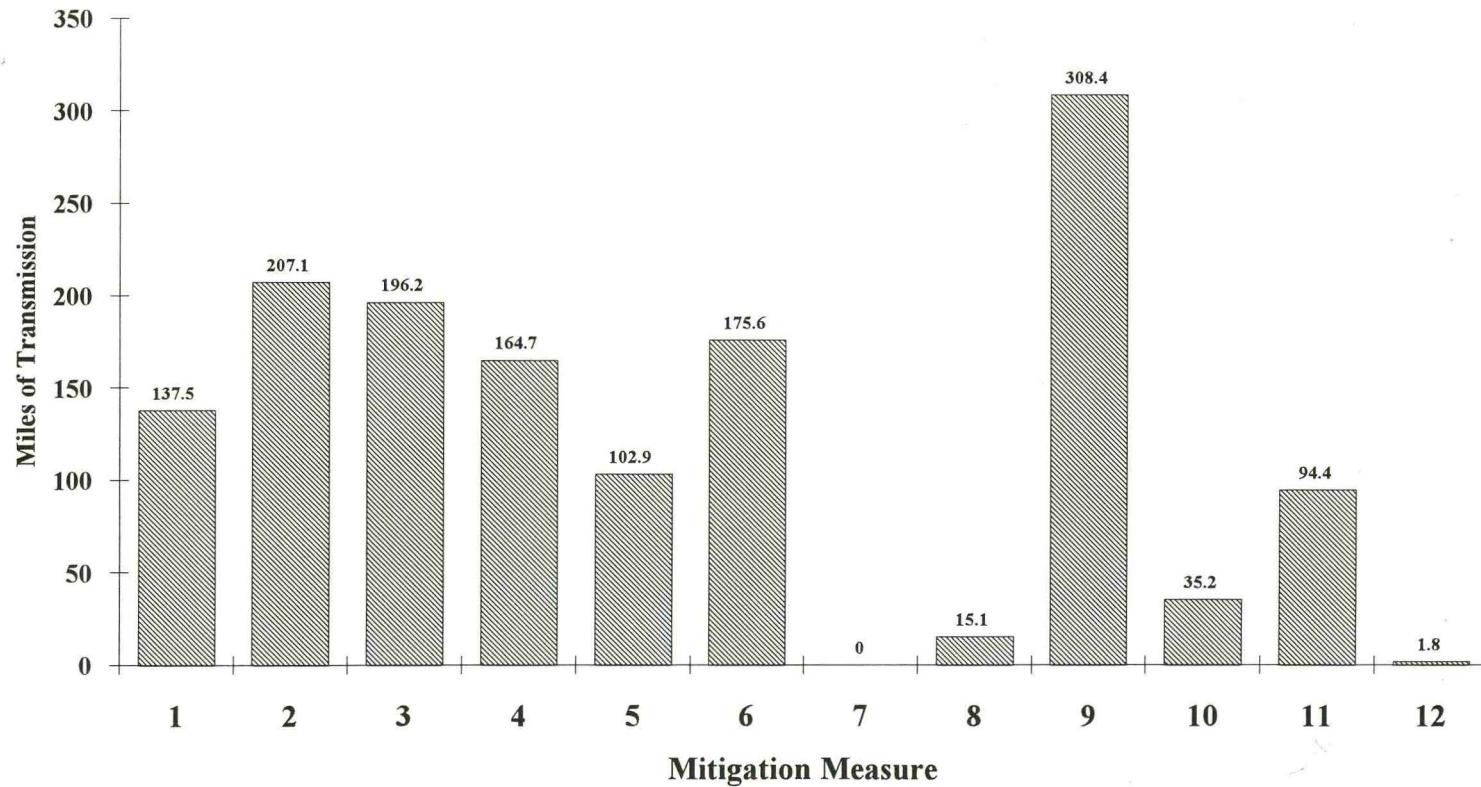
* Proposed Action, Environmentally and Agency/Utility Preferred Routes

3 of 3

** Preferred by the National Park Service

TABLE 1-3

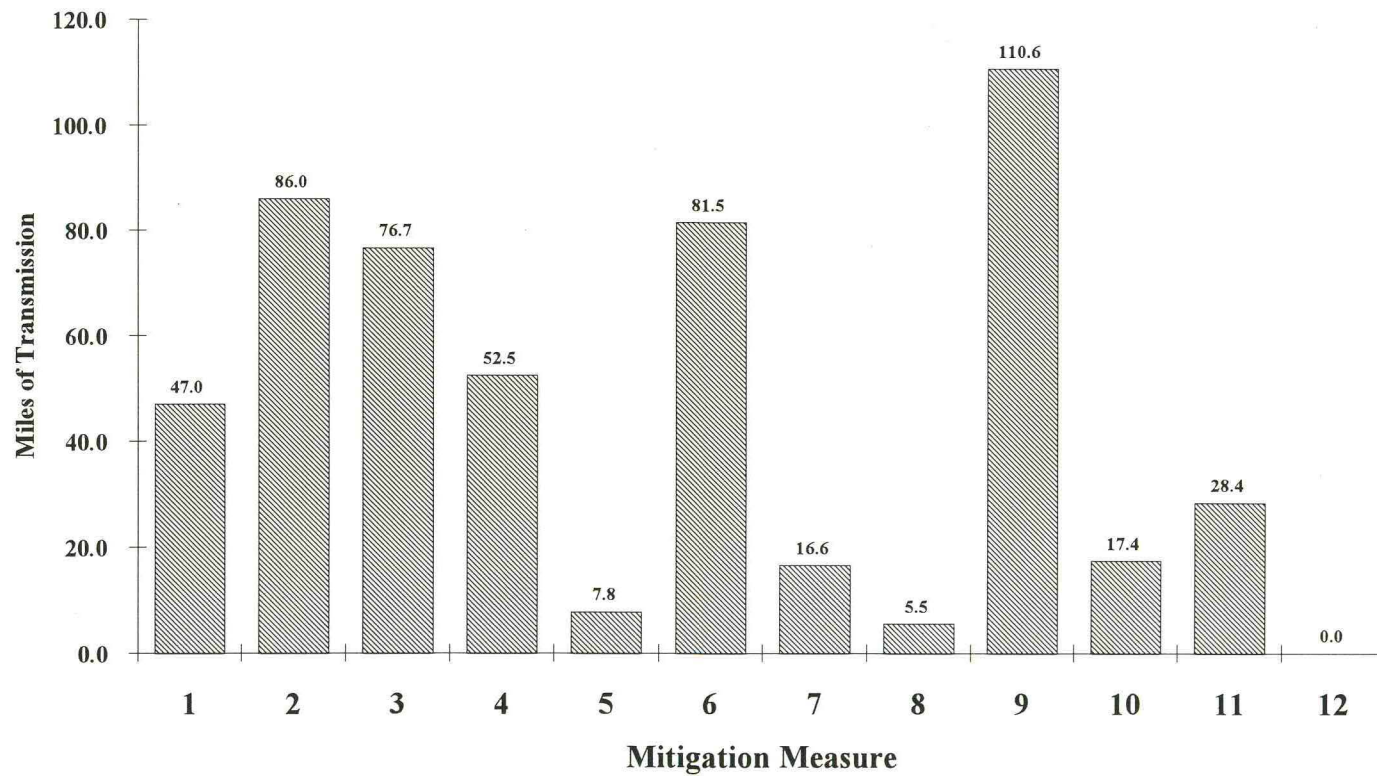
SUMMARY OF SELECTIVELY COMMITTED MITIGATION FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION
Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment



Note: Selectively Committed Mitigation Measures are described in Table 1-5

TABLE 1-4

SUMMARY OF SELECTIVELY COMMITTED MITIGATION FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION
Ely to Delta Segment



Note: Selectively Committed Mitigation Measures are described in Table 1-5

TABLE 1-5

Selectively Committed Mitigation Measures

Note: These selective mitigation measures apply only to specific impact locations that were identified in the EIS or during field investigations.

1. No widening or upgrading of existing access roads would be undertaken in the area of construction and operation, except for repairs necessary to make roads passable, where soils and vegetation are very sensitive to disturbance.
2. There would be no blading of new access roads in the area of construction and operation. Existing crossings would be utilized at perennial streams, National Recreational Trails, and irrigation channels. Off-road or cross-country access routes would be used for construction and maintenance. This would minimize ground disturbance impacts. These access routes must be flagged with an easily seen marker and the route must be approved in advance of use by the authorized officer.
3. The alignment of any new access roads or overland route would follow the designated area's landform contours where possible, providing that such alignment does not additionally impact resource values. This would minimize ground disturbance and/or reduce scarring (visual contrast).
4. All new access roads not required for maintenance would be permanently closed using the most effective and least environmentally damaging methods appropriate to that area with concurrence of the landowner or land manager (e.g., stock piling and replacing topsoil, or rock replacement). This would limit new or improved accessibility into the area.
5. Modified tower design or alternate tower type would be utilized to minimize ground disturbance, operational conflicts, visual contrast and/or avian conflicts.
6. In designated areas, structures would be placed so as to avoid sensitive features such as, but not limited to, riparian areas, water courses, and cultural sites, and/or to allow conductors to clearly span the features, within limits of standard tower design. This would minimize amount of sensitive feature disturbed and/or reduce visual contrast.
7. Standard tower design would be modified to correspond with spacing of existing transmission line structures where feasible and within limits of standard tower design. The normal span would be modified to correspond with existing towers, but not necessarily at every location. This would reduce visual contrast and/or potential operational conflicts.
8. At highway, canyon, and trail crossings, towers are to be placed at the maximum feasible distance from the crossing, to reduce visual impacts.

Table 1-5, Selectively Committed Mitigation Measures (Continued)

9. Nonspecular conductors would be used, where specified by the authorized officer, to reduce visual impacts.
10. "Dulled" metal finish towers would be used to reduce visual impacts.
11. With the exception of emergency repair situations, right-of-way construction, restoration, maintenance, and termination activities in designated areas would be modified or discontinued during sensitive periods (e.g., nesting and breeding periods) for candidate, proposed threatened and endangered, or other sensitive animal species. Sensitive periods, species affected, and areas of concern would be approved in advance of construction or maintenance by the authorized officer.
12. Helicopter placement of towers would be used to reduce ground disturbance impacts (e.g., soil erosion).

TABLE 1-6

Generic Mitigation Measures Included In The Project Description

1. All construction vehicle movement outside the right-of-way would normally be restricted to predesignated access, contractor acquired access or public roads.
2. The areal limits of construction activities would normally be predetermined, with activity restricted to and confined within those limits. No paint or permanent discoloring agents would be applied to rocks or vegetation to indicate survey or construction activity limits.
3. In construction areas where recontouring is not required, vegetation would be left in place wherever possible and original contour would be maintained to avoid excessive root damage and allow for resprouting.
4. In construction areas (e.g., marshalling yards, tower sites, spur roads from existing access roads) where ground disturbance is significant or where recontouring is required, surface restoration would occur as required by the landowner or land management agency. The method of restoration would normally consist of returning disturbed areas back to their natural contour, reseeding (if required), cross drains installed for erosion control, placing water bars in the road, and filling ditches.
5. Watering facilities (e.g. - tanks, natural springs and/or developed springs, water lines, wells, etc.) would be repaired or replaced if they are damaged or destroyed by construction activities to their predisturbed condition as required by the landowner or land management agency.
6. Towers and/or ground wire would be marked with high-visibility devices where required by governmental agencies (Federal Aviation Administration).
7. On agricultural land, right-of-way would be aligned, in so far as practical, to reduce the impact to farm operations and agricultural production.
8. Prior to construction, all supervisory construction personnel would be instructed on the protection of cultural and ecological resources. To assist in this effort, the construction contract would address: (a) Federal and state laws regarding antiquities and plants and wildlife, including collection and removal; (b) the importance of these resources and the purpose and necessity of protecting them.
9. Cultural resources would continue to be considered during post-EIS phases of project implementation in accordance with the programmatic agreement that would be developed in conjunction with preparation of the EIS. This would involve intensive surveys to inventory and evaluate cultural resources within the selected corridor and any appurtenant impact zones beyond

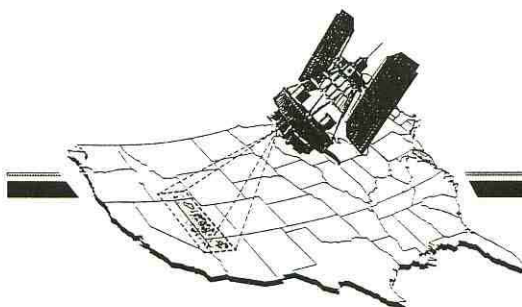
Table 1-6, Generic Mitigation Measures Included In the Project Description (Continued)

the corridor, such as access roads and construction equipment yards. In consultation with appropriate land managing agencies and state historic preservation officers, specific mitigation measures would be developed and implemented to mitigate any identified adverse impacts. These may include project modifications to avoid adverse impacts, monitoring of construction activities, and data recovery studies.

10. The Project Sponsors would respond to complaints of line-generated radio or television interference by investigating the complaints and implementing appropriate mitigation measures. The transmission line would be patrolled on a regular basis so that damaged insulators or other line materials that could cause interference are repaired or replaced.
11. The Project Sponsors would apply necessary mitigation to eliminate problems of induced currents and voltages onto conductive objects sharing a right-of-way, to the mutual satisfaction of the parties involved.
12. The Project Sponsors would continue to monitor studies performed to determine the effects of audible noise and electrostatic and electromagnetic fields in order to ascertain whether these effects are significant.
13. Roads would be built as near as possible at right angles to the streams and washes. Culverts would be installed where necessary. All construction and maintenance activities shall be conducted in a manner that would minimize disturbance to vegetation, drainage channels, and intermittent or perennial streambanks. In addition, road construction would include dust-control measures during construction in sensitive areas. All existing roads would be left in a condition equal to or better than their condition prior to the construction of the transmission line. Towers will be sited with a minimum distance of 200 feet from streams.
14. All requirements of those entities having jurisdiction over air quality matters would be adhered to and any necessary permits for construction activities would be obtained. Open burning of construction trash would not be allowed unless permitted by appropriate authorities.
15. Fences and gates would be repaired or replaced to their original predisturbed condition as required by the landowner or the land management agency if they are damaged or destroyed by construction activities. Temporary gates would be installed only with the permission of the landowner or the land management agency; and would be restored to its original predisturbed condition following construction.
16. Transmission line materials would be designed and tested to minimize corona. A bundle configuration (three conductors per phase except for the Ely to Delta segment would be two conductors per phase) and larger diameter conductors would be used to limit the audible noise, radio interference (RI), and television interference (TVI) due to corona. Tension would be maintained on all insulator assemblies to assure positive contact between insulators, thereby avoiding sparking. Caution would be exercised during construction to avoid scratching or nicking the conductor surface which may provide points for corona to occur.

Table 1-6, Generic Mitigation Measures Included In the Project Description (Continued)

17. During operation of the transmission line, the right-of-way would be maintained free of non-biodegradable debris.
18. The primary focus of paleontological mitigation efforts should be areas of greatest disturbance and areas likely to have significant fossils.
19. Mitigation measures that will be developed during the consultation period under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (1974) will be adhered to as specified in the Biological Opinion of the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service.
20. Hazardous materials shall not be drained onto the ground or into streams or drainage areas. Totally enclosed containment shall be provided for all trash. All construction waste including trash and litter, garbage, other solid waste, petroleum products, and other potentially hazardous materials shall be removed to a disposal facility authorized to accept such materials.
21. Pre-construction surveys for plants and wildlife species designated as sensitive or of concern will be conducted in areas of known occurrence or habitat as stipulated by the land-administering agency during the development of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan once the transmission line centerline, access roads, and tower sites have been located and staked in the field.



CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

In response to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (1978) for implementing the NEPA, an extensive coordination program was developed for the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) to ensure that all the appropriate members of the public and federal, state, and local agencies were contacted, consulted, and given an adequate opportunity to be involved in the process. Chapter 5 (Consultation and Coordination) in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA) describes the public and agency scoping process, the public participation program, the issues and concerns identified from the public and agency comments, and the environmental planning process. This section describes activities of this process that have occurred during the review of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Proposed Plan Amendment (FEIS/PPA).

PUBLIC INFORMATION

During the course of the project 12 newsletters, fact sheets, and project updates were published to inform the interested parties about the environmental process, the project status, and opportunities to participate. Publications were sent to the individuals, organizations, and agencies on the project mailing list. The mailing list included names and addresses from the lead and cooperating agencies and Idaho Power Company's (IPCo) existing mailing lists, as well as all potentially affected public and federal, state, and local agencies and environmental organizations. The mailing list was expanded to over 3,000 interested parties during the process. Copies of the newsletters, fact sheets, and project updates sent out prior to the release of the SWIP DEIS/DPA are located in the Volume I - Objectives, Procedures, and Results technical report.

A Project Update was published in May 1992 announcing the release of the SWIP DEIS/DPA to the public for review and comment. Information regarding the comment period for the SWIP DEIS/DPA was also given. The Formal Public Meetings were announced indicating where and when the public could comment on the accuracy or adequacy of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

A Project Update was released in June 1992 notifying the public concerning an error in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on Panel 4 in the Map Volume. A map inset was shown to correct the error. Meeting times and places for the formal public meetings were also announced again.

A Project Update was released in June 1993 announcing the release of the SWIP FEIS/PPA with information regarding the protest and appeal period for affected agencies. A summary of the comments received on the SWIP DEIS/DPA was also included.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee was established at the outset of the project to guide Dames & Moore through the EIS preparation and to review data and decision criteria. The Steering Committee was comprised of representatives of:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 - Burley District (Idaho)
 - Boise District (Idaho)
 - Shoshone District (Idaho)
 - Elko District (Nevada)
 - Ely District (Nevada)
 - Las Vegas District (Nevada)
 - Richfield District (Utah)
 - Utah State Office
 - Idaho State Office
 - Nevada State Office
- Forest Service
 - Humboldt National Forest (Nevada)
- National Park Service
 - Great Basin National Park (Nevada)
 - Western Region (California)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Dames & Moore
- IPCo
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)

Eleven Steering Committee meetings were held throughout the SWIP to discuss the status and issues of the project and to provide review and input:

- first meeting (February, 1989) - discussion of the coordination between the agencies, the progress of the regional study, and the selection of alternative corridors
- second meeting (May, 1989) - public meetings, responses, and letters from the first fact sheet were reviewed, wildlife was the major topic of discussion
- third meeting (August, 1989) - discussion and review of the BLM actions on the SWIP including record requirements, right-of-way applications, and plan amendments
- fourth meeting (November, 1989) - discussion of a new alternate route from the North Steptoe area, Hill Air Force Base conflicts, and the impact assessment/mitigation planning process

- fifth meeting (April, 1990) - discussion of scope expansion, right-of-way application amendments, and draft purpose and need statement; Dames & Moore presented the substation site selection, the subroute analysis process, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) processing for resource impacts
- sixth meeting (June, 1990) - the draft purpose and need statement, results of GIS impact assessment modeling, the subroute analysis process and the feasibility of expanding the SWIP south of Ely were the main points of the meeting; the dates for additional scoping meetings were also announced
- seventh meeting (September, 1990) - opening discussion began with the Clark County desert tortoise Conservation Plan and how this plan should be addressed in the SWIP; the route selection process, Dry Lake alternative, and mitigation commitments were also discussed
- eighth meeting (December, 1990) - the SWIP DEIS/DPA outline, purpose and need statement, and the effects of the impact assessment results on the routing alternatives were discussed; the desert tortoise issue as well as the cumulative effects of the SWIP and the visual effects to Great Basin National Park and Interstate 84 were discussed
- ninth meeting (July, 1991) - a preliminary SWIP DEIS/DPA was submitted to the Steering Committee for review; the addition of several new routing alternatives were discussed as well as the issue of potential visual impacts to Wilderness Study Areas (WSA)
- tenth meeting (March, 1992) - discussion included final review of comments on the preliminary SWIP DEIS/DPA; the Stateline Resource Area of the BLM's Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and the on going desert tortoise consultation and Habitat Conservation Plan
- eleventh meeting (December, 1992) - discussion included comments and responses on the preliminary SWIP FEIS/PPA, content of the Purpose and Need, and the findings of the field review of Leland Harris Spring Complex.

FORMAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

The purpose of the Formal Public Meetings was to receive views and comments regarding the accuracy and adequacy of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Six Public Meetings were held in August 1992 in Idaho, Nevada, and Utah at six locations:

<u>City</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Twin Falls, Idaho	Weston Plaza	August 3rd, 1992
Wells, Nevada	Wells High School	August 4th, 1992
Ely, Nevada	Bristlecone Convention Center	August 5th, 1992
Delta, Utah	City Council Chambers	August 6th, 1992
Caliente, Nevada	Soil Conservation Service Center	August 19th, 1992
Las Vegas, Nevada	BLM District Office	August 20th, 1992

The meetings were announced in the May and June 1992 SWIP Update and distributed to the approximately 3,000 people on the mailing list. Press releases were sent out in July and August, 1992 to 17 newspapers serving the communities in the area to announce the meetings:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Paper</u>	<u>Insertion dates</u>
Boise, Idaho	<u>Idaho Statesman</u>	Wed 7/29
Caliente, Nevada	<u>Lincoln County Record</u>	Week 7/27
		Week 8/3
Cedar City, Utah	<u>Daily Spectrum</u>	Wed 8/5
St. George, Utah	<u>Daily Spectrum</u>	Wed 8/5
Delta, Utah	<u>Millard County Chronicle Progress</u>	Thurs 7/27
Elko, Nevada	<u>Free Press</u>	Wed 7/29
		Fri 7/31
Ely, Nevada	<u>Times</u>	Fri 7/31
		Mon 8/3
Filmore, Utah	<u>Millard County Gazette</u>	Week of 8/3
Las Vegas, Nevada	<u>Sun</u>	Wed 8/5
Las Vegas, Nevada	<u>Review Journal</u>	Thurs 8/6
Nampa, Idaho	<u>Press Tribune</u>	Wed 7/29
Reno, Nevada	<u>Gazette Journal</u>	Wed 7/29
Richfield, Utah	<u>Reaper</u>	Week of 7/27
Salt Lake City, Utah	<u>Deseret News</u>	Wed 7/29
Salt Lake City, Utah	<u>Tribune</u>	Thurs 7/30
Twin Falls, Idaho	<u>Times News</u>	Wed 7/29
		Fri 7/31
Wendover, Nevada	<u>High Desert Advocate</u>	Week of 7/27

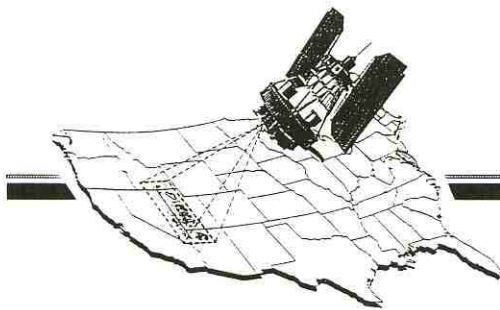
Meeting information flyers were also posted in the community at and around public establishments.

Each meeting began with introductions and a presentation given by a BLM representative with project personnel from the BLM, the IPCo, LADWP and Dames & Moore present. The presentation addressed the project description, purpose and need, the SWIP DEIS/DPA planning process, alternative routes identified, and the project schedule. The meeting then opened up for comments from the public.

A total of 75 people attended the six formal public meetings held in August, 1992. All comments and questions concerning the SWIP DEIS/DPA at the meetings were recorded and have been responded to in Chapter 5 of this document.

Frequently voiced comments included:

- visual impacts to residences
- health and safety
- minimize land use impacts
- property values
- need for the transmission line
- alternatives to the project



CHAPTER 3

MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONAL STUDIES

CHAPTER 3

MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONAL STUDIES

PURPOSE AND NEED

Because of public concern about the purpose and need for the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS/DPA), additional information about the Purpose and Need is presented in this chapter. This information is an expansion of the Purpose and Need described in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Introduction

Today's electric generation and transmission system play a critical role in the nation's economic and social well being. Many utility customers take its operation for granted as they enjoy electric services relatively free of interruption. There is an increasing need for utilities in the western United States to work cooperatively to maintain greater resource and transmission flexibility and enhance service reliability through transmission system interconnections.

Electric utilities are responsible for providing adequate supplies of reliable, economic electricity to their customers. The present load growth in the western United States, coupled with the expense and difficulties of building new generating resources, reinforces the need to provide for inter-regional transfers of energy.

The principal function of any interconnected transmission system is to provide for the reliable transfer of electric energy from one regional electric system to another, including generation from plants at various locations within that regional system to various load centers at other locations. The integration of large and small generating units in a transmission network permits not only efficient economic dispatch of power within regions during normal conditions, but also the transfer of power between regions during emergencies. The strategic importance of transmission is much greater than is indicated by its relative low cost as compared to the overall cost of electricity. Adequate interconnections provide the key to generation resource diversity, sharing of reserve generating capacity, and efficient utilization of conservation and new or existing generating capacity. In short, interconnection is the coordinating medium that makes possible the most efficient use of electrical facilities in any area or region.

Diversity Between Regions of the WSCC

There is a regional need to take advantage of the seasonal diversity which exists between the loads and resources of the Northwest and the Southwest. Purchases and exchanges over the SWIP would help the entire Western Systems Coordinating Council (WSCC) region meet load growth by utilizing existing resources more efficiently. It is this seasonal diversity, specifically between the Arizona-New Mexico Power Area (ANMPA) and the Northwest Power Pool (NWPP) and between the NWPP and the California-Southern Nevada Power Area, that the SWIP is needed to serve. There are adequate

markets in both the NWPP and the Southwest for over 1200 megawatts (MW) of seasonal diversity transmission with a resulting potential for deferring significant generation resource additions.

Figure 3-1 illustrates the projected WSCC regional peak and average loads, generation capability, inter-regional transfer capability, and summer/winter load diversity for the year 2000 (WSCC 1992 IE-411). The generation capacity numbers reflect all generators at their rated capacity, but are not representative of actual available resources at any one time (does not include reserve margin, effects of variable water flows, or the impacts of unplanned outages). For example, in the NWPP region, the reserve margin requirements total approximately 8000 MW. Therefore, the planned available capacity for the year 2000 is 61,000 MW (total installed capacity = 69,000 MW). The available seasonal diversity in this figure is the difference between the peak winter load and the peak summer load of that region. The inter-regional transfer capability shown is the rated capacity expected for the year 2000 less the firm inter-regional generation transfers.

Northwest Power Pool

The NWPP has about 13,200 MW of seasonal load diversity available during the summer peak period. The total summer export capability from the NWPP is about 9200 MW (7900+780+550). During the winter, there is about 13,800 MW of seasonal load diversity available in the California and Arizona power areas. The total winter import capability to the NWPP is about 8900 MW (6775+1560+600). About 3000 MW of seasonal load diversity remains untapped and available for seasonal exchange.

The transfer capability between the NWPP and the California-Southern Nevada Power Area is in two major paths. The northwestern path is made up of the Pacific Alternating Current (AC) Intertie (3-500 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines = 4800 MW north to south and 3675 MW south to north) and the Pacific Direct Current (DC) Intertie (+/- 500kV = 3100 MW bi-directional). The southwestern path is made up of three subcomponents, the Sierra Pacific Power-Pacific Gas and Electric transmission lines (2-120kV lines and 1-60kV transmission line = 160 MW bi-directional), the PacifiCorp-Nevada Power transmission line (345kV = 300 MW north to south), and the Intermountain Transmission System (ITS) DC transmission line (+/-500kV = 1920 MW north to south and 1400 MW south to north). The ITS has a total capability of 1920 MW, however, 1600 MW are reserved for Intermountain Generating Station (IGS). The south to north capability is restricted by two 345kV ITS/PacifiCorp interconnections. In order to utilize this 1920 MW ITS capability, the IGS generation would need to be displaced which is not likely due to its low power production cost.

The transfer capability between the NWPP and the ANMPA is made up of one 230kV PacifiCorp/Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) interconnection and one 345kV PacifiCorp/Arizona Public Service transmission line. Together these transmission lines are rated at 550 MW north to south and 600 MW south to north. The 345kV interconnection capability is usually restricted by ANMPA system transfers south and west of the Four Corners area.

Rocky Mountain Power Area

The transfer capability between the Rocky Mountain Power Area (RMPA) and the NWPP is not significant due to internal transmission constraints. The RMPA has little seasonal diversity.

Northwest Power Pool

generation capacity 69,000 MW
 average load 41,500 MW
 Peak Load: Winter 59,700 MW
 Summer 46,500 MW

Rocky Mountain Power Area

generation capacity 10,500 MW
 average load 5,300 MW
 Peak Load: Winter 7,600 MW
 Summer 7,600 MW

Available
 Summer Diversity
 13,200 MW

Available
 Winter Diversity
 11,200 MW

No Available
 Diversity

Available
 Winter Diversity
 2,600 MW



California - Southern Nevada Power Area

generation capacity 68,700 MW
 average load 34,000 MW
 Peak Load: Winter 43,600 MW
 Summer 54,800 MW

Arizona - New Mexico Power Area

generation capacity 18,400 MW
 average load 9,300 MW
 Peak Load: Winter 12,600 MW
 Summer 15,200 MW

Note: all values in megawatts (MW), peak load excludes interruptable load

<p>— SWIP Projects (A & B) ... Other Proposed Projects (C,D,E)</p>			<p>Transmission Capacity is firm capability less firm inter-area generation transfers.</p>	
Map Symbol	Transmission Project	Transmission Rating (MW)	winter	summer
A	SWIP (Midpoint to Dry Lake)	1200	 * Transfer capability not significant due to internal transmission or no inter-area seasonal diversity.	
B	SWIP (Ely to Delta)	1100		
C	Utah-Nevada (UNTP)	1100		
D	Mead-Adelanto	1200		
E	Mead-Phoenix	1300		

SOURCE: WSCC 1992 IE-411 Report

WSCC Seasonal Diversity Potential for the Year 2000

The transfer capability between the RMPA and the ANMPA is shown as the combination of the 230kV and 345kV transmission lines between Colorado and Arizona-New Mexico. The transmission lines are capable of 550 MW bi-directionally, however, a firm generation integration commitment of 379 MW north to south exists.

Arizona-New Mexico Power Area

The ANMPA has about 2600 MW of seasonal diversity available during the winter peak period. Of this 2600 MW, only about 600 MW are currently usable between the ANMPA and the NWPP.

The transfer capability between ANMPA and the California-Southern Nevada Power Area is about 7000 MW, with nearly half of this capability committed for firm generation integration commitments. This transmission path is generally not significant for seasonal diversity exchanges due to the two regions having coincidental peaks.

Diversity Benefits from Interconnections

Current forecasts of utility resource requirements portray the fact that the future is uncertain and identify steps to reduce the risks resulting from that uncertainty. For the same reasons that investors diversify investment portfolios to minimize the risks associated with individual stocks, utilities seek to diversify their system resources to minimize the risks associated with individual resource options. To reduce the risks associated with uncertainty of load growth, utility planners favor resources (e.g., transmission interconnection, new power plants, or other generation facilities) that can be developed in the shortest possible length of time, or shortest "lead time". Reducing the lead time needed to acquire new resources allows the actual commitment to construct a resource to be made when forecasting uncertainty has been reduced as much as possible. Taking advantage of regional diversity through the SWIP would increase the number of resource options available to a utility and would serve as a tool for reducing the risk of overbuilding or underbuilding generating resources as a result of load and resource uncertainties.

Transmission lines play a major role in managing the costs of an electric system service. Adequate and available transmission capacity allows interaction between supplies and markets for the most economical exchange of power, with benefits including:

- *Diversity of Area and Use* - Over the history of electric system development, diversity was first captured in neighborhoods, then cities and regions as transmission systems were expanded. The fact that the system is used at different times for different purposes means that the broader the area the system encompasses, the fewer generating resources are required to serve it, lowering the total amount of required generation.
- *Market Diversity* - Competitive forces should drive down the cost of the utilities' future resource options as suppliers of generation and conservation gain access to the transmission grid.

- *Fuel and Supply Diversity* - Transmission provides a way to enhance plans for environmental mitigation between regions. For example, generation may be reduced in one region during times when there are air quality concerns or river flows may be increased for migrating salmon. Transmission also provides shifting among fuel supplies (e.g., coal versus natural gas) for cost savings as prices fluctuate or as air emission requirements change.

Conservation and Demand-Side Management

Conservation and other demand-side management programs are expected to reduce, but not eliminate, the region's need for new generating resources. Conservation and demand-side management programs are an integral part of the resource strategy of every utility considering partnership in the SWIP. Regulatory requirements dictate that supply-side and demand-side resource options should be considered on an equal basis in a utility's plan to acquire lowest cost resources. However, conservation does not correspondingly reduce the value of regional transmission for minimizing resource costs.

Even with reduced generating requirements, environmental and economic considerations may require siting new generation at substantial distances from population and load centers, thus requiring transmission such as the SWIP. Regional conservation may be more fully developed given the availability of adequate regional transmission. Without such transmission, the cost effectiveness of conservation programs must be determined on the basis of the avoidable generating resource costs of an individual utility. Utilities having a lower avoided cost may be unable to develop economical conservation resources at the same level as those utilities with a higher avoided cost. With transmission, conservation throughout the region could be developed to the level of the highest avoidable generating costs in the region.

Transmission facilities like the SWIP would contribute to the region's task of meeting future load growth most efficiently with the least amount of new generating capacity. It is important to recognize the seasonal load diversity within the region. Transmission would allow existing resources to be used to serve seasonal load requirements in one part of the region while also meeting new load growth requirements in another part of the region. Therefore, total regional resource requirements (e.g., generation) can be reduced by transmission. Transmission, such as the SWIP, should be considered as a resources option along with new generating resources.

Utility Cost Minimization Initiatives

The goal of electric utilities is to provide reliable electrical service at the lowest reasonable infrastructure cost. Both state and federal regulatory agencies establish rules and review the proposed actions of utility companies to assure that electrical consumers are provided service at the lowest possible costs. Recent industry initiatives to minimize costs have focused on three areas:

- *Integrated Least Cost Planning* - Utilities are required by state utility commissions to consider both conservation and new generation options equally in developing a resource plan that achieves the lowest cost to electrical consumers.

- *Free Enterprise in the Generation Market* - Additional competition in the generation market brought about by independent power producers allows the market's competitive forces to drive down the cost of new generation. Generation represents the largest cost component of the electric power system.
- *Environmental Costs* - As part of the Clean Air Act, governmental and regulatory bodies are attempting to establish values for emissions from power plants to quantify and reduce "total societal costs" associated with resource options.

Environmental and Consumer Benefit Tests

Transmission lines must meet two tests to be shown beneficial to society: environmental impacts and consumer benefits. The first test is to determine if the potential impacts of the transmission line would be environmentally acceptable, and the second is the consumer benefit test. Until a project has cleared environmental hurdles it is not considered prudent to include it in least cost plan alternatives. Utilities cannot make plans to meet service requirements without some confidence that a resource option will be possible. Further, to do so would presume a favorable decision through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

As the nation continues to reduce dependence on imported oil, renewable energy resources such as wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, and hydropower which may be available only at fixed sites need to be encouraged through better access to markets. In order to economically develop these resources, as well as other independently developed power plants, their developers must have access to transmission facilities to move the power to utilities that need additional sources of power.

The SWIP could facilitate transactions which help protect the environment. For example, transmission contracts could be structured which redistribute inter-regional generation in such a way that northwest river flows could aid in the salmon recovery process. There are currently many proposals being considered regarding the operation of federal dams on the Columbia River. It is unknown how Columbia River operations and salmon recovery plans will affect northwest-southwest power exchanges at this time. As environmental costs become an important consideration in the resource planning process, low environmental cost (green) resources become more important. The ability to move these green resources to the load centers would be expanded with the addition of the SWIP.

The second test is the consumer benefit test. Utilities must demonstrate to their regulators that a transmission line would reduce the total costs, thereby benefiting the consumers. Once the project (i.e., the SWIP) is permitted, utilities may then begin including the project in their least cost plans. When and if a sufficient number of utilities have demonstrated the cost effectiveness of the project to their regulators, those project participants would move the project forward (i.e., implement that part of their least cost plan).

Generation vs. Transmission

When utilities consider whether to jointly build generation and share it via transmission, or build redundant plants in their respective service territories, they must consider:

- power plant construction cost
- transmission line construction cost
- the extent to which generation can be shared because of regional diversity
- transmission energy losses

For example, if we assume that a power plant is needed for summer air conditioning in the Southwest, and in the winter needed for light and heat-related loads in the Northwest, there is potential for sharing a generating station.

"Despite the progress of the last 10 years, the region enters the 1990s without the capability to successfully run conservation programs in all sectors of the economy and without an inventory of resources that can be developed quickly. Even with moderate growth, the region will need an additional 2000 MW by the turn of the century. Of all the options the region faces, inaction would expose the people and the economy to the greatest risk." (Northwest Power Planning Council, 1991).

In response to this, northwest utilities are soliciting proposals for new generating stations and conservation projects during the 1990s. The Idaho Power Company (IPCo) is sponsoring conservation programs and constructing power plant enhancements. California and Nevada utilities are taking similar actions. Desert Southwest utilities anticipate similar requirements later in the decade.

There is wide recognition in the electric utility industry that new transmission would make the best use of the scarce capital available for resource development by providing for the sharing of resources. There are new transmission projects proposed and being built to provide additional capacity between the Northwest and California, and between the Desert Southwest and California. The SWIP would increase the capacity between the Northwest and Southwest. That interconnection is important to extend the cost savings of transmission to the West.

Construction Costs

As part of their least cost planning, utilities routinely examine the average cost of bringing additional capacity into their systems. Least cost options are determined, in part, by evaluating the cost per kilowatt for various resources:

- a coal plant costs approximately \$1200 per kilowatt
- a natural gas plant costs approximately \$600 per kilowatt
- conservation may cost approximately \$900 per kilowatt (conservation in one region can free resources to supply another region in lieu of new generation)
- transmission costs approximately \$300 per kilowatt (assume 500 miles at 1200 MW capacity is approximately \$360,000,000)

Note: These numbers are conceptual order of magnitude estimates and do not reflect any particular project costs.

Using these examples: (1) a coal generating station with one fourth (300/1200) of its output shared between regions would justify transmission, rather than building plants in two locations, (2) a natural gas plant with one half (300/600) of its output shared would justify transmission, and (3) the transmission would be justified if it would free one third (300/900) of the energy saved from conservation for use in another region.

Losses on a transmission system of this distance are typically 4 percent to 6 percent of the energy transmitted. The cost of losses would adjust the above ratios to determine whether the transmission was justified.

Transmission System Reliability

The WSCC is an organization of utilities throughout the western U.S. that was organized in August 1967. It establishes reliability criteria and provides the coordination which is essential for operating and planning a reliable and adequate electric power system for the western part of the continental U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

Due to the vastness and diverse characteristics of the region, WSCC's members are faced with unique and challenging problems both in coordinating the day-to-day interconnected system operation and the long-range planning needed to provide reliable and affordable electric service to more than 59 million people in WSCC's service territory.

It has become apparent to the WSCC and its member utilities that the bulk power system in the western U.S. and parts of Canada has evolved into a highly integrated interconnected system.

The SWIP would significantly improve the reliability of the regional power system. A WSCC study indicated the potential for voltage instability in several areas under transmission or generation outage conditions during peak demand periods. Voltage instability can result in the uncontrolled loss of customer load. Steps are being taken to mitigate the problem by installing new transmission equipment and interconnecting segregated systems, like the Intermountain area, to more stable regional systems. The SWIP would directly reinforce the Intermountain area which would improve system reliability and reduce the likelihood of isolating areas from the regional system. It would provide additional transmission capacity to help support the electrical integrity of the western system in the event of the loss of critical generation or transmission facilities.

By interconnecting the SWIP and the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP), the SWIP Crosstie (hereafter referred to as the Ely to Delta segment) would provide an alternative path if either transmission line were curtailed due to scheduled or unscheduled outages. This would allow for optimal transfer capability ratings for the SWIP and the UNTP systems. The resulting interconnected system would have a larger transfer capacity than would be possible if these projects were not interconnected.

The total electrical strength of all ties between the northern and southern portions of the transmission system in the West would significantly increase with the construction of the SWIP. This would reduce the potential for and the severity of electrical disturbances during operating emergencies. Reliability would be increased by providing an additional transmission path between Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. The geographical and electrical separation between existing north-south transmission facilities and the SWIP would be substantial. This separation would increase system reliability by reducing the portion

of all major north-south ties that can be disrupted by a single event, such as an earthquake, storm, or vandalism.

Regional Economic Benefits of the SWIP

Capturing current and future efficiencies within the electric power system of the western United States would provide regional economic benefits. Interconnecting the systems of the Northwest and Southwest with firm transmission access via the SWIP's proposed "open marketplace" concept would allow the regions' utilities to realize these efficiencies. Open access to other regions would facilitate creative energy transactions which, driven by the forces of the open market, would take economic advantage of the load and resource diversities between the regions. Energy transactions between interconnected utilities would better use existing internal transmission capacity. These transactions would benefit the wheeling utility by creating revenues that can be applied against its internal system costs, including seasonal exchanges, resource coordination, nonfirm sales and purchases, firm sales and purchases, and reserve sharing. Interconnections between utilities would also provide other benefits including improved system reliability and environmental enhancements.

The addition of the SWIP would allow utilities in the Northwest and Southwest to add capacity and reliability to the western electrical system at an economical price. Specifically, the SWIP would fulfill the major needs as outlined below:

Seasonal Exchanges

Seasonal exchanges provide benefits by taking advantage of the load pattern diversities between regions. By directly interconnecting and exchanging power between the winter peaking Northwest and the summer peaking Southwest, both regions would benefit from increased operating efficiencies of existing resources. Seasonal exchange transactions could reduce operating expenses through fuel diversity, as well as reduce capital cost expenditures by deferring costly new generating resources.

The SWIP would allow the Northwest, the Southwest, and the Intermountain areas to take advantage of the various load pattern diversities including variations in electrical demand and supply within the region. The Ely to Delta segment would create an additional bi-directional transfer path between the Northwest and the Intermountain regions of the West. Currently, these areas are interconnected only by lower voltage transmission lines with limited electric load-carrying capability. It would also create an additional bi-directional transfer path between the Intermountain area and the Southwest including southern Nevada. This is an area that is rapidly growing and is in need of additional energy and capacity resources to serve its native load.

Resource Coordination

The SWIP would enable regional resources with diverse generating characteristics to operate jointly in a manner that increases overall operating efficiencies. For example, the Northwest could use the surplus peaking capacity and storage capability of its hydro system in conjunction with the base loaded thermal resources of the Southwest, thus increasing load-carrying capability as well as reducing

production costs. Resource coordination agreements, like seasonal exchanges, benefit the utilities by both reducing operating expenses and potentially deferring new generating resources.

Nonfirm Sales and Purchases

Nonfirm sales and purchases provide benefits by lowering the total power production expenses of the parties involved. Nonfirm or economy transactions accomplish this by taking advantage of the diversity in incremental production costs between generating resources, such as displacing oil resources with coal resources or displacing coal with hydro. The purchasing party benefits from lower production expenses than it would have otherwise incurred, while the selling party benefits from the revenues received that are in excess of its incremental production costs. Nonfirm transactions are generally short-term in nature, ranging from the next hour to several months, since incremental costs are very sensitive to the uncertainty of future load requirements, generating unit availability, and fuel costs or availability, such as spot gas prices or winter snow pack.

Firm Sales and Purchases

Firm agreements tend to be longer in term and place a higher level of obligation on both parties. As such, they are included in the utility's long-term planning process. The economic benefits derived from firm sales and purchases are therefore somewhat broader than those of the nonfirm market. Firm transactions benefit the purchaser by deferring large capital outlays associated with the acquisition of a new generating resource. They benefit the seller by sharing the output and the fixed costs of an existing resource until such time as the seller can fully utilize the resource.

Reserve Sharing

Reserve margin is generating capacity that must be available to respond to emergency conditions. Additional transmission capacity between the Northwest and Southwest would enhance the utilities' abilities to meet these reserve margin requirements by using the load and resources diversities that exist between regions. Thus, reserve sharing would benefit the utilities by optimizing the existing and future regional resources in meeting reserve margins.

Existing and Future Generation

Utilities attempting to reduce their need for new generation construction look to existing generating stations with surplus capacity. Many of these plants, designed for forecasted demands that were not realized due to shifts in growth and energy conservation efforts, are oversized for current demand. They now provide cost-effective alternatives to new plant construction. Regional transmission access to these plants is either non-existent or constrained by systems currently loaded to capacity. The economics of pursuing transmission facilities to access regional surpluses to displace more costly generation justifies a regional intertie network necessary for cost-effective load management.

Bonanza Generating Station (Bonanza)

The Deseret Generation and Transmission Cooperative (DG&T), a Utah cooperative, has constructed and operates Bonanza, a coal-fired generating station consisting of a 400 MW unit, plus possible construction of a second 400 MW unit. The Bonanza plant has a dedicated coal mine with a dedicated rail system. The Bonanza site is approximately 7 miles northwest of Bonanza, Utah.

Nevada is uniquely positioned between Rocky Mountain and Northwest energy sources and California and Southwest consumption centers. As such, having open market substations as well as access to these stations (e.g., the Ely area) is essential in this keystone state. The Ely to Delta segment would provide a critical path for the DG&T to access these marketplace substations in Nevada where energy transactions can take place.

Intermountain Generating Station (IGS)

The IGS was constructed on behalf of a group of Utah, California, Nevada, Wyoming municipalities, rural electric cooperatives, and a privately owned company to supply their respective communities with a firm supply of electrical energy. The IGS, as proposed, was to construct and operate four 750 MW, coal-fired units, two of which are currently operational. The IGS currently supplies Los Angeles and other southern California cities with over 25 percent of their electrical energy needs over the 500kV DC transmission line.

The Ely to Delta segment would create a supplementary transmission link to the IGS which would reduce the potential for a serious electrical disturbance to the interconnected Utah electrical system. Presently, a lower voltage transmission line interconnects the IGS to the electrical system in Utah. However, this transmission line is less robust and requires a complicated remedial action scheme and relays designed to protect Utah's electrical system(s) from a DC transmission failure.

The Ely to Delta segment would also reduce the potential for, and severity of, electrical disturbances to the existing and future IGS generation units.

White Pine Power Project (WPPP)

The WPPP, although no construction dates have been scheduled, is a major option in future resource planning for the City of Los Angeles and other metropolitan areas.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), as many utilities throughout the country, has implemented conservation, load management, and customer energy efficiency programs. The LADWP has projected a deferment of 600 MW of supply-side resource requirements by the year 2000 as a result of implementing demand-side management programs. When these programs are combined with the SWIP transmission system, they would provide access to the surplus generation in the Northwest and Intermountain regions of the country. The LADWP could defer the need for major new generating plants during the next ten years.

Due to the financial risk associated with the large capital expenditures required to build new generating facilities, utilities are reluctant to commit to large new projects. The cost of the transmission system associated with generation projects is a relatively small percentage (10 to 15 percent) of the total project cost, yet the billions of dollars invested in a power plant can be held hostage awaiting transmission system permitting, approval, and construction. One factor that often impairs the ability to install new resources in a timely manner is the long lead times required to fulfill the permitting process. Therefore, these transmission lines must be assured or be in place before the decision to construct future WPPP units can be made.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Anticipated Utility Projects in the Ely Area

Scenario 1 - Cutoff Route to North Steptoe/Robinson Summit

In this scenario the SWIP Ely to Delta segment would utilize the Cutoff Route. The least-impact Cutoff Route could be constructed to the North Steptoe Substation siting area and then southwest to the Robinson Summit Substation site (refer to Figure 3-2). This route would not require a substation at the North Steptoe site but would allow a potential interconnection of the Ely to Delta segment with the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment at Robinson Summit. In this scenario there would be two lines from North Steptoe to Robinson Summit.

If the environmental impacts would be assumed to be similar on the Cutoff and the 230 kilovolt (kV) Corridor Routes, as described on page 2-53 of the SWIP Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA), then the environmental impacts would be incrementally higher between North Steptoe and Robinson Summit because of the second line. The 230kV Corridor Route would then become the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

If the White Pine Power Project (WPPP) is constructed there would be one additional line built from the North Steptoe area to Robinson Summit and two additional lines south from there. Neither the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment nor the Ely to Delta segment would necessarily interconnect at the WPPP, however, all three lines could be interconnected at Robinson Summit.

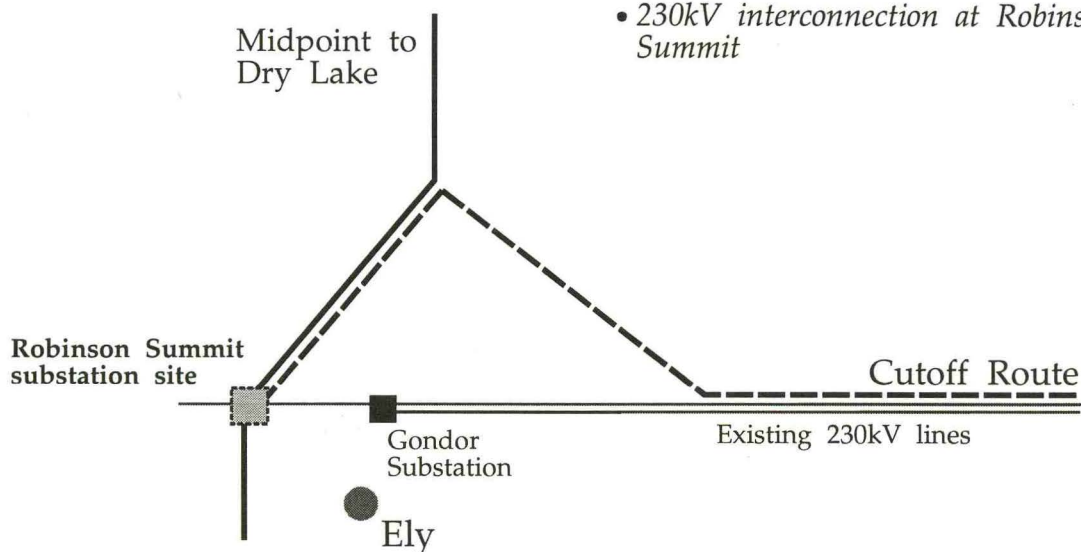
Scenario 2 - Cutoff Route to North Steptoe Substation

In this scenario the Cutoff Route would be constructed for the Ely to Delta segment and the marketplace substation would be constructed at North Steptoe. Then a 230kV line would need to be constructed from the Gondor Substation to North Steptoe to provide the future the SWIP interconnection with the 230kV system (refer to Figure 3-3). This would likely result in a 230kV line from Gondor Substation to the Robinson Summit area then paralleling the SWIP line to North Steptoe. This scenario would result in impacts similar to the Cutoff Route to Robinson Summit scenario (see above). If the 230kV interconnection occurred, again the 230kV Corridor Route would be environmentally preferred over the Cutoff Route.

If the WPPP is constructed, there could be four lines from North Steptoe to the Robinson Summit area (3-500kV lines and 1-230kV line), then 3-500kV lines south from Robinson Summit. This scenario would result in the most cumulative impacts of all of the scenarios. The only advantage of this scenario over the Cutoff Route to North Steptoe/Robinson Summit scenario (above) is that only one substation site would be needed.

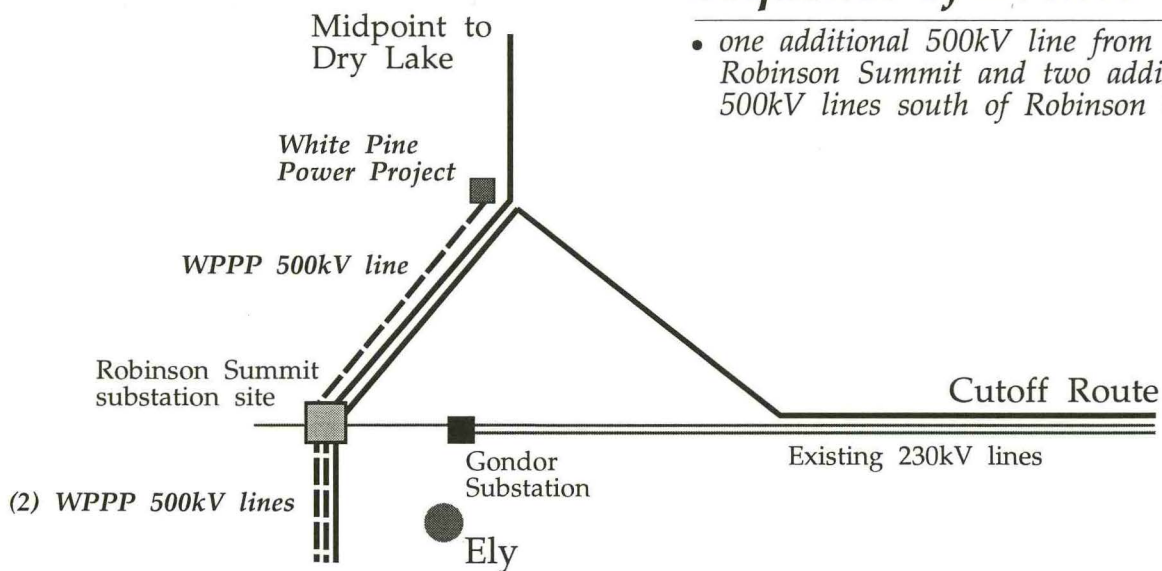
Sequence of Events

- 500kV connection of the Cutoff Route at Robinson Summit
- 230kV interconnection at Robinson Summit



Sequence of Events

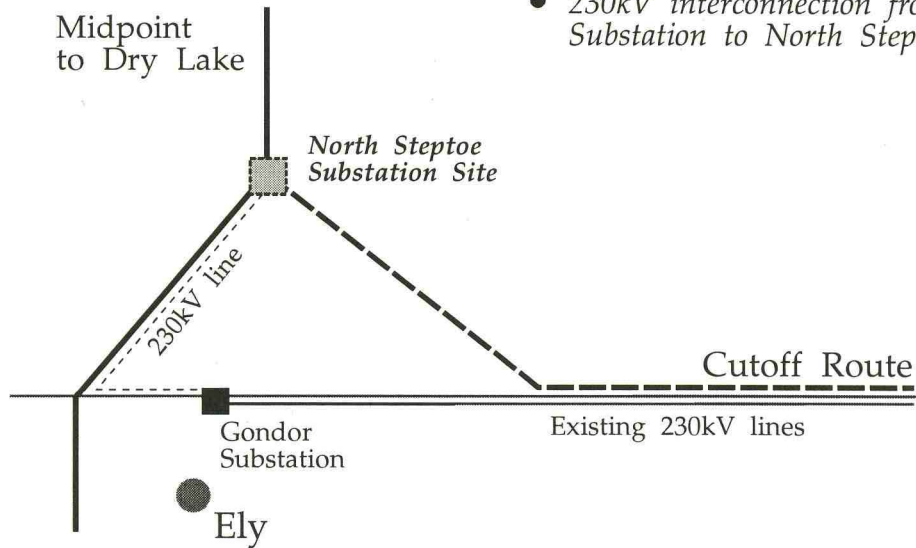
- one additional 500kV line from WPPP to Robinson Summit and two additional 500kV lines south of Robinson Summit.



Scenerio 1 Cutoff Route to North Steptoe/Robinson Summit

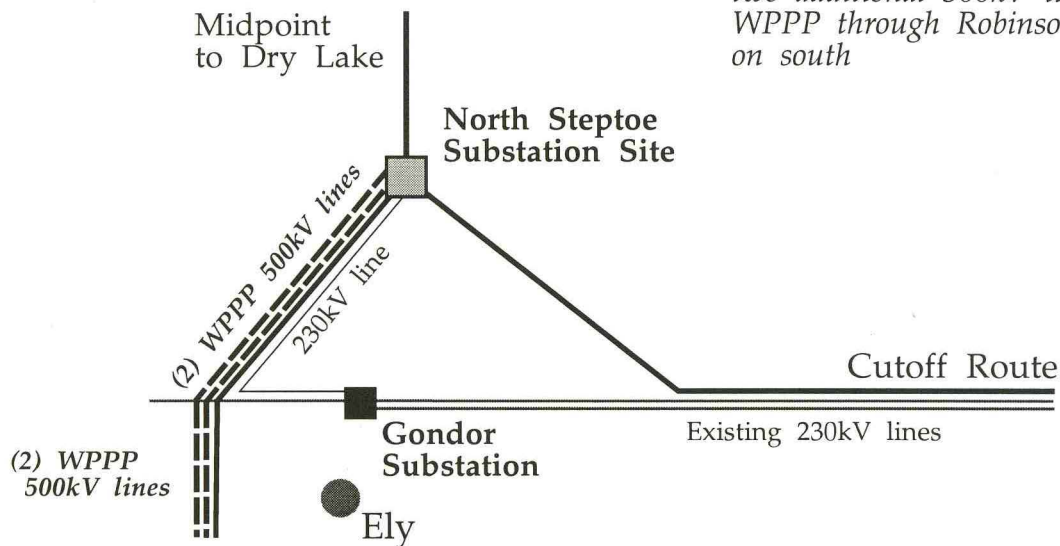
Sequence of Events

- 500kV connection of the Cutoff Route to North Steptoe.
- 230kV interconnection from Gondor Substation to North Steptoe



Sequence of Events

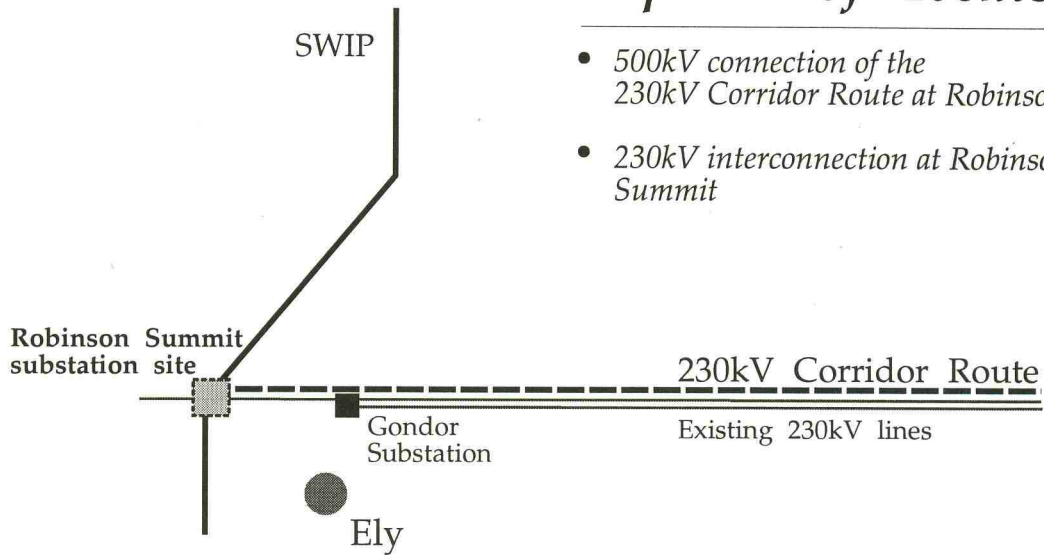
- two additional 500kV lines from WPPP through Robinson Summit and on south



Scenerio 2 Cutoff Route to North Steptoe Substation

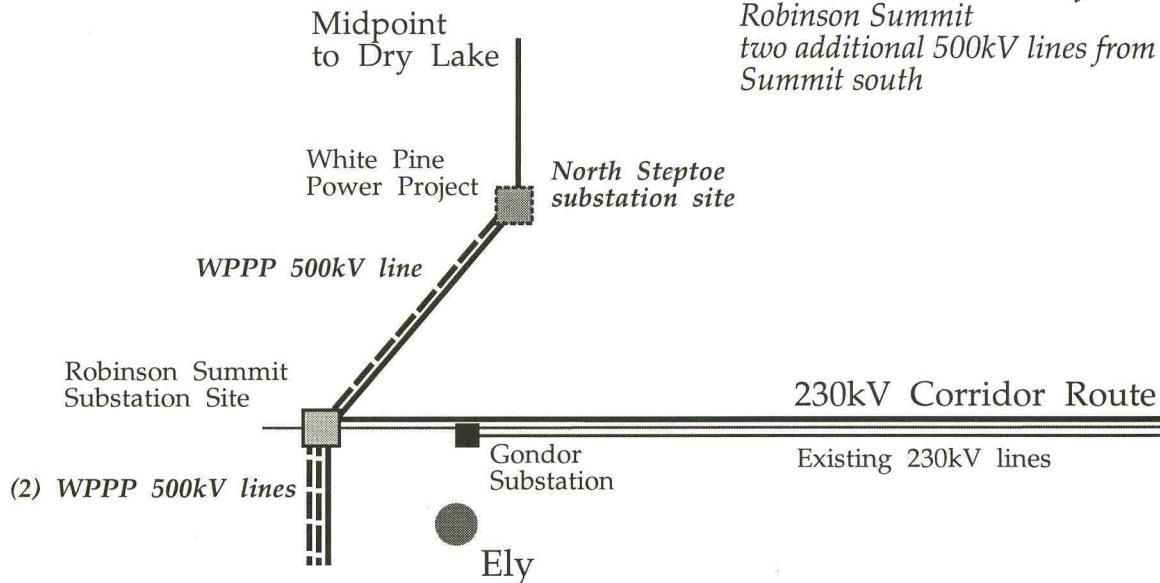
Sequence of Events

- 500kV connection of the 230kV Corridor Route at Robinson Summit
- 230kV interconnection at Robinson Summit



Sequence of Events

- North Steptoe substation is constructed w/ WPPP and Midpoint to Dry Lake is interconnected.
- one additional 500kV line from WPPP to Robinson Summit
two additional 500kV lines from Robinson Summit south



Scenerio 3 230kV Corridor Route to Robinson Summit

Scenario 3 - 230kV Corridor Route to Robinson Summit

With this scenario the Ely to Delta segment would utilize the 230kV Corridor Route and the substation would be constructed at Robinson Summit where the interconnection with the 230kV system could occur (refer to Figure 3-4). If the 230kV interconnection were to occur, this scenario would have the least cumulative impacts to this point in the "buildout".

If the WPPP is constructed, the SWIP could interconnect at the North Steptoe area (at WPPP), one new 500kV line would be constructed from WPPP to Robinson Summit and two new 500kV lines would be constructed south of there. If the WPPP were constructed this scenario would cause the least cumulative environmental impacts.

Environmental Comparison of the Scenarios

The following table illustrates the environmental preferences of the expected future utility development in the Ely area.

Summary of Cumulative Effects Environmental Preference in the Ely Area

	SWIP (Midpoint to Dry Lake and the Crosstie)	230kV Interconnection	White Pine Power Project
Scenario 1			
Scenario 2			
Scenario 3			

Environmental Preference

	Most Preferred
	Second-Most Preferred
	Least Preferred

The Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project

The proposed substation in the Dry Lake area would be the southern terminus of the SWIP. In 1990 the BLM asked the Idaho Power Company (IPCo) to help coordinate the transmission needs of utility companies with new transmission facilities planned in southern Nevada, particularly those needing transmission access to the McCullough Substation area located south of Boulder City, Nevada. The regional utilities developed a corridor concept which would maximize the capacity of the corridor while minimizing environmental impacts. Subsequent discussions with the Nevada Power Company (NPC) and other utilities resulted in the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT) project, which is planned to be proposed to the Nevada Public Utility Commission in July 1993 by NPC. This approximately 53 mile project would connect the proposed SWIP substation in the Dry Lake area to a new marketplace substation in the McCullough Substation area. Two high capacity 500kV transmission lines would connect the two substations of the "open marketplace". The combined capacity of over 3000 megawatts (MW) would allow utilities to interconnect at either substation and conduct transactions.

Although the MAT would be operated by NPC, several other regional utilities would likely be participants in the project. The purpose and need for the MAT would be to provide a major electrical interconnection point for the Inland Southwest, with connection points on its north end (i.e., the proposed Dry Lake Substation site) and south end (i.e., the proposed marketplace substation near McCullough Substation). This project would also provide capacity for NPC's internal system needs. The combined capacity rating of over 3000 MW would be possible because of the relatively short distance between the two proposed marketplace substations. The high capacity of this system would allow the planned transmission lines to connect on either end, while minimizing the number of lines through this sensitive area. The MAT is proposed to be in service in 1997.

There are two major potential routing alternatives for this project. The first would run straight south through the Apex development parallel to the proposed Utah-Nevada Transmission Project 500kV line, then cutting southeast to the Gypsum Wash area, and then south through the Sunrise Mountain and Henderson areas. The second major routing alternative would cross Interstate 15 at the north end of the Dry Lake range and run straight south paralleling the Intermountain Power Project (IPP)-Adelanto 500kV Direct Current (DC) line and the Navajo-McCullough 500kV line to the Sunrise Mountain and Henderson areas.

The SWIP's southern connection to the proposed Dry Lake Substation would require an interconnection with the proposed marketplace substation. The Notice to Proceed for the construction of the SWIP, from Ely to Dry Lake, would be contingent on the approval of a transmission facility between the Dry Lake Substation and the proposed marketplace substation. The Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT) has been proposed by Nevada Power Company to meet this and other interconnection needs.

The SWIP may be built in phases if market or financial conditions warrant. The portion of the SWIP from Midpoint Substation to Ely (Midpoint to Dry Lake segment) may be the first phase developed.

Also refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Potential Fiber Optic Ground Wire

To protect conductors from direct lightning strikes, two overhead ground wires, 3/8 to 1/2 inch in diameter, would be installed on the top of the towers. Electrical current from lightning strikes would be transferred through the ground wires and structures into the ground. There is an opportunity to install ground wire with fiber optic capability to serve the needs of commercial communication companies rather than traditional ground wire. Further, the fiber optic ground wire could also be used to supplement the communication needs of the SWIP. However, the planned microwave communication system would be the primary communication system.

If installed, access to the fiber optic ground wire by a commercial communications company would only be allowed upon completion of all environmental permitting activities (e.g., NEPA) and obtaining the right-of-way. Regeneration stations, which are typically small concrete buildings approximately 10 feet by 10 feet, would be needed at 20-40 mile intervals along the transmission line right-of-way. They would likely be placed on or immediately adjacent to the SWIP right-of-way.

Similar to the conductors, ground wire would be strung using powered pulling equipment at one end and powered braking or tensioning equipment at the other end of a conductor segment as shown on Figure 2-5 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Sites for tensioning equipment and pulling equipment would be approximately 2 miles apart. If a fiber optic ground wire is installed rather than conventional ground wire, the construction methods would be the same. The appearance of a fiber optic ground wire is the same as conventional ground wire. The regeneration stations would likely cause insignificant visual impacts.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES AND INFORMATION

Analysis of the No-Action Alternative

Information and analysis about the No-Action Alternative is presented here as a supplement to the section analyzing the No-Action Alternative in Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 2-10 and 2-11. Within this section the potential impacts associated with No-Action are assessed.

Biology

Selection of the No-Action alternative would have the effect of creating no project related impacts to biological resources in the States of Idaho, Nevada, or Utah. Impacts that would not occur under this alternative are varied and include short and long term losses of habitat to a wide array of wildlife species resulting from construction roads and disturbance at tower sites and ancillary facilities (e.g., line pulling and tensioning sites and equipment storage yards). In addition to short term impacts to wildlife, some populations of rare plant species would not be affected under this alternative.

Long term impacts, both direct and indirect, that would be avoided under the No-Action alternative include permanent commitment of small amounts of wildlife and plant habitat to transmission line tower footings, potentially increased OHV use along transmission line roads (even after closure of such roads), a potential for limited bird mortality resulting from collisions with conductors and static lines, and creation of hunting or nesting sites for predatory bird species.

In southern Nevada, the federally listed desert tortoise would suffer no direct impacts from short or long term disturbance of habitat, no permanent loss of habitat to transmission line tower footings, and no harassment, injury, or mortality from construction-related activity. Potential indirect benefits of this alternative include no project-associated, unintended, increases in public access to tortoise habitat or from activities associated with operation and maintenance of the transmission line. Impacts from increases in public access could include further habitat degradation from unauthorized off-road vehicle activity, direct mortality from tortoises being crushed by vehicles, increased mortality from vandalism (e.g., shooting of tortoises), and increased illegal collecting of tortoises for pets.

In northern Nevada, and to some extent, southern Idaho, the No-Action alternative would provide both direct and indirect benefits to local populations of sage grouse. Although it is likely that direct impacts to crucial sage grouse wintering and strutting areas can be avoided by judicious tower placement, there may be some impact to these habitat features. The primary indirect benefit to sage grouse from this alternative would be that transmission line towers would not be present to provide hunting perches for golden eagles, or other birds such as ravens, to prey on sage grouse during particularly vulnerable segments of their life cycle.

The No-Action alternative may also result in indirect benefit to big game species. In the absence of the project, individual pronghorn antelope, mule deer, bighorn sheep, and elk may realize net benefits through no increases in the potential for human access to habitat areas used by these species at various times of the year. However, the No-Action alternative may not result in measurable benefit to regional populations of these species.

The No-Action alternative may also result in no net benefit accruing to some species and result in a scenario that is reflected by the currently existing environment. The introduction of transmission line towers into some areas may provide nesting and hunting sites for some species (e.g., some species of hawks) where none currently exist. Conversely, the No-Action alternative may be of benefit to individual birds of prey inasmuch as perched birds and nests on transmission line towers are highly visible, making them more vulnerable to illegal shooting by humans.

Some particularly sensitive habitats and the wildlife and plants that occur there (e.g., the Leland Harris spring complex in Juab County, Utah) may realize beneficial indirect effects from this alternative. In the case of the Leland Harris springs, most notable would be the absence of any project related impacts to the springs and wetlands associated with them. Secondary, indirect beneficial impact may accrue to this area by virtue of the entire planning process for this project, which has brought heightened attention to the degraded nature of the existing environment at this sensitive site.

Cultural Resources

The No-Action Alternative would result in continued management of cultural resources in accordance with current agency programs. No intensive surveys would be undertaken along an approved construction corridor and most of the estimated 200 to 400 cultural resources likely to be present probably would not be discovered and recorded in the near future. None of these resources would be affected by the transmission line construction activities, nor would the setting of these resources be altered by introduction of a new transmission line. No archaeological or historical studies would be undertaken nor would other types of measures be implemented to mitigate the impacts of constructing the proposed transmission line. The public accessibility of the region would not be enhanced by construction of access roads and therefore cultural resources are unlikely to be threatened by increased vandalism or inadvertent damage as a result of more visitation.

The No-Action Alternative would be similar to the Existing Environment (refer to Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

Visual Resources

The No-Action Alternative would not alter the Visual Resources beyond that already described in the existing environment (refer to Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

Land Uses

The No-Action Alternative would not affect present land uses as described in the existing environment in Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Soils/Geology/Paleontology

The No-Action Alternative would not alter the Soils/Geology/Paleontology beyond that already described in the existing environment (refer to Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

Recreation Resources

The No-Action Alternative would not create any additional recreation access beyond that already described in the existing environment (refer to Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

Wilderness/WSAs

The No-Action Alternative would not alter the Wilderness/WSAs beyond that already described in the existing environment (refer to Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

Electric and Magnetic Field Effects

The No-Action Alternative would not alter the Electric and Magnetic Field Effects beyond that already described in the existing environment. Refer to Table 4-5 and 4-6 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a comparison of Electric and Magnetic Field Effects that currently exist with Electric and Magnetic Field Effects that would exist if the SWIP were constructed, also refer to Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Socioeconomics

With the No-Action Alternative the cost of power may be increased within the western U.S. over time because of the inability for the utilities to implement least-cost planning alternatives (i.e., the SWIP). The tax bases of the counties under the No-Action Alternative would be the same as the existing environment, refer to Table 4-4 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and Chapter 4 page 4-14 of the SWIP FEIS/PPA for a description of estimated county tax revenues that would be foregone by county residents if the SWIP is not constructed (refer to Chapter 3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

Grazing

For grazing lessees the No-Action Alternative would be an adverse impact because of less access for rangeland purposes. It would also be a beneficial impact to the lessee because the No-Action Alternative would also provide less access onto rangeland by the public, and therefore less disruption to grazing operations, less chance of vandalism, and less chance of harassment of domestic livestock.

Recent EMF Research Results

Additional information has been provided on electromagnetic field (EMF) research which has been published since the SWIP Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA). For a complete discussion of EMFs, please refer to the Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

In September 1992, two Swedish residential and occupational EMF studies were released. One case-control study investigated cancer in both children and adults living near high voltage transmission lines in Sweden during a 25-year period. The Swedish researchers found a weak association between historical EMF exposure and leukemia in children, but could find no evidence of an increased risk for adults. The occupational study's results showed a modest association for both leukemia and brain tumors in adults who had occupational exposures to EMFs. The researchers concluded that the results of the studies provide some support for an association between EMF and cancer development.

In October 1992, the Danish Cancer Registry released preliminary results from their own EMF studies. They paralleled their Swedish colleagues with one childhood and one occupational study. Their findings, however, did not support those of the Swedish study. For childhood leukemia, the Danish study results do not support a conclusion of an elevated risk from EMF exposure. Nor was a leukemia exposure-response trend evident. The occupational study, on the other hand, reports an increased risk of leukemia in working adults exposed to continuously elevated EMFs. The reason for this increase is not clear. In addition to magnetic fields, other factors may also be present in the work environment.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) has analyzed the Swedish studies and finds that they contain important new information and innovative measurement techniques that better identify the exposure variables. The Swedish studies are also consistent with other studies that have found a correlation. However, there are weaknesses. In the residential study, there was a relatively small number of cases that estimated the leukemia risk, making it difficult to draw statistically significant conclusions. Additionally, the long term exposure tracked over the 25 year period necessitated estimations that did not take into account possible exposures from other sources. The Swedish occupational study, however, did adjust for exposures to various other environmental factors. The Edison Electrical Institute (EEI) also notes that although the studies were credible and thoroughly researched, they were incomplete and showed no definite link between EMFs and cancer.

Right-of-Way

Right-of-Way Width Requirement and Grounding

A right-of-way width of 200 feet is required to accommodate the conductor blowout (i.e., swinging of the conductor midway between towers) due to wind, guy wires and anchors, and maintenance clearances at the tower sites. All power lines produce EMFs. These fields produce static charges on conductive objects within a certain distance from the line. The amount of charge depends on the conductive object's size, shape, and orientation to the line. These static charges can be eliminated by either using nonconductive materials or by grounding the conductive objects that would be of sufficient size to produce a charge. Buildings or structures with conductive surfaces located outside of the right-of-way, but within 200 feet of the assumed centerline, would be grounded. Buildings or

structures beyond 200 feet would be reviewed in accordance with the National Electric Safety Code (NESC) to determine grounding requirements.

The NESC requires grounding "as one of the means of safeguarding employees and the public from injury that may be caused by electric potential." The grounding standards of the Idaho Power Company (IPCo) exceed the NESC requirements. IPCo grounds all buildings, fences, and other structures with metal surfaces located within 200 feet of the assumed centerline of transmission lines. Typically, residential buildings located 200 feet outside the assumed centerline would not require grounding. The IPCo also grounds all metal irrigation systems that parallel a transmission lines for distances of 1000 feet or more within 100 feet of the assumed centerline. If grounding is required outside the right-of-way, a temporary use permit or landowner consent would be obtained as necessary. Grounding of fences, buildings and other structures would be fully detailed in the SWIP Construction, Operation, and Maintenance (COM) Plan.

Right-of-Way Separation between the SWIP and the UNTP

Where the SWIP would parallel the proposed Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP), the rights-of-way of the two transmission systems would need sufficient separation to meet reliability and outage criteria of the Western States Coordinating Council (WSCC) (also refer to the transmission system reliability section in the updated Purpose and Need in this chapter and to page 1-2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Without adequate separation the criteria considers the simultaneous outage of the SWIP and the UNTP to be a credible event or an event that has a significant likelihood of occurring. The simultaneous loss of the SWIP and the UNTP under heavy transfer conditions could precipitate a major electrical system disturbance resulting in a cascading failure of the western power system. Building and operating the system in this manner would be inconsistent with the WSCC reliability criteria.

The projects must (1) reduce capacity (which has the effect of rendering one project economically impractical), (2) provide measures to avert system breakup (considered technically and economically impractical), or (3) construct the projects so a simultaneous outage is not credible (e.g., use adequate circuit separation). While the latter course is preferable to the project participants, the specific amount of separation required to achieve this determination has not been defined in the criteria. However, based on the terrain and environmental considerations in the area of parallel right-of-way, it is believed that 2,000 feet would be adequate.

Each right-of-way evaluation or request within the WSCC system should consider the specific line combinations to determine whether a specific separation is required. The issue is the credibility of a simultaneous loss of the circuits involved. The WSCC criteria state:

"the credibility of loss of a particular set of lines will depend upon the total distance of common corridor shared by the lines and upon the vulnerability of the circuits over that distance to a common mode failure. Considerations for this vulnerability assessment will include line design, length, location, whether forested, agricultural, mountainous, etc., outage history, operational guides, and separation. For example, some utilities use separation by more than the span length as adequate to designate the circuits as being in separate corridors."

This issue is not new. For example, the Third Pacific 500kV AC Intertie requested and received miles of separation between it and the existing two 500kV interties in forested areas. This separation was

required to allow adequate response time to adjust the system following the loss of the existing lines and a potential loss of the third 500kV line. Similar to the SWIP and the UNTP, the consequences of such an outage would be wide spread outages in the WSCC system. Without this separation, that project probably would not have been feasible.

The reason for separating the SWIP and the UNTP lines is to meet the WSCC reliability criteria for regional transmission facilities. Placing these lines closer together or on the same double circuit tower could result in a considerably lower capacity rating that would render the projects economically infeasible. The capacity rating of the SWIP line would not be permitted if the project developer does not comply with WSCC separation requirements.

Double circuit towers or a separation of less than 2,000 feet would exist in isolated areas along the route due to terrain or land use conflicts (e.g., Pahrnatag Wash). These transmission towers would have to be designed with a safety factor that is several more times redundant than would be otherwise necessary. The project developer hopes that the WSCC would be willing to allow the 1200 MW rating with these design concessions for a short distance (i.e., less than 1 percent of the total line length).

The SWIP and the UNTP would converge near Robber's Roost Hills (Link 675 - milepost 12), and would be parallel for 88.5 miles (Links 690, 700, and 720 - milepost 15) into Coyote Spring Valley in southern Nevada, where the UNTP would continue south and the SWIP would cross through the southern end of the Arrow Canyon Range into the Dry Lake Valley. A separation of 2,000 feet would be needed for this entire distance except where it is not physically possible to maintain this separation.

In the Pahrnatag Wash area, the SWIP and the UNTP lines may need to be closer than 2,000 feet for two miles or more. Because the Delamar Mountains and Evergreen Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are within about 1/2 mile of each other and other linear features are present (e.g., U.S. Highway 93 and the Lincoln County Coop 69kV line), the SWIP and the UNTP lines would each be constructed on double circuit towers, with one circuit left open. The plan is for the two future WPPP lines to be placed on the open circuits of the SWIP and the UNTP lines through this area. The proposed configuration of the planned lines through this area is shown schematically in the cross-sections included in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA. To help compensate for this lack of separation and to meet the WSCC criteria outlined above, the structures within this area would need to be engineered to a higher standard to better withstand potential physical disturbances (e.g., earthquakes, etc.). Refer to Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

If the Delamar and Evergreen WSAs are not designated as Wilderness by Congress by the time all of the lines are constructed, the involved utilities may pursue amending the right-of-way grants to allow all of the lines to be placed on separate circuits.

In the 88.5 miles where the SWIP and the UNTP lines would be separated by 2,000 feet, the SWIP and the UNTP lines would form the outside edges of the utility corridor that would include the two planned 500kV WPPP transmission lines. The cross-sections in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA schematically show the relationship of the four planned 500kV transmission facilities. Refer to the Cumulative Effects section in Chapter 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The involved regional utilities will coordinate with the Las Vegas District of the BLM on the final configuration of this corridor.

Where the SWIP would not parallel the UNTP line, a minimum separation of 200 feet from other transmission facilities, centerline to centerline, would be required (i.e., for some facilities the rights-of-way could be side by side). With this separation, if either the SWIP or the lower voltage line failed, neither would fall into the other.

Military Air Space

In a comment on the SWIP DEIS/DPA, the National Park Service (NPS) requested additional information about the significant potential impacts of the alternative routes on military airspace. This section describes Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and agreements, the Air Force's concerns for the SWIP alternative routes, and the potential impacts of each alternative route on flight operations and military airspace.

The SWIP would affect two of the largest flight training areas in the West: the Utah Testing and Training Range (UTTR) of Hill Air Force Base (AFB) and the Desert Military Operating Area of Nellis AFB. Each of these ranges have a series of military operating areas (MOAs) where a large variety of low-level flights are conducted for combat training maneuvers and exercises.

Flights in these areas are conducted under visual flight rules (VFR) to provide low-altitude navigation and radar-simulated combat exercises (FAA Order 7610.4, Special Military Operations). Because of the low-level high-speed nature of the flight operations in MOAs, surface structures (e.g., radio towers, transmission line towers, etc.) present significant potential danger to pilots and aircraft, particularly when altitude ceiling and visibility conditions are impaired. Although flight operations can be altered to avoid the potential hazards of transmission line facilities, the low-altitude training operations are a pre-existing use of the airspace (FAA Part 77, 7400.2C Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters, 1984). FAA procedures state that when proposed structures that exceed the obstruction standards are being sited and the military has determined the alternative would be detrimental to their flight operations, an attempt to persuade the project sponsor to lower or relocate the alternative should be identified by the military (7400.2C Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters, Chapter 7 - Evaluating Aeronautical Effect).

Military Operating Areas and Restricted Areas - The Military has negotiated agreements with the FAA to set aside special airspace areas to contain flight activities that, because of their nature, may impede other aircraft operations that are not part of those activities. These airspace areas, called MOAs and restricted areas, establish positive control area to separate certain non-hazardous military activities from instrument flight rules (IFR) traffic (e.g., conventional commercial aircraft) and to identify for VFR traffic (e.g., small aircraft) where these military activities are conducted (7400.2C Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters, May 1, 1984). Military activities can include air intercepts, supersonic flight, acrobatic maneuvers, air combat exercises, and other flight training. Restricted Areas and MOAs contain these activities and prevent non-participating aircraft from being affected or interfered with during military operations.

Military airspace is divided into two categories: those that involve rulemaking actions and those that involve non-rulemaking actions. Rulemaking actions relate to the assignment, review, modification, or revocation of airspace by a rule, regulation, or order as prescribed in the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR Part 11). Restricted Areas fall into this category. Because an agreement between affected military units, FAA representatives, and jurisdictional owners or administrators (e.g., the BLM) is required, it is difficult to amend and/or change the operation plans in these areas. Non-rulemaking

areas include MOAs, firing areas, and alert areas where the FAA has the authority to make the final decision but does not render that decision by issuing a rule, regulation, or order (7400.2C Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters, May 1, 1984). The SWIP alternatives would pass through both categories of military airspace.

A letter of agreement between the controlling agency, the FAA, and the using agency, Hill AFB, is used to establish special airspace areas. This agreement regulates and coordinates military activities with other aircraft and private land owners and public land administrators. The controlling agency is the agency, organization, or military command whose activity the special airspace was established for when first designated.

The controlling agency will establish a MOA or restricted area as a non-joint use area, joint use area, or point source area. This designation allows the special airspace to be used or not used when all or part of the airspace is not required for its prescribed purpose or used for other purposes when missions are not taking place. To determine the useable limits of each, MOAs and restricted areas are described in terms of horizontal and (boundaries), vertical (altitudes) dimensions, the time it will be used (specified times and days of the week), and the types of activities or missions that will take place. Because of their small size, geographic location, or high degree of use, some areas are impractical for use all of the time or at all. These areas are usually termed as non-joint use. Areas that are used periodically may be termed joint use and areas that are used frequently, such as specific valleys, may be termed point source use.

Letters of agreement are signed as part of the negotiations between the controlling agency and the using agency. Agreements are necessary when military activity is to be designated below 1,200 feet above-ground-limit (AGL) and when the underlying land belongs to a private owner or is administered by a public agency other than the military. The agreements state reasonable and timely aerial access to such lands and grant the Air Force permission to fly missions over lands they do not administer. In order for the military to designate activities down to the ground surface, the proponent must either own, lease, or by letter of agreement control the underlying surface.

Affected Environment

All of the alternative routes for the Ely to Delta segment would affect restricted airspace or MOAs of the UTTR (Hill AFB) and all of the alternative routes for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would affect several MOAs operated by Nellis AFB.

Agreements - There are no signed letters of agreement between the BLM and the Department of Defense for the MOAs and restricted areas affected by the SWIP alternative routes. There are existing agreements between the BLM and FAA and the FAA and the Department of Defense. These agreements established the MOAs and restricted areas for Hill AFB in Utah and Nellis AFB in Nevada.

There are no regulations governing the allowed uses on the BLM-administered lands under a restricted areas or MOA. The BLM has jurisdictional rights and can permit a utility line under airspace administered by the military.

Hill Air Force Base Flight Operations - The UTTR of Hill AFB is located in northwestern Utah and extends across the state line into northeastern Nevada. The portions of MOAs in Nevada are used primarily for flight maneuvers and air combat training, as well as approaching and departing targets

located in the adjacent restricted areas of the UTTR (UTTR, 1988). Flight levels extend from 100 feet-AGL to 9,000 feet (6,500-feet Mean Sea Level (MSL)). All supersonic flights are conducted under VFR during the daylight hours (U.S. Air Force, Hill AFB, 1985). Altitude floors for the Lucin A, Lucin B, Gandy, Sevier A, and Sevier B MOAs of the UTTR are set throughout at 100-feet AGL.

Hill AFB was contacted and notified of the SWIP alternative routes during the inventory. The airspace coordinator provided maps for locating Restricted Areas and MOAs and a letter expressing concerns about alternative study corridors. The portion(s) of the UTTR affected are described for each alternative route:

Delta Direct Route - This route would cross 19.5 miles in the Gandy MOA, 44.5 miles in the R-6405 Restricted Area, 12.8 miles in the Sevier A MOA, and 13.8 miles in the Sevier B MOA. Hill AFB stated that a route across the R-6405 Restricted Area would likely not be feasible. Areas of high concern were also identified along the portion of the Gandy MOA that would be affected by this route.

Cutoff Route - This route would cross 33.8 miles in the Gandy MOA, 62.5 miles in the Sevier A MOA, and 20 miles in Sevier B MOAs. Flight operations in these areas may occur down to 100-feet AGL in a joint use arena.

230kV Corridor Route - This route would cross 40.4 miles in the Sevier A MOA and 20 miles in the Sevier B MOA. Flight operations may occur in these areas down to 100-feet AGL in a joint use arena.

Southern Route - This route would cross 1.2 miles in the Sevier A MOA and 82 miles in the Sevier B MOA. Flight operations in these area may occur down to 100-feet AGL in a joint use arena.

The specific mileage of each alternative route in MOAs and Restricted Areas is listed in Table 3-1. Restricted Areas and MOAs are illustrated in the study corridors in blue and MOAs are illustrated in green on the Land Use Resources maps in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume.

As one of the largest flight training areas in the in the U.S., the UTTR is highly regarded as a valuable testing and training center and is considered very important by the Department of Defense, especially in light of the recent closing of military bases around the country by Congress.

Nellis Air Force Base Flight Operations - Nellis AFB operates several MOAs located in southern Nevada collectively called the Desert Military Operating Area. The FAA has authorized the Nellis Air Traffic Control Facility (NATCF) to govern this airspace. NATCF controls the entry and exit of military aircraft in their airspace while the Range Control Center monitors mission activities within the airspace.

Flight operations in the Desert Military Operating Area include high-speed low-level flight training maneuvers and supersonic flight exercises at or above 5,000-feet AGL. Operations may occur during daylight hours Monday-Saturday. The MOAs operated by Nellis AFB administer the airspace from the ground level to 55,000 feet.

Nellis AFB was contacted and notified of the SWIP alternative routes during the inventory. Nellis AFB is opposed to alternative routes through the White River Valley (Link 671), Dry Lake Valley

(Link 673), and Kane Springs Wash (Link 680) because of low-level flight activity and air to air intercepts exercises that occur in these areas.

In October 1990, Nellis AFB sent maps recommending specific route changes and tower height restrictions. Nellis AFB expressed a preference for a route that would turn east at a point south of the Wayne Kirch Wildlife Management Area across Cave Valley through a pass at the southern end of the Schell Creek Range (Link 672) then turning southeast across Muleshoe Valley (Link 674) toward the Bristol Range and south along the east side of Dry Lake Valley. This routing would begin paralleling the existing Lincoln County 69kV transmission line near Robber's Roost Hills (Link 675). The Caliente Resource Area of the Las Vegas District of the BLM agreed that the routing proposed by Nellis AFB should be studied. Subsequently, the described route segments were added (refer to the Panel 5 - Land Use Resources map in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume).

The individual MOAs affected by alternative routes include Reveille (Links 672, 673), Caliente West (Links 675, 690), Caliente Alpha (Link 690), and Sally Corridor (Link 690). Nellis AFB then identified "areas of high concern" along the alternative study corridors mapped during the inventory. These areas of high concern occur along portions of Links 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 680, and 690.

The specific mileage of each alternative route in MOAs and Restricted Areas are listed in Table 3-1. Restricted Areas and MOAs are illustrated in the study corridors in blue and MOAs are illustrated in green on the Land Use Resources maps in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume.

Environment Consequences

The construction of the SWIP through military airspace in a Restricted Area or MOA would introduce a potentially hazardous obstruction across high-speed low-level flights routes used by aircraft approaching or departing targets. The Air Force has stated that maintaining their current operations with such an obstruction in the area would risk pilots and aircraft unless many low-level flight maneuvers were curtailed or otherwise altered.

The potential impacts of alternative routes on flight operations in Restricted Areas and MOAs is described below. All moderate residual impacts are considered significant.

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment - All of the alternative routes for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would adversely effect MOAs operated by Nellis AFB. Alternative routes would pass through 64.7 miles of areas of high concern in the Desert Military Operating Area. To reduce the potential hazard of the transmission line towers, the AGLs of the affected MOAs would have to be raised to 200 feet. Changing the AGLs would require modifications to flight operations (e.g., exercises, flight routes, etc.) and potentially change the use designation (e.g., non-joint, joint, or point source use) of affected MOAs. Curtailed or altered flight operations could diminish the effectiveness of flight training exercises available in the Desert Military Operating Area.

The use of shorter towers was recommended as mitigation to reduce moderate initial impacts to low residual impacts. The potential application of this mitigation was negotiated with the airspace manager of Nellis AFB. However, there is no agreement with Nellis AFB to accept this mitigation. Nellis AFB did not submit comments on the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Ely to Delta Routes - The Direct Route would result in 55.1 miles of moderate residual impacts where it would pass through the R-6405 Restricted Area operated by Hill AFB. Following a series of

meetings and correspondence, Hill AFB's airspace coordinator submitted a letter (May 22, 1991) stating the position of Hill AFB and the concerns of the Department of the Air Force regarding the four Ely to Delta routes. Hill AFB is opposed to any power line construction above 30 feet in height in the Restricted Area or would prefer the transmission line be buried. The letter cited that safety was of high concern above and below the test and training aircraft.

The other Ely to Delta routes would affect only MOAs. Hill AFB is opposed to towers above 105 feet in areas of high concern and above 154 feet in all other areas of the affected MOAs. Shorter towers (i.e., 105 feet) were recommended as mitigation within the areas of high concern following negotiations with the Hill AFB airspace coordinator. The locations of shorter towers are illustrated on Figure 3-5. Hill AFB agreed in a letter that shorter towers would be acceptable in the MOAs.

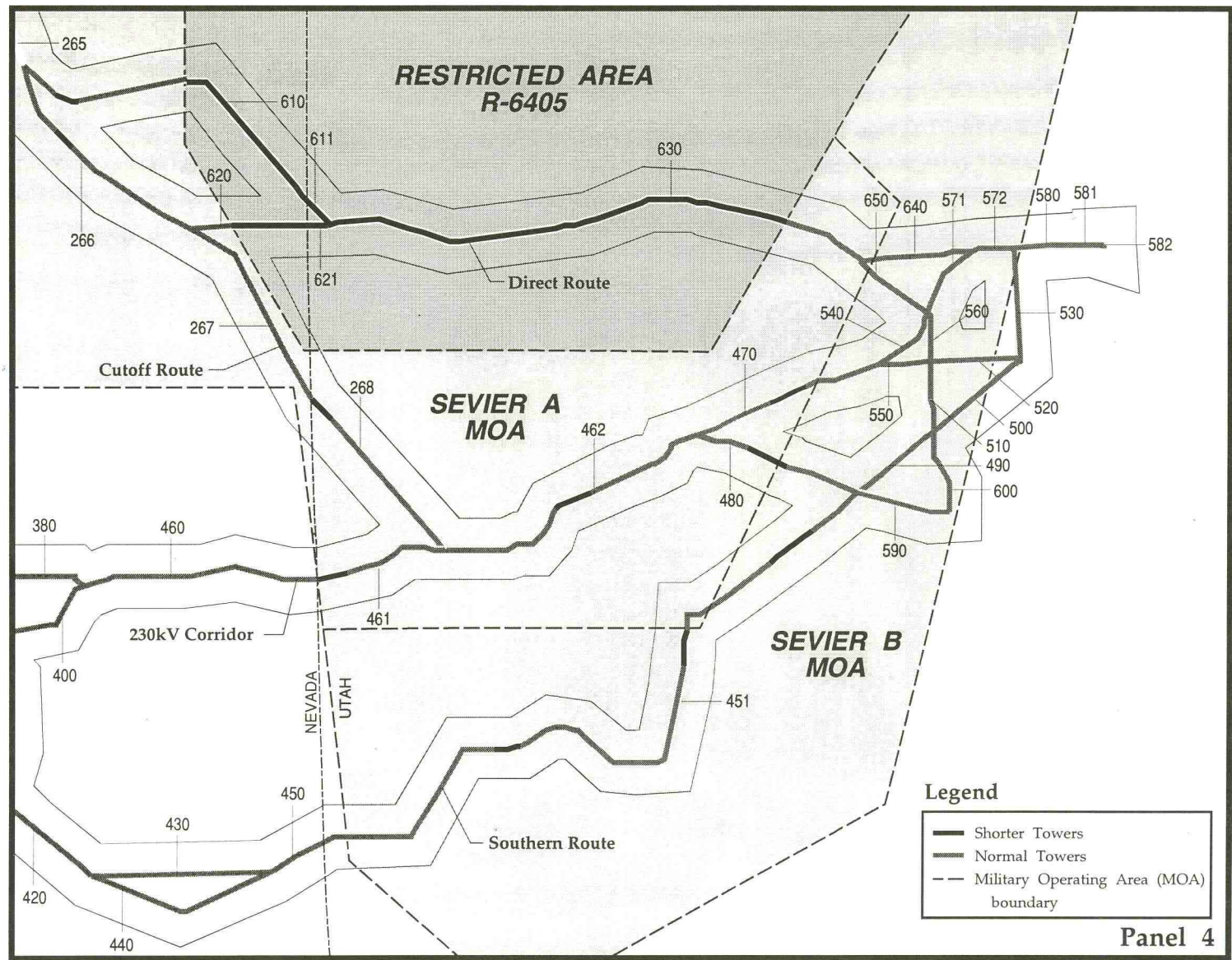
Effects to Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and Instant Study Areas

No wilderness areas, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), or instant study areas (ISAs) would be directly affected by any of the alternative routes. None of the alternative routes is expected to adversely affect the natural integrity, apparent naturalness, opportunities for solitude, or primitive recreation opportunities of wilderness or WSAs. The primary issue of concern for these areas is the potential effects (indirect) of a transmission line on the visual resource of adjacent areas.

As described under Visual Resources in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, viewpoints were identified and mapped within 3 miles of the assumed centerline of each alternative study corridor (i.e., link). No specific viewpoints (e.g., trail, vista, etc.) were identified within wilderness, WSAs, or ISAs during the inventory. Because recreation use in wilderness areas, WSAs, and ISAs is generally dispersed, views may occur from an indefinite number of potential viewpoints. And since none of these areas that fall within the study corridors have any designated viewpoints or management plans, it is not possible to estimate specific visual impacts.

Buffer zones around wilderness areas are specifically addressed in Chapter I of the BLM Handbook H-8560-1, Management of Designated Wilderness Areas under Section A.1.b. which states, "Wilderness must be viewed in context with other public lands, recognizing that no buffer zones will be created. Construction of high standard roads, recreation facilities or developments adjacent to a wilderness should consider the effect they will have on the wilderness." It further states that non-wilderness activities or uses that can be seen or heard from areas within the wilderness shall not, of itself, preclude such activities or uses up to the boundary of the wilderness area (BLM, 1983). However, the handbook also states that effects of adjacent activities or land uses outside of wilderness areas should be identified. This policy also applies to WSAs and ISAs because the BLM must manage these areas as wilderness in accordance with the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (BLM document H-8550-1). If Congress designates them wilderness, the Interim Management Policy would cease to apply. Areas not designated as wilderness would be returned to multiple use in accordance with existing BLM planning documents. Since WSAs and ISAs are being managed as potential wilderness, impacts to these areas from influences outside of their boundaries must also be assessed.

Based on direction from the BLM Handbook and the BLM's Nevada State Director, potential effects of the alternative routes to dispersed viewpoints in wilderness areas, WSAs, and ISAs were addressed. Because it is not possible to assess specific impacts to dispersed viewpoints that could potentially



Locations of Shorter Towers in Utah Testing and Training Range

occur anywhere within these areas, potential effects considered the general viewing conditions (e.g., distance zone, view orientation, existing visual conditions - dominant or subordinate, etc.) and the visual contrasts of each alternative route.

Potential Effects

The project study area in Nevada and Utah is part of the Basin and Range physiographic province. Wilderness areas and WSAs in this physiographic province are generally associated with the mountain ranges, with one notable exception, Lower Salmon Falls Creek WSA in southern Idaho. Because of this tendency, views from wilderness areas and WSAs typically look out over large basins towards distant mountain ranges. Views can easily range beyond 30 miles under clear conditions.

The SWIP would likely tend to dominate views when seen from less than one-half mile away depending on specific viewing conditions (e.g., screening, viewer position and orientation, time of day, etc.). Because steel-lattice towers are proposed, it is expected that the transmission line would quickly become less visually evident with increasing distance from the viewer. In context with the grand scale of Basin and Range landscapes, the SWIP would be subordinate.

Because most of the landscapes surrounding wilderness areas and WSAs would be viewed from a superior position (i.e., looking down or over) in mountainous topography, most dispersed recreation users would likely tend to overlook the SWIP as they viewed the landscapes beyond (i.e., vast basins and rugged mountains) and the transmission line would be "backdropped" by the landscape. This viewing position would tend to make visual intrusions less evident and subordinate in the landscape. In a few cases, the SWIP may be viewed from an inferior position (i.e., looking up) which would tend to accentuate visibility, especially where it would be viewed against the sky or the horizon (skylined).

Under certain lighting conditions, the SWIP may be visible at greater distances because of the light reflected from towers and conductors. The use of dulled towers and non-specular conductors would be expected to largely mitigate this effect.

Mitigation The selectively committed mitigation measures (#9 and #10 in Table 1-5) were recommended to minimize potential adverse visual impacts of the SWIP. Mitigation was recommended based on the distance of the alternative routes from the boundaries of wilderness areas and WSAs:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| • 0 to 1 mile | dulled towers and non-specular conductor |
| • 1 to 3 miles | non-specular conductor |

This section describes the characteristic views and visibility of alternative routes for each wilderness area and WSA, and documents the potential effects of each alternative route on visual resources of these areas. The locations of wilderness areas and WSAs are illustrated on the Land Use Resources maps in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume. Tables 3-2 and 3-3 show, by wilderness area and WSA, the mileage of each alternative route that would pass within 0 - 1/4 mile, 1/4 - 1 mile, and 1 - 3 miles of their boundaries.

Idaho

Lower Salmon Falls Creek WSA - This WSA is the portion of Lower Salmon Falls Creek from Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir to Balanced Rock State Park. Because viewers in this WSA would be in the canyon, none of the alternative routes would be visible. Route F would parallel the existing Upper Salmon to Wells 138kV transmission line along the east boundary of this WSA and would be openly visible to viewers on the west rim of the canyon.

Nevada

Mt. Moriah Wilderness - This wilderness is situated 30 miles east of Ely near the Nevada-Utah state line within the boundaries of the Humboldt National Forest. Although the Cutoff Route (Link 267) would be visible for some distance to views northeast and east from this wilderness, it would be a subordinate feature in the vast open landscape of the Snake Valley. The 230kV Corridor Route (Link 464, 469, 471) would also be visible to some middleground and background views from this wilderness in the Sacramento Pass area (also refer to the Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute section in Chapter 3 of this document).

South Pequop WSA - This WSA is located in southern half of the Pequop Mountains in southeastern Elko County. With the exception of the Union Pacific Railroad and a few unpaved roads in Independence Valley and Goshute Valley, views from this WSA are of largely undisturbed natural landscapes.

Routes A, C, F, and G would be visible in the middle of Goshute Valley from 1 to 3 miles where these routes would parallel the Nevada Northern Railroad (Links 212, 230). From viewing positions in the northeast and east portion of this WSA, most of these routes would be backdropped by the Goshute Mountains east across the valley and would be visually subordinate to the landscape. Route D would tend to dominate views north where this route would pass within 1/4 mile of the boundary of this WSA at the railroad tunnel (Link 190) in the Pequop Mountains.

Bluebell WSA - This WSA is located in the northern part of the Goshute Mountain Range approximately 10 miles southwest of Wendover, Nevada. The landscape of this WSA is dominated by steep, mountainous topography with numerous canyons radiating along a north-south trending mountain range.

Routes B and E would pass north and east of this WSA and would be openly visible in Pilot Creek Valley (Link 222). From the northern portion of this WSA, views include Interstate 80 and several unpaved roads in the valley with occasional long-distance views of the salt flats beyond Wendover, Nevada. Views east, from north of Clifside to as far south as Felt Wash, include U.S. Highway 93 Alternate and unpaved access roads.

Routes D and E would dominate views where these routes would pass within 1/4 mile of the WSA for 2.4 miles. Routes A, C, F, and G would traverse in the center of Goshute Valley (5-6 miles away) parallel to the Nevada Northern Railroad and would be subordinate to views west from this WSA.

Goshute Peak - This WSA is located in the southern portion of the Goshute Mountain Range. Similar to Bluebell WSA, the landscape of this WSA is dominated by steep, mountainous topography with numerous canyons radiating from a north-south trending mountain range.

Routes B and E (Links 222, 225, 226) would be openly visible to views east and southeast from this WSA, except for a portion that may be screened by Ferguson Mountain. There are also distant views to the southwest of U.S. Highway 93. These routes would dominate views where they would be visible within one-quarter mile of this WSA (Link 226) for 1.3 miles and visible within 1/4 mile to 1 mile (Link 225, 226) for 3.4 miles.

Goshute Canyon - This WSA is located in the Cherry Creek Mountains from the Elko/White Pine county line to approximately 2 miles north of Cherry Creek. Views north are of the wide flat expanse of Steptoe Valley toward dark rugged forms of the Cherry Creek Range. The only apparent visual intrusions include U.S. Highway 93 on the far side of the valley, several two-track roads, and a series of seismic survey lines that cross the valley.

Routes D and G (Links 241, 242) would be largely subordinate views east from this WSA where they would be backdropped by the Shell Creek Range. Routes D and G may dominate some views across north Steptoe Valley from visitors to Goshute Cave where these routes would pass within 1 mile.

Marble Canyon WSA - This WSA is situated 30 miles northeast of Ely near the Nevada-Utah state line adjacent to the Mt. Moriah Wilderness in the Humboldt National Forest. Part of this WSA was included with the designation of the Mt. Moriah Wilderness. Although the Cutoff Route (Link 267) would be visible for some distance northeast and east from this WSA, it would be a subordinate feature in the vast open landscape of the Snake Valley. The Cutoff Route would be most noticeable along the lower portion of the alluvial benches that stretch from Marble Wash to Smith Creek Canyon within 1 to 2 miles of the east boundary of this WSA. Refer to Figure 4-5 in the Errata in Chapter 4 for the location of this WSA.

Swamp Cedar ISA - This ISA is located in Spring Valley several miles east of U.S. Highway 6/50. The 230kV Corridor Route (Link 380) is approximately one mile to the south of this area parallel to two existing 230kV transmission lines. Situated in the open valley, this route would be openly visible to middleground views. However, because of weaker structure contrasts associated with the existing transmission lines, the 230kV Corridor Route would not cause significant change in this landscape.

Mount Grafton WSA - This WSA is located on Mount Grafton approximately 30 miles southeast of Ely, Nevada, on the White Pine/Lincoln County line. The landscapes seen from the northern portion of this WSA are largely undisturbed, except for the Horse and Cattle Camp Backcountry Byway, an unpaved scenic route. The Southern Route would dominate views where it would pass adjacent to the northern boundary of this WSA. This route would be visible in Steptoe Valley (Link 364) from north of Mollys Nipples until it drops out of sight through numerous rock outcrops and scattered peaks north of Burnt Knoll Spring.

Fortification Range WSA - This WSA is located in Lincoln County between Lake Valley and Spring Valley just east of U.S. Highway 93. Only a very small portion of this WSA extends into the study corridor (Link 440). Only visitors to the northern part of the WSA would be affected by the Southern Route (Links 420, 430). Looking from mountain peaks above Indian Springs, viewers would see faint views of the SWIP where it would cross Spring Valley east towards Big Springs Wash. Views within the WSA to the west, south and far east would not be affected.

Delamar Mountains WSA - This WSA is located in the southern half of the Delamar Mountain Range east of the Pahrangat Wash Wildlife Refuge and Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Lincoln County. All of the alternative routes for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would use Link 690

which would traverse the base of these mountains along the west side of the WSA. The SWIP would be visible in the narrow valley formed by Pahrnagat Wash.

When viewing north from this WSA, the SWIP would be seen for over 20 miles approaching across Delamar Valley parallel to the UNTP 500kV transmission line and the Lincoln County 69kV transmission line. All the routes would be visible along Link 690 where they would pass within one-quarter mile of the west boundary of this WSA for approximately 23 miles and would tend to dominate views west. However, because the SWIP would be parallel to two existing transmission lines, there would be only a slight incremental increase in the effect.

Evergreen WSA - This WSA is composed of three parcels of land, contiguous to the Desert National Wildlife Range (Link 690), located east of U.S. Highway 93 in the flat of Pahrnagat Wash. All of the alternative routes for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would pass through the center of Pahrnagat Wash adjacent to this WSA and parallel to U.S. Highway 93, the UNTP 500kV transmission line, and the Lincoln County 69kV transmission line (Link 690). Although backdropped by the Delamar Mountains, views from this relatively flat WSA would be dominated by the transmission lines and the highway in Pahrnagat Wash. The addition of the SWIP would be a slight incremental increase in the visual effect of the existing lines and highway.

Fish and Wildlife 1, 2, & 3 WSA - Similar to the Evergreen WSA, this WSA is composed of three parcels of land contiguous to the Desert National Wildlife Range (Link 700, 720). All of the alternative routes for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would pass through the center of Coyote Spring Valley adjacent to this WSA and parallel to U.S. Highway 93, the UNTP 500kV transmission line, and the Lincoln County 69kV transmission line. Except for some views from points in the Elbow Range, the SWIP would be subordinate from this largely flat WSA. Parallel to two existing transmission lines and the highway in the middle of Coyote Springs Valley over one mile away, adding another transmission line would be a slight incremental increase in the visual effect.

Arrow Canyon WSA - This WSA is located in the Arrow Canyon Range, which rises abruptly along the east edge of Coyote Spring Valley (Link 720). All of the alternative routes for the Midpoint to Dry Lake segment would pass through Coyote Spring Valley below this WSA parallel to U.S. Highway 93, the UNTP 500kV transmission line, and the Lincoln County 69kV transmission line. From the southern portion of this WSA, views west would be dominated by transmission lines and the highway where the line would be within one-quarter mile of the east boundary for 4.3 miles. However, because the SWIP would be parallel to two existing transmission lines and the highway, there would be only a slight incremental increase in the visual effect. The SWIP would be subordinate in views west from the northern portion of this WSA.

Utah

Howell Peak WSA - This WSA is located north of Marjum Canyon in the Middle Range just south of the Swasey Mountains. The SWIP along the Cutoff Route or the 230kV Corridor Route (Links 462, 470) would dominate views south into the highly scenic and narrow Marjum Canyon, where these routes would parallel two existing 230kV transmission lines. From high points these routes would be visible to views southwest as they would cross Tule Valley, disappearing momentarily into Marjum Canyon and reappearing heading northeast across Whirlwind Valley.

King Top WSA - This WSA is located in the Confusion Range (Link 451). From the southern portion of this WSA, the Southern Route would be visible first where it would come around Pyramid

Knolls in the west. This route would dominate views along the southern boundary for approximately 3 miles. Knolls and hills west of the Confusion Range would screen some of the views of this route. Once past Warm Point the route would be screened by the Barn Hills. Views east from the northeast portion of this WSA would be of the Southern Route, where the route would parallel U.S. Highway 6/50 toward Sevier Lake.

Notch Peak WSA - This WSA is located in the House Range between U.S. Highway 6/50 on the south and Marjum Canyon on the north. Looking west viewers would first see the 230kV Corridor Route and the Cutoff Route (Link 462) across Tule Valley coming from Payton Canyon in the Confusion Range parallel to two existing 230kV transmission lines. From Pines Peak 3 miles north of Notch Peak, viewers would see the transmission line corridor continue from Tule Valley to south of Marjum Canyon. From the northern boundary, views would likely be dominated where the SWIP would pass through the highly scenic Marjum Canyon. Only viewers in the extreme northeast portion of the WSA would see these routes exit Marjum Canyon heading northeast across Whirlwind Valley.

From the southern portion of this WSA, viewers would see the Southern Route (Link 451) where it would traverse north across Tule Valley. The Southern Route would begin to dominate views south where it would turn northeast to parallel U.S. Highway 6/50 into the Sevier Desert.

Wah Wah Mountains WSA - This WSA is located in the Wah Wah Mountains north of Utah State Highway 21 (Link 451). Only a small portion of the northwest boundary of this WSA would view the Southern Route. At over 2.5 miles away, the Southern Route would be subordinate in the landscape.

Fish Springs WSA - This WSA is located in Fish Springs Range between Snake Valley and Fish Springs Flat (Link 630). From the southern end of this WSA viewers would see the Direct Route over one mile away. In this largely undisturbed landscape, the Direct Route would be noticeable, but would not be a dominant feature in the vast expanse of Tule Valley in the distance.

Swasey Mountain WSA - This WSA is located in the House Range (Link 630) between Tule Valley and Whirlwind Valley. Only two small portions of the northern boundary fall into the study corridors. Distant views of Direct Route from these areas would likely be screened by isolated hills at the end of the Swasey Mountains. The Direct Route would be subordinate to views northeast across Whirlwind Valley and Swasey Bottom over 3 miles away.

The 230kV Corridor Route and Cutoff Route (Link 470) would parallel two existing 230kV transmission lines across Whirlwind Valley. These routes would be subordinate to views south from this WSA and would be less than 2 miles away.

Recreation Effects

Although no developed recreation sites would be directly affected by the alternative routes, the SWIP would indirectly affect recreation resources. The presence of transmission line facilities may affect the experience available to recreation users. Towers, construction disturbances, and roads may affect recreation activities and experiences where they border, pass through, or cross developed and proposed recreation sites and areas. All park, recreation, and preservation areas within 3 miles of the assumed centerlines of the alternative study corridors were identified, mapped, and described during the inventory.

In general, all of the alternative routes would have a minor affect on dispersed recreation in the region. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use (i.e., 4-wheel drives, motorcycles, and other all-terrain vehicles) could increase in some remote areas because of roads kept open for transmission line maintenance. This would be a potential benefit to public land users with OHVs. There could also be some benefit to dispersed hunting opportunities within remote areas because of potentially increased access.

The potential effects of the SWIP routes on recreation resources and the specific parks, recreation, and preservation areas that occur along each route are described below.

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

Route A - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, several recreational sites occur along the route. Route A would pass adjacent to the Minidoka Relocation Center Interpretive Site (Link 20), adversely affecting the recreation experience of visitors to this historic site. The route would pass through the Snake River Rim Recreation Area, a BLM special management area between Interstate 84 and the Snake River canyon. That encompasses a large area of rural agricultural lands interspersed with the BLM-administered lands. In this largely developed area the adverse effects of Route A would be minimal except at a few specific recreation sites or features. In particular, the portion of this route that would cross the Murtaugh section of the Snake River, proposed for designation as a Wild and Scenic River, would diminish the experience of recreation users (e.g., river floaters) (Link 41). Similarly, the sight of this route crossing the Oregon Trail (Link 41) would briefly diminish the experience of users on this national recreation trail. Route A would minimally affect recreation at Nat-Soo-Pah, a private development located approximately 1 mile away. This route would only slightly increase the effects to recreation experiences where it would parallel the Upper Salmon to Wells 138kV and the Midpoint to Valmy 345kV transmission lines (Links 50, 70) near existing and proposed BLM campgrounds and recreation facilities located in the Salmon Falls Reservoir Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA).

From Jackpot, Nevada to the Robinson Summit Substation site, Route A would cross the California National Historic Trail three times (Links 1612, 211, 212), and the Pony Express Trail (Link 291). Construction disturbances and the presence of the SWIP at these crossings would diminish the recreation experience of users of these national trails. For dispersed recreation users in the South Pequop WSA (Link 212), the presence of Route A, 3 miles away in the Goshute Valley, would go largely unnoticed under most viewing conditions.

From the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, Route A would cross a portion of U.S. Highway 93, a designated scenic route (Link 675), and the proposed Kane Springs Backcountry Byway (Links 690, 700). Because viewing scenery is the major activity for users of these travelways, Route A would significantly diminish the experience of recreation travelers where it would be visible. Similarly, a large part of the dispersed recreation users' (e.g., hikers) experience can be attributed to viewing undisturbed natural landscapes. The presence of the SWIP would also adversely affect this recreation experience where Route A would pass near the Wayne Kirch Wildlife Management Area (Link 672), the Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge, the Evergreen WSA (Link 690), the Delamar WSA (Link 690), the Desert National Wildlife Refuge (Link 690), the Fish and Wildlife 1, 2, & 3 WSAs (Link 700), and the Arrow Canyon WSA (Links 700, 720). The effects of Route A on primitive recreation opportunities would be significant where the SWIP would dominate views from WSAs (refer to Wilderness Effects in this chapter).

Route B - Route B is the same as Route A from Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada. From Jackpot, Nevada to the North Steptoe Substation site, Route B would cross the California National Historic Trail and California Trail Back Country Byway (Link 140), where viewing scenery is the major activity. Route B would introduce transmission line towers into the largely undisturbed landscape of Toano Draw, and the recreation experience of users would be significantly affected at each of the trail and byway crossings. This route would also pass within one-half mile of the Bluebell WSA (Link 222) and the Goshute Peak WSA (Links 222, 224, 226). The effects of Route B on primitive recreation opportunities would be significant where the SWIP would dominate views from WSAs (refer to Wilderness Effects in this chapter). From North Steptoe Substation site to Robinson Summit Substation site, Route B would cross the Pony Express Trail (Link 280). From Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, Route B is the same as described for Route A.

Route C - Recreation effects for Route C from Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, would be the same as those described for Route A. From Jackpot to the vicinity of Oasis, Nevada (Link 200), recreation effects would be the same as described for Route B. From the vicinity of Oasis to the Dry Lake Substation site, the recreation effects would be the same as those described for Route A.

Route D - From Midpoint Substation to HD Summit (Link 162), northeast of Wells, Nevada, recreation effects for Route D would be the same as those described for Route A. Route D would cross the California National Historic Trail (Link 167, 180, 190) three times. Like Route B, the recreation user experience would be significantly affected at each of the crossings of this trail. Route D would also pass adjacent to the South Pequop WSA (Link 190), where the effects on primitive recreation opportunities would be significant (refer to Wilderness Effects in this chapter). From Goshute Valley (Link 230) to Dry Lake Substation site, recreation effects for Route D would be the same as those described for Route A, except Route D would pass closer to Goshute Canyon WSA (Link 241, 242) in Steptoe Valley.

Route E - From Midpoint Substation to the vicinity of Oasis, Nevada (Link 200), the recreation effects of this route would be the same as those described from Route A. From the vicinity of Oasis to the Dry Lake Substation site, recreation effects would be the same as those described for Route B.

Route F - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, Route F would pass through the Snake River Rim Recreation Area, a BLM special management area between Interstate 84 and the Snake River Canyon which encompasses a large area of rural agricultural lands interspersed with the BLM-administered lands. In this largely developed area, the adverse effects of Route F would be minimal, except where it would pass near or adjacent to a section of the Snake River that is proposed for Wild and Scenic River designation (Link 61), the west boundary of Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument (Links 62, 64), and Salmon Falls Creek WSA (Link 64). In addition, this route would cross two portions of the Oregon Trail (Link 61, 64), U.S. Highway 30, and the Thousand Springs Scenic Route (Link 61) near Hagerman, Idaho. Near Hagerman, Route F would pass near Malad Gorge State Park (Link 61), parallel part of the Salmon Falls Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), and pass within one-mile of the Balanced Rock State Park (Link 64). Route F would slightly increase in effects to recreation experiences where it would parallel the Upper Salmon to Wells 138kV and the Midpoint to Valmy 345kV transmission lines (Links 50, 70) near existing and proposed BLM campgrounds and recreation facilities in the Salmon Falls Reservoir SRMA.

From Jackpot, Nevada, to the vicinity of Oasis, Nevada (Link 200), recreation effects would be the same as those described for Route B. From the Oasis area to the Dry Lake Substation site, recreation effects would be the same as those described for Route A.

Route G - Recreation effects for Route G from Midpoint Substation to the vicinity of Contact, Nevada, would be the same as those described for Route A (to Link 130). At Link 130, Route G would turn southeast (Link 151) and cross the California National Historic Trail and the California Trail Back Country Byway. Like Route B, this route would introduce transmission line towers into a largely undisturbed landscape. The recreation experience of trail and byway users would be significantly affected at the crossings. From the Oasis vicinity (Link 200) to Currie, Route G is the same as described for Route A. From Currie to the North Steptoe Substation site, Route G would pass by the Goshute Canyon WSA (Links 241, 242, 244). The effects of Route G on primitive recreation opportunities would likely not be significant except where the SWIP would dominate views by visitors to Goshute Cave (Link 241) in the Goshute Canyon Special Natural Area. From North Steptoe Substation site to Robinson Summit Substation site, recreation effects for Route G would be the same as those described for Route B. From Robinson Summit Substation site to Dry Lake Substation site, recreation effects for Route G would be the same as those described for Route A.

Ely to Delta Segment

Direct Route - This route would cross three segments of the Pony Express Trail (Links 265, 266) near Stonehouse, Nevada, near the southern end of the Antelope Range. The recreation experience of users would be significantly affected in the area around the crossings of this trail by the introduction of transmission line towers into a largely undisturbed landscape.

The Direct Route would pass near the Fish Springs WSA and the Swasey Mountain WSA (Link 630). The effects of the Direct Route on primitive recreation opportunities would be significant where the SWIP would dominate views from wilderness areas or WSAs (refer to Wilderness Effects in this chapter). This route would also pass near the Topaz Lake Wildlife Management Area (Link 572).

Cutoff Route - The Cutoff Route would have the same effects on the Pony Express Trail (Links 265, 266) as described for the Direct Route. This route would pass within 2 miles of the Gandy Mountain ACEC. From Eskdale, Utah (Link 461), to Delta, Utah, the only significant recreation effects of the Cutoff Route would occur where the SWIP would dominate some dispersed views from WSAs including the Mt. Moriah Wilderness (Link 267), Howell Peak WSA (Link 462, 470), Notch Peak WSA (Link 462, 480), and the Swasey Mountain WSA (Link 470) (refer to Wilderness Effects in this chapter). The Cutoff Route would not affect the proposed interpretive site (Link 462) for Great Basin National Park (GBNP) or the Topaz Lake Wildlife Management Area (Link 572).

230kV Corridor Route - The 230kV Corridor Route would cross the entrance road to Cave Lake State Recreation Area (Link 380) parallel with two 230kV and one 69kV transmission lines. However, the addition of the SWIP would slightly increase the adverse effects of the existing lines in this area, but this route would not affect recreation in the park itself. The 230kV Corridor Route would pass near proposed BLM recreation areas at Comins Lake (Link 380) and through to the proposed Weaver Creek Scenic Area (Link 460). No impacts were identified at the Weaver Creek Scenic Area, as the withdrawal has been revoked by a notice published in the Federal Register by the BLM. The 230kV Corridor Route would pass within 2 miles of the northern boundary of GBNP in Sacramento Pass (Link 460). Part of the purpose of GBNP is to interpret the Basin and Range physiography of the region. Although the 230kV Corridor Route would not directly affect recreation in GBNP, this route would cross U.S. Highway 6/50 that many park visitors use to access the area. The 230kV Corridor Route, parallel to the existing 230kV transmission lines, would only slightly increase the affect on visitor's experience of the basin areas interpreted by the park. The route would also pass over one

mile from the Swamp Cedar Special Natural Area (Link 380) and more than 2 miles from Osceola Geologic Area (Link 460). These areas would be slightly affected by another line in this corridor. The 230kV Corridor Route from Eskdale (Link 462) to Delta, Utah would be the same as described for the Cutoff Route.

Southern Route - The Southern Route would cross the Horse and Cattle Camp Scenic Backcountry Byway (Link 364) twice. The recreation experience of users of this byway would be significantly affected at the crossings of this trail by the introduction of transmission line into a largely undisturbed landscape. This route would also pass within 2 miles of Ward Charcoal Ovens State Historic Site (Link 364) and within one mile of two proposed GBNP interpretive sites [on U.S. Highway 93 (Link 420) and Utah State Highway 21 (Link 451)]. These sites are proposed as part GBNP's interpretation of the Basin and Range physiography of the region. This route would adversely affect the potential future recreation experience of visitors to the area. The Southern Route would have significant recreation effects where the SWIP would dominate views from wilderness areas or WSAs, including the Mt. Moriah Wilderness, the Grafton WSA (Link 364), Wah Wah Mountains WSA (Link 451), King Top WSA (Link 451), and Notch Peak WSA (Link 451).

Herd Management Areas

Public lands in Nevada and Utah are home to herds of wild horses and burros. The BLM and Forest Service (FS) manage these animals under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act (1971), which states that wild and free roaming horses and burros are protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death. Wild horses are defined as unbranded and unclaimed horses with progeny that have used public lands on or after December 15, 1971, or that use Federal lands as all or part of their habitat. The Herd Management Areas (HMAs) are areas of public land where habitat is provided for one or more wild horse herds in order to maintain a good population, social structure, and age-sex ratio of the animals. The horses can move freely within the HMAs and often migrate every year as a function of weather and availability of food and water.

Following the release of the SWIP DEIS/DPA in June of 1992, the BLM raised the issue of potential effects of the SWIP routes on HMAs and what the impact would be on wild horses and burros. Their primary concern centered on the potential harassment of wild horses and burros during the construction phase of the SWIP transmission line and the loss of forage from the construction of access roads and tower sites. Other concerns were establishing fences that would inhibit movement to food and/or water and conflicts with humans.

Affected Environment

The SWIP alternative routes would affect HMAs in Nevada and Utah (refer to Tables 3-4 and 3-5). The BLM's highest concerns in Utah occur where critical habitats are crossed. These areas are monitored yearly and evaluated using trend plots. The trend plots are located in all HMAs to monitor habitat through the use of water and feed during extended periods of time. The trend plots help determine an accurate population of the herds, age-sex ratio, social structure, and general physical condition of horses and burros within the HMAs. On the Ely to Delta Segment, the Direct Route would disturb 7.8 miles of critical habitat and 2.5 miles on the Cutoff Route. No other routes within the Ely to Delta Segment or the Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment affect critical areas.

On the Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment, Route B would cross the most miles of HMAs within the study area (159.8 miles) and Routes A & C the least (123.8 miles). The agency preferred route crosses only 115.1 miles of HMAs. The worst route on the Ely to Delta Segment is the Direct Route which crosses 28.0 miles HMA and 7.6 miles of critical horse habitat. The southern route crosses only 13.1 miles of HMAs and no critical habitat.

Environmental Consequences

Because of their size and numbers throughout the study area HMAs, like range allotments, are unavoidable by the alternative routes. Issues considered during the impact analysis included the transmission lines creating a barrier or hazard to the movement of any wildlife species and the potential harassment by increased human activity/public access.

Ground disturbance caused by construction of the SWIP would result in the insignificant loss of habitat within HMAs. Access road construction and tower footings would result in insignificant long-term loss of forage. Construction of the SWIP transmission routes would likely displace herds from the vicinity of the right-of-way during high activity. However, the line would not inhibit the movement of the herds after its completion. Increased public access into the remote areas during construction may result in increased human harassment and trappings of wild horses. The increased harassment would alter the current plot trend studies and may create new locations to be established or borders moved.

Mitigation

To reduce potential impacts resulting from ground disturbance and increased levels of public access in HMAs crossed by alternative transmission routes, generic and selectively recommended measures would be applied. For example, restricting vehicle movement of construction equipment to routes (#1) and recontouring and revegetating disturbed areas where necessary (#3 & 4) would minimize the loss of forage. Limiting construction activities during sensitive periods (foaling season) (#11) would minimize harassment.

Impacts in the Oasis Area

During the formal public meetings for the SWIP DEIS/DPA in Wells, Nevada on August 4, 1992, residents of Oasis opposed the preferred alternatives that would pass west of Oasis along the base of the Pequop Mountains (Link 211). Their opposition was based on proposed development plans by Northern Holdings, Inc. and CSY Investments. These proposed developments were not identified during the SWIP inventory because neither of these developers have been actively seeking action by Elko County. This section addresses the concerns of these future developments. Written comments as well as a summary of comments expressed at the formal public meeting held in Wells by the residents of Oasis and representatives of these development companies are listed in Chapter 4 of this document.

Northern Holdings, Inc. - Northern Holdings, Inc. has future plans to develop residential and commercial uses in R66E T36N Sections 2 and 3, west of the existing development at Oasis. The development plans would be phased. The first phase would develop commercial uses, including infrastructure, traveler facilities, truck repair, restaurant, and other similar facilities. The second phase

would consist of subdividing a portion of Section 2 near the existing mobile home park into lots for a residential subdivision. There are also future plans to subdivide part of Section 3 for residential development. The primary concerns of the developers are the potential visual effects that the preferred alternatives would have on views from future residential areas, property values, and the unknown effects of EMFs.

CSY Investments - CSY Investments owns over 100,000 acres of land, much of it distributed in checkerboard fashion among the BLM-administered lands, in the Goshute Valley and around Oasis. Conceptual plans propose a large recreation and vacation development that extends from north of Interstate 80 near Oasis south into Goshute Valley. CSY Investments' planned development is particularly concerned with Link 211 which would traverse southwest from Squaw Creek across Interstate 80 and would then turn northwest and would pass within one mile of the Big Springs Ranch Headquarters. CSY Investments is concerned that Routes A, C, F, and G would significantly affect the scenery of Goshute Valley and marketability of the mini-ranch sites and water ranch sites proposed in the Big Springs Ranch Development Plan. The Big Springs Ranch Development Plan conceptualizes 24,960 acres of mini-ranch sites in the western half of Goshute Valley, 8,320 acres of mountain cabin and retreat areas along the foothills of the Pequop Mountains, 13,440 acres for a hunting club and wildlife management area, 8,960 acres of recreational use areas (e.g., off road vehicle use and camping facilities) on the east side of the Goshute Valley south of Interstate 80, 6,400 acres of tourist/commercial sites, and 1,920 acres for industrial sites along the interstate (Big Springs Ranch Proposed Land Use Diagram, 1992). CSY Investments also expressed concern for a private, unregistered grass airstrip near the Big Springs Ranch Headquarters.

Subroute Comparison

Link 211 was compared with Links 221 and 223 (Subroute Set 9) in Appendix D of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The comparison summarized the impact data for the five resource disciplines of concern (i.e., biology, earth, visual, land use, and cultural). These links have been re-evaluated to consider the proposed developments of CSY Investments, Northern Holdings, Inc., and other public comments from the residents at Oasis.

Link 211 was environmentally preferred in the SWIP DEIS/DPA because it would be a less visually intrusive crossing of Interstate 80, a low visibility corridor designated by the Elko District of the BLM managed with Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II (refer to Visual Resources in the SWIP DEIS/DPA). With the dark colors of the Pequop Mountains as a backdrop, this link would cause weaker visual contrast to travelers on Interstate 80.

Strong and moderate visual contrasts along Link 211 would result in high and moderate visual impacts to views from the possible future recreational ranch properties being planned along the base of the Pequop Mountains. Links 221 and 223 would traverse the center of the valley along the edge of one of the planned development area. Although visual contrasts would be strong to moderate, these links would be viewed from several miles away and would result in insignificant visual impacts to views from the planned recreational ranch properties. However, Links 221 and 223 would likely be more highly visible at the crossing of Interstate 80 in the middle of the valley and to views from dispersed recreation users in the Pequop Mountains and Toano Range.

In addition, Link 211 would cause less disturbance to shallow ground water areas, but would cross numerous intermittent streams east of the Big Springs Ranch Headquarters. Links 221 and 223 would

also cross numerous intermittent streams and some areas with high flood potential north of Shafter along the existing railroad.

The only sensitive wildlife species that would be effected by this link would be sage grouse leks in Goshute Valley. Link 211 is part of Routes A, C, F, and G, and is the environmentally preferred subroute through Goshute Valley. Sage grouse leks occur near the end of Link 221.

Links 221 and 223 would better utilize the BLM utility planning corridor, which follows the railroad corridor through the center of Goshute Valley, and would pass through the edge of the Lucin C MOA. Link 211 would require a plan amendment to the BLM's planning utility corridor in this area.

Impact Summary Table

Links	Biology			Earth			Land Use			Cultural			Visual				Comments
	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	VRM	
211	0	0	1.6	17.6	0	0	0.8	14.5	0	7.1	0.9	0.3	15.1	17.0	0	5.8	Better crossing of I-80, closer to ranch
211 & 223	0.1	0	1.5	17.5	0.1	0	16.2	7.3	0	10.8	1.0	0.4	16.7	8.2	0	4.4	Utilizes railroad corridor, crosses less future development

Conclusions

In response to the public comments from residents at Oasis and the potential cumulative effects to planned developments by Northern Holdings, Inc. and CSY Development, the Agency Preferred Alternative has been modified slightly to follow Links 221, 223 along the railroad corridor through the center of Goshute Valley. The utility also prefers this subroute. This subroute would completely avoid future potential conflicts with Northern Holdings' properties and would minimize potential future impacts to significant portions of the CSY Investments' development. Because neither of these developments have been formally filed with Elko County the Environmentally Preferred Subroute is still Link 211.

Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds

The National Park Service, in a comment letter on the SWIP DEIS/DPA, identified an area of outstanding paleontological resources in the House Range that would be crossed by the 230kV Corridor Route.

The scientific value of the paleontological resources in the House Range has been described in a number of papers dating to 1875. The House Range, located in west central Utah, is famous for its Cambrian and Ordovician fossils including brachiopods, clams, sponges, trilobites, and other fossils totaling over forty different species (Bostick and Niles, 1975). Occurring primarily in the Notch Peak limestone strata of the House Range and adjacent outcrops, trilobites are the prize of commercial and amateur (i.e., rock hounds) fossil-gathers that use the area.

A study conducted in 1975 inventoried an area known as the Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds and found it to have paleontological resources of important scientific value. The study recommended that the area be evaluated for potential registry as a National Natural Landmark. The 1979 site evaluation included an area of 144 sections or approximately 92,000 acres. This potential site evaluation area would be crossed by the 230kV Corridor Route. The specific boundaries have yet to be determined and impacts to the potential registry as a National Natural Landmark cannot be assessed. However, impacts to paleontological resources were analyzed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA (refer to pages 4-4 through 4-8 of the DEIS/DPA).

The Agency Preferred Alternative (230kV Corridor Route) would cross through Marjum Canyon in the House Range. Much of this area was inventoried for the SWIP using a high sensitivity level for paleontological resources (also refer to the Volume II - Natural Environment Technical Report). Potential impacts of the construction in the area were determined to be low. Mitigation measures including use of existing access roads, overland access routes, and monitoring of construction by a qualified paleontologist are expected to minimize any impacts (refer to Tables 1-5 and 1-6 of this document). Specific stipulations will be developed in the COM Plan to mitigate significant resources that may be found during construction.

Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute

In response to public comments about impacts to private lands and potential visual impacts to travelers on U.S. Highway 6/50, several mitigation reroute alternatives were analyzed.

Affected Environment

This section provides a description of the resources potentially affected by rerouting for mitigation through the Sacramento Pass area. The following resources were inventoried:

- earth resources (soils, geology, paleontology, minerals, surface hydrology)
- biological resources (vegetation, wildlife, riparian, wetlands, and threatened, endangered, and other special-status species)
- land use resources (land jurisdiction, existing and planned land uses, parks, recreation, preservation areas, transportation and access, grazing and mining claims and extractive uses)
- visual resources (viewpoints, natural scenery)
- cultural resources (prehistory, ethnohistory, history, archaeology)

The inventory was completed to provide a basis to evaluate the impacts of each mitigation reroute alternative. Inventory methods were the same as described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the Technical Reports.

The resource discussions that follow are based on the following subroutes:

- Subroute 1 - Links 463, 469, 471, 473

- Subroute 2 - Links 464, 465, 469, 471, 473
- Subroute 3 - Links 464, 466, 468, 471, 473
- Subroute 4 - Links 464, 466, 467, 472 (part of the original 230kV Corridor Route)

Earth and Water Resources

Geology - There are no known active faults or geologic hazards in the Sacramento Pass area.

Paleontology - High sensitivity paleontological resources may be present in younger Tertiary sedimentary rocks (Tys) near Weaver Creek in the Snake Range as well as in Quaternary alluvium and colluvium (Qs) in large areas of the Snake Valley. Links 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 471, 472, and 473 cross these areas, however, no known significant fossils have been found in the area.

Mineral Resources - Portions of the Osceola and Black Horse Mining Districts occur in the area. Mineral resources include silver, gold, copper, zinc, tungsten, and lead found in veins along faults and as replacement deposits in limestone. Placer deposits are also common. Mining in the area occurred primarily in the early 1900s but there are still some small placer operations (BLM 1993). Links 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 469, 471, and 472 cross areas which may have mineral resources.

Soils - The soils include Typic Camborthids - Typic Torriorthents - Xerollic Haplargids with a slight erosion hazard (Links 467 and 471), Xerollic Durorthids - Xerollic Durargids - Xerollic Haplargids with a moderate erosion hazard (Links 476 and 471), Typic Xerorthents - Lithic Xerorthents (may unit 49) with a moderate erosion hazard (Links 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, and 471), and Aridic Haploxerolls - Lithic Argixerolls - Rock Outcrop with a moderate erosion hazard (Links 463 and 464). These soil units are described in Table ER-6 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

Water Resources - Several intermittent drainages occur in the Sacramento Pass area. Perennial streams in the area include Weaver Creek and Silver Creek. Silver Creek is crossed by Link 467 at two locations, and by Link 471 at two locations. Weaver Creek is crossed at one location each along Links 464, 467, 468, and 469. Springs located within 0.5 mile of the proposed centerline occur along Link 467 (2 spring locations) and Link 469 (1 spring location). Numerous springs occur in the region.

Refer to Figure 3-6 for an illustration of sensitive Earth Resources.

An inventory of the Sacramento Pass alternatives was completed based on the methods and results as described in Chapter 3, Affected Environment, of the SWIP DEIS/DPA as well as in the Technical Report for the Natural Environment-Volume II. Information on part of the area is discussed under the "230kV Corridor Route" section of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and under the section "Nevada" for the various disciplines geology, paleontology, mineral resources, soils, and water resources in the Technical Report, Volume II, Chapter 2, pages 3-1 to 3-27.

Subroute 1

This subroute crosses 5.4 miles of areas with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 463, 469, 471), although no fossils have been found in the area. There is no prime farmland along this subroute.

Subroute 2

This subroute crosses 7.1 miles of areas with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 464, 465, 469, 471) although no fossils have been found in the area. There is no prime farmland along this subroute.

Subroute 3

This subroute crosses 6.9 miles of areas with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 464, 468, 471) although no fossils have been found in the area. There is 1.2 miles of prime farmland along the assumed centerline of Link 467.

Subroute 4

This subroute crosses 1.3 miles of areas with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 464, 467) although no fossils have been found in the area. There is 1.2 miles of prime farmland along the assumed centerline of Link 467.

Biological Resources

Wildlife species which occur in the area include pronghorn antelope, mule deer, bobcat, mountain lion, coyote, whitetail, antelope squirrel, and desert cottontail. Common bird species include chukar partridge, horned lark, golden eagle, prairie falcon, and red-tailed hawk (Gordon, personal communication, 1993). Refer to Figure 3-7 for an illustration of sensitive Biological Resources.

The mitigation reroute alternatives through the Sacramento Pass area traverse sagebrush shrub, mountain shrub, grassland, and riparian communities (refer to Figure 3-8). Sagebrush scrub, characterized by greasewood and big sagebrush associations, occurs along all the subroutes. Mountain shrub, primarily pinon-juniper woodlands, occurs along the western links at higher elevations (Links 460, 463, 464, 465, and 466). Riparian woodlands, characterized by narrowleaf cottonwood and willow, are supported by Silver Creek (Links 467, 471). Grasslands, characterized by winter fat, galleta grass, and Indian ricegrass occur along the Utah portions and are scattered in Nevada. Playas, characterized by very sparse vegetation cover, occur near the Nevada-Utah border.

Subroute 1

Wildlife - Seven special status bird species have been identified as potentially occurring in the area by agency personnel in Utah (Gordon, personal communication, 1993). Bald eagle and peregrine falcon are listed as endangered at the federal and state levels. Bald eagles are residents of the Snake Valley and the Ferguson Desert (south of the area) during winter months, although no active nests are known to exist along the proposed links. Peregrine falcons are occasional migrants during the fall and spring. Ferruginous hawks and loggerhead shrikes (Federal candidate Category 2 species) and golden eagle, mountain bluebird, and Swainson's hawk (sensitive species) may nest in suitable habitat within the SWIP location.

The area provides year-long habitat for antelope. Link 471 crosses through identified crucial antelope kidding grounds (Podborny, personal communication, 1993). No crucial raptor habitat exists within the proposed area and no known active raptor nests occur within one mile of the assumed centerline.

Plants - Three special status plant species have been identified within the area. One of the three special status plant species is Swertia gypsicola. Its known habitat exists along the eastern links in Utah (Links 471 and 473), although exact locations were not identified. This is a Federal candidate, Category 2 plant species that occurs in desert areas characterized by greasewood-saltbush associations (Mendenhall, personal communication, 1993). Two special status plant species were identified within Nevada (NNHP 1993). Sclerocactus pubispinus occurs within the one-mile corridor for Link 463. It is protected in the State of Nevada by the Cactus and Yucca Law. Two populations of the third species, Cymopterus basalticus, occur. One is located within one-mile of Link 471 and one is along the assumed centerline of Link 471. This is Federally listed as 3C (more common than frequently believed) and is a watch species in Nevada (Northern Nevada Native Plant Society - NNNPS).

Subroute 2

Wildlife - Special status wildlife species are the same as those described for Subroute 1.

Plants - Known habitat for Swertia gypsicola exists along the eastern links in Utah (Links 471 and 473), although exact locations were not identified. This is a Federal candidate, Category 2 plant species that occurs in desert areas characterized by greasewood-saltbush associations (Mendenhall, personal communication, 1993). The third species, Cymopterus basalticus, occurs within one-mile of Link 465. This is Federally listed as 3C (more common than frequently believed) and is a watch species in Nevada (NNNPS).

Subroute 3

Wildlife - Special status wildlife species are the same as those described for Subroute 1.

Plants - Habitat for one special status plant species, Swertia gypsicola, occurs in Utah along Links 471 and 473 as described for Subroute 1.

Subroute 4

Wildlife - Special status bird species are the same as those described for Subroute 1. Although the area provides year-long habitat for antelope, no critical habitat has been identified along these links. Antelope kidding grounds occur north of Link 467, within the one-mile corridor (Podborny, personal communication, 1993). Antelope kidding grounds are important. However, to remain consistent with the previous analysis, the grounds have not been identified as crucial. No crucial raptor habitat exists within the proposed area and no known active raptor nests occur within one mile of the assumed centerlines.

Plants - One special status plant species has been identified within the area. Known habitat for Swertia gypsicola exists along the eastern links in Utah (Links 467 and 472), although exact locations were not identified. This is a Federal candidate, Category 2 plant species that occurs in desert areas characterized by greasewood-saltbush associations (Mendenhall, personal communication, 1993).

Land Use

Land Jurisdiction - Approximately 90 percent of the lands in the Sacramento Pass area are administered by the BLM. Of the remaining lands, approximately 7 percent are private land, and about 3 percent are state-administered lands (refer to Figure 3-9).

Existing & Planned Land Uses - Several small ranches and farms occur in the Sacramento Pass area. The majority of the land in the area is range allotments administered by the BLM. An area of cultivated/agricultural lands occurs between Links 467 and 471 near the Nevada-Utah state line. No airports/airstrips occur within this vicinity. Two 230kV wood H-frame transmission lines, one 69kV transmission line, and one single-pole distribution line traverse through this area (Links 460, 464, 466, 467, 472, 461).

Parks, Recreation, and Preservation Areas - Parks, recreation, and preservation areas include a rest area maintained by the Nevada State Highway Department along U.S. Highway 6/50 (Link 463), Mt. Moriah Wilderness, and the Humboldt National Forest north of Links 469, and 471. Two undeveloped recreation areas include Weaver Creek Scenic Area south of Link 464 and Sacramento Pass Recreation Area northwest of Link 463.

Transportation and Access - U.S. Highway 6/50 is crossed by Links 463, 465, 468, and 467. Numerous unpaved roads and jeep trails occur in the Sacramento Pass area. These roads are unmaintained and provide access to the Forest Service-administered lands and the Mt. Moriah Wilderness.

Mining Claims and Extractive Uses - Numerous mining claims exist in the Sacramento Pass area. However, only a small percentage of these mining claim are maintained in active status.

Refer to Figure 3-10 for an illustration of the Land Use resource features.

Subroute 1

Subroute 1 would pass between the Weaver Creek Scenic Area and the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area (Link 463). Continuing northeast the subroute would cross U.S. Highway 6/50 through rolling basins and low grasslands. This subroute would pass to the north of cultivated lands along Silver Creek, then turn southeast (Link 471, 473) to rejoin the 230kV Corridor Route

Subroute 2

Subroute 2 would turn sharply to cross U.S. Highway 6/50 at a right angle (Link 465). Two miles beyond the highway, this subroute would turn east and follow Links 469, 471, and 473 as described in Subroute 1.

Subroute 3

Subroute 3 would cross U.S. Highway 6/50 just north of the original 230kV Corridor Route (Subroute 4). The subroute would cross the highway, roughly parallel to the existing 230kV transmission lines. From here, it would follow the same corridor as Subroute 1 (refer to Subroute 1).

Subroute 4

Subroute 4 would parallel the two existing 230kV transmission lines. The subroute would cross through the BLM Weaver Creek Scenic Area (Link 464) and pass to the north of GBNP (Link 464, 466, 468). The subroute would cross U.S. Highway 6/50 once.

Visual Resources

Characteristics common to all reroute alternatives include: No Class A scenery and no VRM Class II areas within the study corridors in the Sacramento Pass area.

All parks, recreation, and preservation areas have been identified as high sensitivity viewpoints. The BLM has stated that Weaver Creek Scenic Area is not a high sensitivity viewpoint and of low priority (Bunker, personal communication, 1993). However, the scenic area has been included as a high sensitivity viewpoint to be consistent with the previous visual inventory and analysis.

Refer to Figure 3-11 for an illustration of Visual Resource potential impact zones.

Subroute 1

Scenic Quality/Variety Class - Class B scenery primarily occurs in the mountain and foothills landscape character types (refer to page 6-15 of the Volume III - Human Environment technical report) along part of Link 463. Class C scenery predominately occurs in the rolling foothills and valley desert scrub landscape character type, in both Nevada and Utah (Links 463, 469, 471, 473).

Sensitive Viewpoints and Visibility - This subroute would be viewed in the foreground and middleground by users of the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area (Link 463). It would also be visible from the foreground and middleground views of users of the Weaver Creek Scenic Area (Link 463) and middleground to background views by backcountry users of the Mt. Moriah Wilderness (Link 471).

VRM - This subroute would cross VRM Class III areas for 8.5 miles (Link 463, 469, 471) in the Sacramento Pass area.

Subroute 2

Scenic Quality/Variety Class - Class B scenery occurs along a portion of Link 464 in the valley foothills landscape character type. The predominant scenic quality is Class C in this area and occurs in alluvial valleys (Link 464, 465), rolling foothills (Link 465, 469, 471), and valley desert scrub (Link 473) landscape character types.

Sensitive Viewpoints and Visibility - This subroute would be visible in the foreground (Link 464) and middleground (Link 465) to users from Weaver Creek Scenic Area. This subroute would not be visible to users in the planned campground located in the central area of Sacramento Pass Recreation Area. Although the central portion of the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area is higher in elevation than the surrounding area, the rock escarpment would shield users' views of this route. Middleground and background views from dispersed backcountry users in Mt. Moriah Wilderness are also visible from this route (Link 471).

VRM - VRM Class III areas are found along all of Links 465 and 469 and parts of Links 464 and 471 for a total of 8.5 miles.

Subroute 3

Scenic Quality/Variety Class - Class B scenery occurs in the valley foothills landscape character type (Link 464). This subroute would cross primarily Class C scenery in alluvial valleys (Link 464, 466), rolling foothills (Link 468, 471), and desert scrub (Link 473) landscape character types.

Sensitive Viewpoints and Visibility - This subroute would be visible in the foreground from the Weaver Creek Scenic Area (Link 464), a low sensitive viewpoint. It would also be visible in middleground and background views of backcountry users of Mt. Moriah Wilderness (Links 464, 469, 471).

VRM - This subroute would cross VRM Class III areas along all of Links 466 and 468 and portions of Links 464 and 471 for a total of 7.5 miles.

Subroute 4

Scenic Quality/Variety Class - Class B scenery occurs in the valley foothills landscape character type (Link 464). The predominate scenic quality is Class C in the area and occurs in the alluvial valley (Link 464, 466), rolling foothills (Link 467), and desert scrub (Link 467, 472) landscape character types.

Sensitive Viewpoints and Visibility - This subroute would be visible by users in the foreground from Weaver Creek Scenic Area (Link 464). This route would not be visible to users from the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area.

VRM - This subroute would cross VRM Class III along all of Link 466 and portions of Links 464 and 467 for a total of 7.0 miles.

Cultural Resources

The study strategy and methods previously developed for the cultural resources studies were also used to evaluate the Sacramento Pass subroutes. These methods and the cultural history of the region are summarized in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and further discussed in the supporting cultural resources technical report. They are not repeated here.

Agency files were reviewed to identify archaeological and historical sites previously recorded within 2-mile-wide corridors along the newly defined alternative links. Several surveys had been undertaken in

the general vicinity of the alternative subroutes for various types of projects including juniper chaining, highway upgrades, land exchanges, transmission line construction, telephone cable installation, and BLM recreation inventories and planning efforts (Busby 1974, Cain 1968, Henderson 1979, Moore 1988, Newkirk 1982, Revitte 1983, Stornetta 1988). These surveys encompass only a small percentage of the new alternative corridors. Nevertheless, they provide some indication of the types and frequencies of cultural resources present in the study area.

A total of 20 previously recorded archaeological and historical sites were identified within the 2-mile-wide corridors along the newly defined alternative links (Table 3-6). Fourteen other cultural resources inventoried for the original study are located within the corridors for the subroutes being compared. While collecting these data, documentation was reviewed on an additional 14 cultural resources recorded in the vicinity but beyond the limits of the 2-mile-wide corridors. In general, these resources were similar to those within the corridor.

One of the more significant cultural resources in the general area of the Sacramento Pass reroute alternatives is the Lehman Caves National Monument, which includes the Lehman orchard and aqueduct and the Rhodes cabin, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The monument is located more than 5 miles to the south of any of the alternatives being considered and should not be affected. The Osceola Ditch, constructed in the 1880s for hydraulic placer mining, has been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It would be crossed by Link 460 just to the west of the subroutes currently being evaluated. Therefore, the ditch would be crossed by all of the reroute alternatives being considered and has no bearing on the current analysis of the subroutes. Another potentially sensitive area is the Black Horse Mining District, which boomed in the early 1900s. The Black Horse town site and cemetery are located to the northwest of all the reroute alternative. In the Utah portion of the analysis area, archaeological site 42MD767 is a previously recorded prehistoric base camp rated as having moderate-high sensitivity, but it is located on Link 461 reroute alternatives likely to pass near this site.

The inventory of cultural resources recorded along the subroute corridors are dominated by isolated prehistoric lithic sites. More than 55 percent (19 sites) are such isolates, which are assigned a low sensitivity. These isolates typically consist of one or a few pieces of obsidian or chert waste flakes reflecting chipped stone use, but some are more formal tools such as projectile points or scrapers.

More extensive scatters of lithic tools and debris make up about 12 percent of the recorded inventory (four sites), and another four sites are artifact scatters that include lithic artifacts as well as ceramic sherds, including both Fremont gray wares and Shoshone brown wares. These lithic and artifact scatters are assigned a moderate sensitivity.

These isolates, lithic scatters, and artifact scatters make up approximately 80 percent of the recorded cultural resources. Most of these probably reflect prehistoric use of the region, although some may stem from the later ethnohistoric era when Europeans recorded Native Americans living in the area. (Jedidiah Smith is the first documented Euro-American to have crossed through Sacramento Pass in 1827.) The Snake Valley was designated as an ethnohistoric habitation zone. No actual reported camp sites of Shoshone or Goshute, who are reported to have been culturally and linguistically indistinguishable from the Shoshone (Steward 1938:123), have been recorded within the reroute alternative corridors, but the assigned moderate sensitivity reflects the potential for ethnohistoric sites to be present.

Six sites (less than 20 percent of the inventory) are historic sites. These include three trash scatters and a historic corral and chute, all of which are assigned a moderate sensitivity. One of the other two

sites is the historic Eldridge Ranch, which has a standing adobe house that may date from the 1880s and several outbuildings. The other site has concrete foundations and scattered trash and has been identified as the location of a mill associated with early twentieth century mining in the Black Horse District. Both of these particular sites are reported to have compromised integrity, but in accordance with the original methodology they were rated as having moderate-high sensitivity.

Subroute 1

A total of 21 cultural resources have been recorded within a 2-mile-wide corridor along the assumed centerline of Subroute 1. Eleven of these are low sensitivity prehistoric isolated finds, eight are moderate sensitivity sites, including two prehistoric lithic scatters, two prehistoric artifact scatters, the Snake Valley ethnohistoric habitation zone, two historic trash sites, and a historic corral. In addition, a historic ranch and a historic mining mill site, both rated as having moderate-high sensitivity, are located within the Subroute 1 corridor (Table 3-7).

Subroute 2

Twenty-three cultural resources have been previously recorded along the Subroute 2 corridor. Thirteen of these are low sensitivity prehistoric isolated finds. Three are moderate sensitivity prehistoric lithic scatters and four are prehistoric artifact scatters. The moderate sensitivity Snake Valley ethnohistoric habitation zone also is crossed by this subroute. A historic corral, rated as having moderate sensitivity, and a historic ranch, rated as having moderate-high sensitivity, are also within the Subroute 2 corridor.

Subroute 3

Twenty-two of the 23 cultural resources recorded along Subroute 2 are also within the Subroute 3 corridor. The historic ranch site is the one resource not within the Subroute 3 corridor.

Subroute 4

The 2-mile-wide corridor along the Subroute 4 assumed centerline includes 14 previously recorded resources. These include eight prehistoric isolated finds, which are rated as having low sensitivity. One prehistoric lithic scatter and three prehistoric artifact scatters are rated as having moderate sensitivity, as is the Snake Valley ethnohistoric habitation zone and a historic trash site.

It must be remembered that most of these recorded sites are unlikely to be directly affected by the SWIP, and that because of integrity problems many of the specific sites have been evaluated as having less sensitivity than we assigned based on site types. In addition, the numbers of resources largely reflect the degree of prior survey, rather than actual resource densities. To compensate for the lack of inventory data a model was developed to predict sensitivity zones. A total of 5.6 miles of moderate-high sensitivity zones are predicted along Subroute 4, Subroutes 3 and 4 each are predicted to have almost 5 miles of moderate-high zones each, and Subroute 1 is predicted to have 5.9 miles of moderate sensitivity zones, with each of the other subroutes having approximately 4 to 5 miles (refer to Figure 3-12).

In sum, previous research suggests that the Sacramento Pass and Snake Valley area have been occupied for perhaps 10,000 to 12,000 years, first by Paleo-Indians, then Archaic cultures, followed by farming Fremont groups, and then Numic speaking peoples who followed a more nomadic subsistence strategy similar to the Archaic cultures. Euro-American occupation has included episodes of initial exploration, mining, Mormon settlement, and ranching. The mountain pass and relatively abundant water sources have focused human activity in the region, and inventory surveys suggest that cultural resources are likely to be present within all of the alternatives.

Environmental Consequences

Earth and Water Resource

All of the subroutes would cross areas with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources, although no fossils have been found in the area. With mitigation, no adverse impacts would be expected for paleontological resources.

Generally, the soils in the subroute areas would have low to moderate wind and/or water erosion hazards (refer to Figure 3-6).

Subroute 1

This subroute would cross 5.4 miles of potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 463, 469, 471). There would be a total of 20.5 miles of low residual impacts for soil erosion along this subroute. This subroute would cross six intermittent streams (Links 463, 469, 471) one perennial stream (Link 471) and 1.8 miles of shallow ground water (Links 471, 473). There is one spring (Link 469) located within 0.5 mile of the assumed centerline of this subroute.

Subroute 2

This subroute would cross 7.1 miles with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 464, 465, 469, 471). There would be a total of 21.7 miles of low residual impacts for soil erosion along this subroute. This subroute would cross seven intermittent streams (Links 464, 465, 469, 471), three perennial streams (Link 464, 465, 471), and 1.8 miles of shallow ground water (Links 471, 473). There is one spring (Link 469) located within 0.5 mile of the assumed centerline along this subroute.

Subroute 3

This subroute would cross 6.9 miles of area with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 464, 468, 471). There would be a total of 20.7 miles of low residual impacts for soil erosion along this subroute. The subroute would cross 5 intermittent streams crossings (Links 464, 468, 471), three perennial streams (Links 464, 468, and 471), and 1.8 miles of shallow ground water (Links 471, 473). Numerous springs occur in the area but none are located within 0.5 mile of the assumed centerline.

Subroute 4

This subroute would cross 1.3 miles of area with potentially high sensitivity paleontological resources (Links 464, 467). There would be a total of 19.4 miles of low residual impacts for soil erosion along this subroute. This subroute would cross three intermittent streams, (Links 464, 467), three perennial streams (Links 464, 467), and 2.3 miles of shallow ground water (Links 467, 472). There are two springs (Link 467) located within 0.5 mile of the assumed centerline. This subroute would cross 1.2 miles of prime farmland.

Biological Resources

Subroute 1

Wildlife - Impacts to wildlife along this subroute would be low (refer to Figure 3-7). No critical habitat has been identified for big game or raptors and no active raptor nests exist in the area. Antelope utilize the area throughout the year. Five miles of pronghorn habitat and 2.2 miles of antelope kidding grounds have been identified along the links associated with Subroute 1. Although antelope and other big game may avoid the area during the construction period, long-term impacts would be insignificant as antelope use areas where transmission lines currently exist (Gilbertson, personal communication, 1993).

Plants - Four vegetation communities occur along the various links. At higher elevations (Link 463), 0.4 miles of mountain shrub would be traversed. The other links cross 7.7 miles of sage scrub, 0.4 miles of grassland, and 0.4 miles of playa.

Cymopterus basalticus habitat exists along 0.9 miles of Link 463, with at least one known population occurring. *Swertia gypsicola* has the potential to exist along the eastern portion of Link 471 and along Link 473. Mitigation measures would result in low residual impacts to this species if the species is located during preconstruction surveys. A population of *Sclerocactus pubispinus* occurs within the one-mile corridor of Link 463. It is protected by the state Cactus and Yucca Law.

Subroute 2

Wildlife - Impacts to wildlife along this subroute would be low. No critical habitat has been identified for big game or raptors and no active raptor nests exist in the area. Of the area used by pronghorn throughout the year, 5.8 miles have been identified as pronghorn habitat and 2.2 miles are antelope kidding grounds.

Plants - Four vegetation communities would be traversed by the various links. Mountain shrub occurs along link 464 (0.4 miles) at the higher elevations. Sage scrub (8.3 miles), grassland (0.9 miles) and playa (0.4 miles) occur along all the links.

Swertia gypsicola has the potential to exist along the eastern portion of Link 471 and along Link 473. Mitigation measures would result in low residual impacts to this species if the species is located during preconstruction surveys.

Subroute 3

Wildlife - Impacts to wildlife along this subroute would be low. No critical habitat has been identified for big game or raptors and no active raptor nests exist in the area.

Plants - Four vegetation types would be traversed by Subroute 3. Mountain shrub occurs at the higher elevations along link 464 (0.4 miles). The other types are sage scrub (6.8 miles), grassland (0.8 miles), and playa (0.7 miles).

Swertia gypsicola has the potential to exist along the eastern portion of Link 471 and along Link 473. Mitigation measures, which would be applied if it is located during preconstruction surveys, would result in low residual impacts to this species.

Subroute 4

Wildlife - Impacts to wildlife along this subroute would be low. No critical habitat has been identified for big game or raptors and no active raptor nests exist in the area.

Plants - Six land cover types have been identified along these links, including non-irrigated agricultural lands, which is not discussed as a vegetation type. Mountain shrub occurs at the higher elevations along link 464 (0.4 miles). Sage scrub (4.8 miles), grassland (0.8 miles and playa (0.6 miles) occur. Wetland/riparian vegetation types (0.4 miles) occur along Silver Creek, which is traversed by link 467.

Swertia gypsicola has the potential to exist along the eastern portion of Link 467 and along Link 472. Mitigation measures would result in low residual impacts to this species if the species is located during preconstruction surveys.

Land Use

No moderate or high residual impacts would occur along the four subroutes (refer to Figure 3-10).

Subroute 1

This route would cause 1.4 miles of low impacts to land uses where it would cross the Sevier A MOA east of the Utah border (Link 473). As described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, an agreement specifying the locations where shorter towers would be required along Link 467 and 472 (formerly Link 461) to mitigate potential conflicts with the AGL of the MOA has been negotiated with Hill AFB. Links 471 and 473 would also require shorter towers along a portion of this subroute and may require additional negotiation with Hill AFB.

This subroute would not cross any areas of private land.

Subroute 2

This subroute would have the same impact to land uses as described for Subroute 1.

Subroute 3

This subroute would have the same impact to land uses as described for Subroute 1.

Subroute 4

This subroute would cause 1.6 miles of low impacts to land uses. Links 467 and 472 would cross 1.2 miles of the Sevier A MOA. As described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, an agreement with Hill AFB specifying the locations where shorter towers may be required along Links 467 and 472 (formerly Link 461) to mitigate potential conflicts with the AGL of the MOA.

This subroute would parallel two existing 230kV transmission lines through 1.2 miles of prime farmland/agricultural areas (Link 472) in Nevada and Utah. Specific tower placement and centerline position would reduce the potential impacts to prime farmland/agricultural land.

Visual Resources

Visual contrasts associated with all of the subroutes would comply with the VRM Class III and IV designations (refer to Figure 3-11).

The potential visual impacts of the crossings of U.S. Highway 6/50 by each of the subroutes is depicted in the photo simulations in Figures 3-14, 3-16, 3-18, and 3-19. Figures 3-13, 3-15, and 3-17 depict the existing conditions along U.S. Highway 6/50.

Subroute 1

High visual impacts would occur to views from the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area (Link 463) for 0.2 miles where this subroute would be visible in the foreground. An additional 1.7 miles of high visual impacts would occur where this subroute (Link 471) would cross a road that provides access to the Mt. Moriah Wilderness, and where it would be visible in the foreground from several rural residences near the Utah-Nevada state line (Link 473). This subroute would also cause 1.4 miles of moderate visual impacts to middleground views.

Travelers on U.S. Highway 6/50 driving west would view steel lattice transmission line towers (Link 463) skylined in the foreground on a ridge to the south of the highway for 0.5 miles (refer to Figure 3-14). Transmission line towers would also be visible to middleground views for 2.0 miles along the highway.

Subroute 2

This subroute (Link 471) would cause 1.7 miles of high visual impacts where it would cross a road that provides access to the Mt. Moriah Wilderness and where it would be visible in the foreground from several rural residences near the Utah-Nevada state line (Link 473).

Travelers on U.S. Highway 6/50 driving east would view a transmission line tower (Link 465) skylined in the foreground on the slope to the north of the highway for 0.5 miles (refer to Figure 3-16). Further, a massive steel lattice transmission line tower at the 90 degree turn (Link 465) would be highly visible in the valley south of the highway. Travelers driving west on the highway would view this subroute in the middleground for approximately 1 mile.

Subroute 3

This subroute (Link 471) would cause 1.7 miles of high visual impacts where it would cross a road that provides access to the Mt. Moriah Wilderness and where it would be visible in the foreground from several rural residences near the Utah-Nevada state line (Link 473).

Travelers on U.S. Highway 6/50 driving east would view steel H-frame transmission line towers (Link 468) for approximately 1 mile where this subroute would parallel the two existing 230kV transmission lines. Travelers driving west would view the transmission line in the foreground to middleground for approximately 1 mile. North of the highway the dark color of the steel H-frame transmission line towers would be viewed against background hills and mountains minimizing visual contrasts (refer to Figure 3-18 and 3-19).

Subroute 4

This subroute (Link 467) would cause 3.1 miles of high visual impacts where it would cross a road that provides access to the Mt. Moriah Wilderness and where it would be visible in the foreground from several rural residences near the Utah-Nevada state line (Link 467).

This subroute (Links 466, 467) would parallel the two existing 230kV transmission lines and would cause weak to moderate visual contrasts in the landscape. Impacts to travelers on U.S. Highway 6/50 would be slightly less than those described for Subroute 3.

Cultural Resources

Although some 14 to 23 cultural resources had been recorded within 2-mile-wide corridors along the four subroutes, the reference centerline of Link 464, which is a component of Subroutes 1, 2, and 4, is the only link to directly cross any of the recorded sites other than the broadly defined ethnohistoric Goshute habitation area that encompasses much of the Snake Valley (refer to Figure 3-12). The assumed centerline of Link 464 crosses a cluster of five prehistoric resources that include two isolated finds of lithic artifacts, two artifact scatters, and a small lithic scatter. This results in a low to moderate impact rating along 2 miles of this link (refer to Table 3-8).

Projected direct construction impacts within the predicted sensitivity zones accumulate to approximately 7 to 9 miles of moderate impacts and 3 to 5 miles of low impacts among the various subroutes (refer to Table 3-8). Impacts ranked as moderate could include disturbance of 7.5 to 12 acres per linear mile in moderate to moderate-high sensitivity zones. Low impacts were defined as disturbance of 6 to 12 acres per linear mile in low to moderate sensitivity zones.

Increases in public accessibility could lead to increased vandalism of cultural resources or attrition of cultural resources during post-construction years as a result of increased recreational use or vehicular

traffic. In general, the areas traversed by the Sacramento Pass subroutes are already accessible and the increase in public accessibility is projected to increase less than 20 percent along most of the subroutes as a result of constructing access roads for the SWIP. Approximately 2 to 3 miles of each of the four subroutes are predicted to experience a 50 to 100 percent increase in accessibility. Because so few known cultural resources are located in the path of the reference centerlines of the subroutes, the projected secondary impacts due to increased accessibility are rated as low to none (refer to Table 3-9).

The final factor considered was the potential for visual intrusions to degrade the integrity of historic properties. Typically such concerns focus on historic buildings or structures whose setting is an important part of their historical values. None of the known cultural resources within the corridors of the Sacramento Pass subroutes were identified as types of properties warranting specific viewshed analysis. The properties that were considered are the Eldridge Ranch House (CR5322) and the Black Horse town site and cemetery (CR80). The Eldridge Ranch House has been recommended as not being significant, and is located along Link 469, which is in terrain where the line would be seldom seen and visual impacts are rated as low. The Black Horse town site and cemetery have been identified as having potential for development as a recreation area, but the reference centerline of Link 463 is more than 2 miles from the town site. The analysis of the viewshed indicates the line is likely to be visible from this distance, but impacts are expected to be low.

Composite impacts scores were computed using the methods described in the SWIP DEIS/DPA (page 4-70) and cultural resources technical report (9-93). Subroute 1 has the lowest composite impact score (42.4), with Subroutes 2 and 3 having the highest (54.8 and 53.8 respectively). The Subroute Comparison yielded a moderate score of 48.7. Therefore, from a cultural resource perspective, Subroute 1 would be preferable over Subroute 4, which, in turn, is preferred over Subroutes 2 and 3. The range of variation among the routes is not great, no high impact zones are projected along any of the subroutes, and all of the potential impacts are likely to be mitigable through minor route modifications or data recovery studies. In sum, cultural resource factors are not a major factor in the selection of alternatives.

Environmentally Preferred Subroute

Subroute 3 is the environmentally preferred subroute. This subroute would not be visible from the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area and would avoid private lands (refer to Figure 3-20 for subroute locations). Although Subroutes 1 and 2 would not be visible from the Sacramento Pass Recreation Area, transmission line towers would be skylined along these subroutes and would cause significant visual impacts on views from U.S. Highway 6/50 (refer to Figures 3-14 and 3-16). Subroute 2 would cross the highway west of the existing 230kV transmission lines creating visual contrasts and impacts along a larger segment of the highway. Subroute 4 would cause similar visual impacts to the highway where it would parallel the existing 230kV transmission lines. However, Subroute 4 would not avoid private lands.

Although high visual impacts to views from the Weaver Creek Scenic Area were identified in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, the BLM no longer manages this area under a special designation and has returned it to multiple-use management. Subsequently, in this analysis, the Weaver Creek Scenic Area was assigned a low sensitivity and no impacts were identified. There would be no high impacts to the Earth, Biological, Cultural, or Land Use resources by the four subroutes analyzed (refer to Figure 3-21 for miles of impact to each resource).

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Introduction

Due to a number of errors in the DEIS/DPA, the entire Biological Resources section is reprinted in this document.

Federal environmental legislation and regulations applicable to biological resources in the project area include the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended, the Sikes Act, Title II as amended, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1986, the Bald Eagle Act of 1940 (amended in 1962 to include the golden eagle), Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (and amendments), Executive Orders 11990 (protection of wetlands) and 11988 (floodplain management), Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies to prepare environmental impact statements (EIS) on all major federal actions in accordance with Council of Environmental Quality implementing regulations (1978). Additional authority requiring the addressing of biological resources is listed in the technical report.

Affected Environment

Biological resource data for the states of Idaho, Nevada, and Utah were obtained from a secondary (existing) data source for the SWIP regional study conducted by Dames & Moore in 1988 (also refer to Chapter 2). The regional inventory focused on the distribution of highly sensitive species of wildlife and plants and similarly sensitive habitat types. Locations of federally listed species and sensitive habitats were used to select a number of preliminary corridors to be studied further.

Methods

A biological inventory was then conducted for the SWIP alternative routes using data from scientific literature, existing Dames & Moore files, satellite imagery at 1:100,000 scale, SPOT black and white satellite imagery at 1:24,000 scale, and agency contacts. Data was collected within the study corridors one mile on either side of the assumed centerlines for each routing alternative. Agency personnel were asked to provide information on potential or known occurrences of sensitive species of wildlife and plants and on habitats of special concern within the study corridors. The following agencies were contacted for information: the BLM, Forest Service (FS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Idaho, Nevada, and Utah Natural Heritage Programs.

Data were collected and digitized into a Geographic Information System (GIS) at a 1:100,000 scale for:

- vegetation types
- common and characteristic plant species found in each vegetation type
- vertebrate species likely to be found in habitats in the project area
- species listed as federally threatened, endangered or as candidates under review for listing

- species classified as rare, sensitive or otherwise protected by state agencies
- areas of special biological value or interest, including riparian and wetland habitats

The technical reports contain detailed information on the vegetation and wildlife resources inventoried. The results of the biological resources inventory are summarized below.

Results

Vegetative Communities

Twelve vegetative communities have been identified within the SWIP biological study area. Satellite imagery facilitated the identification and distribution of vegetation (refer to Map Volume). The imagery was "classified" using a computer to distinguish various spectral qualities, or light reflectivity from the ground surface digitally recorded by a satellite. Since the spectral qualities of some communities were similar on the satellite images, the various communities were mapped into several vegetation types, and are described below.

Shadscale, greasewood, samphire-iodine bush, and Great Basin sagebrush are all included under sage scrub. Mojave desertscrub and grassland communities are both uniquely identified. Wetland and riparian areas are listed under riparian. Piñon-juniper and alpine tundra are represented by woodland/mountain shrub/grasses. Limber/bristlecone pine and quaking aspen are represented by the mountain conifer/broadleaf category.

Agriculture - This is most prevalent in the Snake River plain in southern Idaho where native vegetation has been cleared for agricultural purposes (i.e., Links 10, 20, 40, 41, 61, 62, and 63). Refer to the Land Use section in the DEIS/DPA and the Landcover maps in the Map Volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for locations.

Grassland - Grassland communities occur throughout the alternative corridors, largely ecotonal with other plant communities, such as sage scrub (Links 71, 91, 92, 100, 110, 130, 160, 141, 142, 144, 152, 161, 200, 211, 221, 243, 259, 260, 270, 362-63, 420, 430, 450, etc.) and piñon-juniper (Links 263, 264, 280, 350), but are often present as discrete grassland units. Many native species have been replaced historically during land management practices by exotics, such as cheatgrass brome (*Bromus tectorum*), crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*), filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), tumble mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola iberica*). Native species include gramas (*Bouteloua* spp.), bluegrasses (*Poa* spp.), needlegrasses (*Stipa* spp.), galleta (*Hilaria jamesii*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*), and squirreltail (*Sitanion hystrix*).

Sage Scrub - The four distinct communities categorized under sage scrub are described below. The most common is Great Basin sagebrush, the other three have more specialized habitat requirements. Very few links cross sage scrub exclusively (e.g., Links 70, 300, 310, and 320), most being ecotonal with grasslands (links listed above).

- **Great Basin Sagebrush Community** - On low foothills at somewhat higher elevations, big sagebrush reach down to make contact with playa chenopods, and upward along ridges and in valley bottoms to mingle with piñon-juniper woodlands. In addition, portions of this community extend well above piñon-juniper to cover rocky ridges and

valleys at elevations as high as 10,000 feet. At higher elevations, soils are rocky and less dense, the water table is lower, and soils are free of salts. Vegetative cover is between 20 and 50 percent. Within this community, mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*) occurs locally on south-facing slopes in dense stands. At higher elevations, quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and white fir (*Abies concolor*) may occur given moister climates. Limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) and spruce (*Picea* spp.) occur in some parts of Nevada.

- **Shadscale Community** - Shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*) occurs in low elevation, often saline basins typified by low precipitation, heavy soils, and a water table too deep to support stands of greasewood. This shrub-dominated community normally has cover values of less than 12 to 15 percent, and plants that are often less than one meter in height.
- **Greasewood Community** - Greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) occurs in saline soils along the edges of playas where the water table is high. Salts from the soils are drawn in solution into the plant, the leaves drop off and rot causing a highly alkaline habitat in which only specialized, salt tolerant plants can survive. Vegetative cover in greasewood communities is usually less than 10 percent.
- **Samphire-Iodine Bush Community** - This community occurs where the combination of high water table and high soil salt content is so great that water often stands in pools of low playas and dense crusts of salt crystals form on soil surfaces and on the bases of plants.

Mojave Desertscrub Community - This community is found on the basin floors and bajadas below 4,000 feet. South of the Pahrnagat Mountains and at the north end of Kane Springs Valley in Nevada, a transition to Mojave desertscrub vegetation occurs (e.g., Links 680, 690, and 700). Creosotebush (*Larrea tridentata*) is the most abundant plant, with white bursage (*Franseria dumosa*) as a codominant. Blackbrush (*Coleogyne ramosissima*) is common at higher elevations. Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*), all-scale (*Atriplex hymenoclea*), desert holly (*A. hymenelytra*) and brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*) occur locally.

Woodland/Mountain Shrubs/Grasses - Piñon-juniper and the alpine-tundra community are two distinct vegetation types represented by this category.

- **Piñon-Juniper** - In areas of generally higher elevations (5,000 to 8,000 feet) and steeper slopes, piñon-juniper woodlands dominate the upper foothill landscape. These woodlands or "pygmy forests" are limited along alternative links at higher elevations, primarily intermingling with grasslands and sage scrub (e.g., Links 263, 264, 280, 350, 364, and 460). In many areas, this vegetation type runs continuously from mountain range to mountain range. Annual precipitation in these sites varies greatly. Soils are often rocky, shallow, and poorly defined. Plant cover is often less than 15 percent with most of that existing as upper canopy cover. Grasses, forbs, and woody plants are limited. The most common woody plant is singleleaf piñon (*Pinus monophylla*). Where juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) dominates, neither singleleaf piñon nor piñon pine (*P. edulis*) occur within the study corridors in southern Idaho.

- **Alpine-Tundra Community** - Above timberline, at elevations exceeding 11,000 feet, low-growing, perennial herbs are virtually the only plant types present. Woody plants are rare or non-existent.

Mountain Conifer/Broadleaf - Two distinct high elevation communities, limber pine - bristlecone pine and quaking aspen, are represented by this category.

- **Limber Pine-Bristlecone Pine** - This high elevation community occurs between 8,000 and 10,000 feet of elevation. Common tree species are white fir (*Abies concolor* var. *lowiana*), bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva* var. *aristata*), and limber pine (*P. flexilis*). This vegetative community has not been specifically identified along any of the links.
- **Quaking Aspen** - Occurring at elevations ranging from 6,000 and 8,000 feet, quaking aspen are often found growing in pure stands. Understory conifers generally will eventually grow and shade out the aspen.

Riparian - Riparian areas are encountered infrequently within the alternatives, generally occurring in narrow communities along streams and marshes. Streams in the region traversed by the SWIP alternatives originate from perennial headwater spring sources or from snowmelt which creates numerous ephemeral and a few perennial streams. Typical intermountain vegetation along these waterways is comprised of cottonwoods (*Populus* spp.), willows (*Salix* spp.), dogwood (*Cornus* spp.), wild rose (*Rosa* spp.), birch (*Betula* spp.), chokecherry (*Prunus* spp.), and alder (*Alnus* spp.) (Links 241, 244, 245, 261, 267, 291, 292, and 620). A unique variety of swamp cedar (*Juniperus scopulorum*) exists in three known locations including the White River Valley (Link 670) and Spring Valley (Link 380). Climate and elevation will determine which species are present.

Wetlands - Wetlands are also present in the form of marshes and wet meadows within portions of the study area, primarily at lower elevations.

Other Natural Land Cover - Other categories of land cover that have been identified by satellite imagery are natural bare soils and playas. Natural bare soils occur along valleys, in dry areas, dunes, and those areas where vegetation is very sparse. Playas are dry lake beds, often with high mineral content. During wet years, playas, or alkali flats, may provide important habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds. They also represent potential nesting sites for the snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), a federal Category 2 candidate species for listing among the threatened or endangered wildlife of the United States. A majority of the playas are located in Utah with a few scattered in Nevada (e.g., Links 190, 223, 230, 490, 500, 510, 520, 572, 290). None of the links are exclusively within a playa.

Wildlife

Approximately 560 species of vertebrates are likely to occur, over the course of a year, in habitats traversed by alternative corridors. These species are listed in Tables BIO-10 through BIO-15 of the technical reports (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where technical reports can be reviewed).

Seventy species of fish are known to occur within aquatic habitats in the project area (refer to Tables BIO-10, BIO-11, BIO-12 of the technical reports). Native and introduced game fish are present in warm and cold water lakes, ponds and reservoirs, and in perennial streams and rivers. Others inhabit

hot and cold springs, and marshes. Approximately 31 percent of the fish fauna occupying waters in the project area are introduced.

Fifteen species of amphibians are expected to occur in aquatic, riparian, and wetland habitats in the project area. Sixty-two species of reptiles potentially occur in terrestrial habitats within the study corridors (refer to Table BIO-13 of the technical reports).

The Biological Resources Technical Report (Table BIO-14 of the technical reports) lists 316 species of birds that potentially occur within habitats in the project area. Of these 109 are most likely to occur in lower elevation swamp/slough areas and 109 (some overlap) are riparian species. Grasslands are habitat for approximately 62 different species and the sagebrush community hosts 81 species. Approximately 71 of the 316 bird species are permanent residents of the area and 143 are summer breeding residents. The remainder are likely to occur only during spring and/or fall migration periods, with a few winter residents.

A total of 111 species of mammals are expected to occur within habitats traversed by the alternative routing corridors of the SWIP (refer to Table BIO-15 of the technical reports). Small mammals including rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits and hares), bats, and shrews are the most numerous, although not readily observed. Over one half of the mammals that may occur in the project area are rodents (51 species). Large mammals include 19 species of carnivores and five species of native ungulates.

Approximately 34 species of vertebrates are not native to the region, introduced through accidental or intentional human activities.

Agencies responsible for wildlife management identified several species of wildlife as being of particular concern. These included the species listed below. More information is provided in the Special Status section and alternative routes descriptions.

Wild Horses and Burros - Free-roaming horses (*Equus caballus*) and burros (*E. asinus*) occur on public lands in the project area. These animals are descendants of horses and burros that escaped from man or were turned out onto the open range. Wild Horses are extremely mobile, readily moving great distances across public lands. They are fairly widespread throughout the northeastern part of Nevada and adjacent Utah. The BLM has established a number of management areas specifically for wild horses (also refer to Herd Management Areas in Chapter 3 of this document).

Gila Monster (*Heloderma suspectum*) - The range of the Gila monster in the United States includes the tip of southern Nevada, the southwestern corner of Utah, all of southern and southwestern Arizona, extreme southwestern New Mexico, and extreme southeastern California (Stebbins 1985). In the Mojave Desert, the Gila monster occurs primarily in Mojave desertscrub, but can also be found in lower most limits of juniper woodlands. They are more common in rocky habitats compared with the drier and sandier floors. Gila monsters are not uncommon, but are seldom seen since they spend most of their time underground (Lowe et. al 1986). They dig their own burrows or occupy those made by other species, such as desert tortoises (Stebbins 1985, Lowe et. al 1986). Gila monsters feed on small mammals, reptiles, lizards, carrion, and eggs, primarily of ground nesting birds (Stebbins 1985). This species is likely to occur in the vicinity of Links 690, 700, and 720. The Gila monster is a federal Category 3C species, and has protected status in Nevada.

Desert Bighorn Sheep - (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) - Desert bighorn sheep remain in several mountain ranges in Clark, Lincoln, and Nye counties, Nevada. These mountains include the Las Vegas, Sheep, Hiko, and Arrow Canyon ranges, and the Delamar and Meadow Valley mountains. They also occur in

the South Egan Range in White Pine County. There has been concern expressed for disruption of bighorn sheep movement and use of water sources.

Desert Tortoise - (*Gopherus agassizii*) - In recent years, dramatic declines in tortoise population numbers have been observed throughout much of its range, including southern Nevada. A number of factors have contributed to the observed decline including disease, loss of habitat to development, degradation of habitat from livestock grazing, predation on juveniles by ravens attracted to areas where human refuse accumulates, illegal collection, and off-road vehicle (ORV) use. The Mojave population of the desert tortoise was formally listed as a federally threatened species by the FWS in April 1990. Concern has been expressed for the maintenance of viable populations in Clark County, Nevada, and especially the Las Vegas Valley where rapid commercial and residential development is occurring. As a result of these urban developments affecting desert tortoise, a Habitat Conservation Plan is being developed to minimize, monitor, and mitigate impacts to tortoises in the larger Clark County region. The plans currently identify the Coyote Spring Valley as a priority area for preservation of the species (Regional Environmental Consultants 1991). Desert Tortoise do not occur in Idaho or in the Utah portion of the SWIP.

Sage Grouse - (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) - Declines in sage grouse numbers are largely associated with destruction of sagebrush habitat. Conversion of sagebrush to agricultural lands and attempts to convert sagebrush areas to grassland for livestock grazing are a few of the human developments contributing to the decrease in grouse numbers. There has been concern expressed by state and federal agency biologists for other activities that would further impact the sage grouse populations.

Aquatic/Riparian Habitats

Idaho - Important aquatic/riparian habitats traversed by the SWIP alternatives or located in close proximity to project alternatives including the Snake River, Salmon Falls Creek and Reservoir, Little Wood River, Deep Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Goose Lake, Wilson Lake Reservoir, and Deep Creek Reservoir.

Nevada - Aquatic/riparian habitats traversed by the SWIP alternatives or in close proximity to project alternatives include the Humboldt River and tributaries, Salmon Falls Creek, Trout Creek, Shoshone Creek, Thousand Springs Creek, Bishop Creek and Reservoir, Duck Creek, Steptoe Creek and associated springs, Bassett Lake, Spring Valley Creek, the White River, Ellison Creek, Forest Home Creek, Whipple and Tule Field Reservoirs and Goshute Creek.

Several wetland areas traversed by the SWIP alternatives serve as nesting and wintering grounds for waterfowl and bald eagles. These occur in areas of Spring Valley, Steptoe Valley, White River Valley and Bassett Lake. Wetlands associated with Bassett lake are nesting habitat for white-faced ibis, long-billed curlew, and sandhill crane.

Natural springs and streams which are habitat for a number of sensitive fish species include Goshute Creek, Duck Creek, and associated springs of Steptoe Valley, Spring Valley Creek, and associated springs of Spring Valley, the White River, and springs of White River Valley and Town Creek.

Utah - Significant aquatic/riparian habitats that occur within the SWIP alternatives in Utah include the Sevier River and tributaries, Sevier Lake, Topaz Slough, Crafts Lake, Baker Creek, Jensen Spring, Rocky Knoll Spring, Coyote Spring, Gandy Salt Marsh lake, Leland-Harris Spring Complex, and Miller Spring.

Leland-Harris Spring Complex and Miller Spring occur within several miles of Link 63 in Snake Valley. These areas are habitat for four sensitive species: the desert dace, least chub, spotted frog, and Great Basin silver spot butterfly. The latter three are candidates (Category 2) for federal listing as threatened or endangered.

Special Status Species - Plants

Seventy-three plant species, which occur or potentially occur along proposed corridors, have been identified as sensitive on the state and/or federal level (refer to Tables BIO-16, 17, and 18 in the technical report). There are no known plant species occurring within the SWIP corridors that are presently listed as endangered on the federal level. One recently listed as threatened is unlikely to occur in the study area. Candidate species in the area include two that are Federal Category 1 (C1), 32 are Federal Category 2 (C2), and 35 are recommended for deletion Federal Category (C3). C1 means that substantial information exists to support proposing the species for listing as threatened or endangered, and a listing proposal is being or will be prepared. C2 indicates that listing of a species may be appropriate when additional information is gathered. The C3 category means that species that were once considered for listing are no longer being considered.

The listing used was the Federal Register 50 CFR Part 17, Wednesday, February 21, 1990. Most are found on at least one state list of species of concern. Although many of the species are not legally protected by the Endangered Species Act, they are protected by federal agency policies and regulations.

Known locations of 31 of the 73 plant species occur along, or within one mile, of alternative routes. The low number of known plant locations in the area is more likely a function of the lack of field research and does not preclude the existence of additional species.

Idaho - Seventeen sensitive plant species have been identified as occurring or potentially occurring within the SWIP corridors in Idaho. According to the most recent data available, none of these species is currently listed as threatened or endangered on the federal level. Of the sixteen species, three are federal Category 2 and one is C3. The State of Idaho identifies various levels of sensitivity as discussed below. Table BIO-16 in the Technical Report lists these 17 plants.

Four plants are classified as C2 on the federal level. One species of milk-vetch, Mulford's milk-vetch (*Astragalus mulfordiae*), is known from several counties, including Owyhee County (Moseley and Groves 1990). It grows on well-drained, deep, sandy soils on south-facing slopes (Rosentreter 1990). Mourning milk-vetch (*A. atratus* var. *inseptus*) is endemic to the mid-Snake River Plains of southern Idaho on flats, plains, and gentle slopes. Davis' peppergrass (*Lepidium davisii*) occurs along internally drained, hard-bottomed playas. These playas are often used for stock watering ponds and race tracks. Montane peppergrass (*L. montanum* var. *papilliferum*), known from Owyhee County can tolerate harsh conditions where other plants are unable to take root (Rosentreter 1990).

The categories used to identify state sensitive species are defined by The Idaho Native Plant Society. One species, wovenspore lichen (*Texosporium sancti-jacobi*), is considered state priority 1. It is part of an effort to identify rare non-vascular plants in Idaho (Moseley and Groves 1990). Only recently found in Idaho, it grows on decomposed grasses and on the underside of very old rabbit pellets where humidity is high (Rosentreter 1990).

Two-headed onion (*Allium anceps*), four-wing milk-vetch (*Astragalus tetraapterus*) and dimersia (*Dimersia howellii*) are listed as State Priority 2. Two-headed onion requires moist habitat and areas that are inundated in the spring. Four-wing milk-vetch is found in association with piñon-juniper at elevations of 3,500 to 6,500 feet. It is known from one site in Twin Falls County, Idaho and is being threatened by off-road vehicles and trampling. Dimersia is known from a limited number of sites in Owyhee County.

Owyhee morning milk-vetch (*Astragalus atratus* var. *owyheensis*) is a state sensitive species. Generally found on steep hillsides and flats over basalt, it is often entangled under sagebrush. Threats include range improvement and agricultural development. Other state sensitive species are Torrey's blazing star (*Mentzelia torreyi* var. *acerosa*), and thistle milk-vetch (*Astragalus kentrophyta* var. *jessiae*), known from a limited number of sites in southern Idaho. Large-flowered gymnosteris (*Gymnosteris nudicaulis*) and small-flowered gymnosteris (*G. parvula*) occur within the Shoshone District, BLM and may occur along proposed corridors (Popovich 1992). Large-flowered gymnosteris is on the BLM and state sensitive species lists. It grows on open, sandy places in the plains and foothills. Small-flowered gymnosteris, a review species on the state list, grows on open, dry to moderately moist slopes, flats, and drier meadows from the foothills to above timberline.

Webber's needlegrass (*Stipa webberi*) is more common than previously known and was recently delisted (Popovich 1992).

Two species being monitored at the state level are Murphy milk-vetch (*Astragalus mulfordiae*) and white eatonella (*Eatonella nivea*).

Two species are Category 3. Picabo milk-vetch (*Astragalus oniciformis*), a BLM sensitive species was thought to be extinct (University of Idaho 1980), however, populations have been found on the Shoshone District of the BLM (Popovich 1992). Murphy milk-vetch (*A. camptopus*), found in arid, sandy soils of southeastern Idaho in association with shadscale (Clark 1989). A primrose (*Primula cusickiana*), is currently undergoing taxonomic review and has no status at this time.

Nevada - Forty-four plant species in Nevada have been identified by various agencies as requiring special consideration (Table BIO-17 in the Technical Report). Status information on the state level is from "Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Plants of Nevada" updated February 13, 1989. There are no federally-listed endangered plant species known to occur or potentially occur within the SWIP corridors in Nevada. One plant listed as threatened has most likely been extirpated from the Great Basin.

Ute, or plateau, lady's tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) historically occurred in Nevada. This species is supported by moist soils in mesic or wet meadows along springs, bogs, or open-seepage areas in cottonwood, tamarix, willow, and piñon-juniper associations at 4,400 to 6,810 feet in elevation. It was last collected in 1936 in Meadow Valley Wash east of the proposed corridors near Panaca, Nevada.

Monte Neva paintbrush (*Castilleja salsuginosa*) is a Category 1 species and critically endangered on the state list. It is found at Monte Neva Hot Springs in Steptoe Valley. Sand-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum argophyllum*) is listed as Category 1 on the federal level, and critically endangered on the state level. It is located in the Ruby Valley area (Lindsey 1989).

Clokey milk-vetch (*Astragalus aequalis*) is a C2 species, recommended as threatened by the Northern Nevada Native Plant Society (NNNPS). It is found on gravelly hillsides and ridges at elevations ranging from 5,900 to 8,400 feet. Three-cornered pod Geyer milk-vetch (*Astragalus triquetrus*) is a

C2 species, listed as threatened by NNNPS (1989) and critically endangered by the State of Nevada. It grows in sandy soils on dunes or in washes. Known locations are along the southern extension in the Dry Lake Valley.

There are 15 species on the federal Category 2 list, which are also on the NNNPS watch list. Exact locations for most of these are unknown, although habitats supporting known populations are similar to those traversed by the SWIP corridors. Therefore, the potential for occurrence of several different species of concern exists. Sunnyside green gentian (*Frasera gypsicola*), a C2 species, is a mound-forming plant found within remnant playas. Known locations include White Pine and Nye counties. Welsh's catseye (*Cryptantha welshii*) is the C2 species with the highest potential for occurrence (Walker 1989). It has been located in Jake's Valley and is likely to be found within one mile of the proposed corridor due to similar habitat types.

Those Category 2 species with moderate potential for occurring along proposed corridors include maguire lewisia (*Lewisia maguirei*) and Blaine's pincushion (*Sclerocactus blainei*). Maguire lewisia is found on loose soils associated with piñon-juniper at elevations of 7,500 to 7,800 feet. Blaine's pincushion is currently not well documented. It is found in association with greasewood-shadscale. The Cactus and Yucca Law would apply to any found in the affected area. Jan's catchfly (*Silene nachleringae*), another newly described species, is found at elevations above 9,500 feet with subalpine vegetation.

Long calyx milk-vetch (*Astragalus oophorus* var. *lonchocalyx*) has low to moderate potential for occurrence (Walker 1989). It is located on dry, gravelly hillsides in association with piñon-juniper and sagebrush.

There are five species with low potential for occurrence. Eastwood milkweed (*Asclepias eastwoodiana*) is found on low alkaline clay hills away from other plants. Peck station milk-vetch (*Astragalus eurylobus*) grows in semi-badland sites with Utah juniper and black sagebrush. Currant milk-vetch (*A. uncialis*) is found on dry knolls and slopes at elevations of 5,300 to 6,500 feet. Sheep fleabane (*Erigeron ovinus*) grows on rocky outcrops at elevations exceeding 6,500 feet. Tuffed globemallow (*Sphaeralcea caespitosa*) is found on gravelly limestones with mixed shrub and piñon-juniper grass communities.

Seven additional C2-listed species include several which are newly described, making it difficult to discern the actual sensitivity of the species. The following descriptions are based on available information. Elko rock-cress (*Arabis falcifructa*) is found in barren or sparsely vegetated areas in Elko County and is of concern in the Wilkins area (BLM 1990). Grouse Creek rock-cress (*A. falcatoria*), also in Elko County, is found in high elevation coniferous forests. Goose Creek milk-vetch (*Astragalus anserinus*) is located in Elko County on undeveloped soils along Goose Creek and at Thousand Springs (BLM 1990). Broad fleabane (*Erigeron latus*) is found on gravelly or rocky hillsides. Not enough is known about this species to make definite statements about its sensitivity (USDI, BLM 1989). Arching pussytoes (*Antennaria arcuata*) grows in meadows that are not permanently wet and in riparian areas. Lewis buckwheat (*Eriogonum lewisii*), is known on gravelly steep slopes. Barren valley collomia (*Collomia renacta*) is found in "badland areas" and is of concern in the Pequop Summit area (BLM 1990).

Six C2 species exist which may occur on the southern extension to Las Vegas. Merriam or white bear poppy (*Arctomecon merriami*), found on shallow gravelly soils, is threatened by land development. Golden bear poppy (*A. californica*), considered critically endangered by the State, is found in gravelly desert flats in association with creosotebush. Alkali mariposa (*Calochortus striatus*) is found in alkali

meadows in association with saltgrass. Beaverdam breadroot (*Pedimelum castoreum*), recently listed (January 1992) is known to occur in sandy gravels of the Mojave Desert, especially along Kane Springs Wash (Link 680). Two subspecies of penstemon (*Penstemon bicolor* var. *bicolor*, *P. bicolor* var. *roseus*) occur next to the Dry Lake Substation site in the Dry Lake Valley. Both are known from shallow, gravelly soils and appear to survive in disturbed areas (Mozingo 1980). The first variety is a watch species. The latter is recommended for deletion on the state level.

Blaine's pincushion, Clokey pincushion (*Coryphantha vivipera* var. *rosea*), and Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*) are three species of cactus specifically listed. All species of cactus and yucca are protected by The Cactus and Yucca Law, Nevada State Law (Revised Statutes 527). There are known populations of Great Basin fishhook along several of the links in the eastern part of the state. The proposed corridors may cross some healthy populations of cactus or yucca.

Eleven of the species identified are listed as 3C on the federal level. Habitat descriptions are given in Appendix C.

Two tree species merit mentioning. Bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*) occurs in eastern Nevada, found on dry, rock slopes and ridges of high mountains at elevations exceeding 7,500 feet. They are classed among the oldest known living plants and can provide important historical information. Additionally, a rare variety of juniper, known as swamp cedar (*Juniperus scopulorum*), occurs in White River Valley east of one link.

Utah - Fourteen species of sensitive plants that are known to occur, or have the potential to occur, within the corridors of the SWIP (Table BIO-18 in the Technical Report). According to the most recent data available, none of these species is listed as endangered on the federal or state level.

Ute, or plateau, lady's tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) historically occurred in the Great Basin. This species is supported by moist soils in mesic or wet meadows along springs, bogs, or open-seepage areas in cottonwood, tamarix, willow, and piñon-juniper associations at 4,400 to 6,800 feet in elevation. None of the historical locations were within the proposed corridors and many of these populations have evidently been extirpated with the exception of some near Utah Lake.

Nine species are C2 on the Federal level. Compact catseye (*Cryptantha compacta*), recently downgraded from a C1 species, is found within Millard County in association with desertscrub and grassland. Sunnyside green gentian (*Swertia*=[*Frasera*] *gypsicola*) is considered extremely rare globally and statewide (Young 1989). Known locations include Millard County. Sand-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum ammophilum*), associated with desertscrub, most likely occurs within the SWIP corridors. Frisco clover (*Trifolium andersonii* var. *friscanum*) is an S1 (S3) species, with this particular subspecies considered rare. It is found at elevations of 7,000 to 7,500 feet in association with piñon-juniper in Millard County.

Known locations of currant milk-vetch (*Astragalus uncialis*) exist near Delta, Utah. This species is found on dry knolls and slopes in limestone-derived soils. Depressed bitterweed (*Hymenoxys depressa*) is undergoing taxonomic recombination resulting in a more extended range than previously defined (Boyce 1989). It is found in association with black sagebrush. Tunnel Springs beard tongue (*Penstemon concinnus*) is known to occur in Millard County, although it may be south of proposed corridors. Jones globemallow (*Sphaeralcea caespitosa*) has been identified as occurring within a proposed corridor (USDI, BLM 1989). It is found on calcareous soils in association with mixed shrub and piñon-juniper communities at elevations of 5,000 to 6,500 feet.

The remaining five plants listed are categorized as 3C which indicates that they are no longer candidates for listing because they are more abundant than previously believed or have no federal status. They should still be taken into consideration, as the State of Utah lists several of them as species of concern. Calloway milk-vetch (*Astragalus callithrix*) and terrace buckwheat (*Eriogonum natum*) are listed as S2. Their ranges include Millard County. Limestone buckwheat (*E. eremicum*) and Great Basin pincushion (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*) have not been ranked on the state level yet. Both are found in Millard County. Transmission lines are listed as a threat to limestone buckwheat, and harvesting for horticultural purposes threatens the Great Basin pincushion. Low beard tongue (*Penstemon nanus*) is found in Juab, Millard, and Tooele counties.

Special Status Species - Wildlife

The FWS and the states of Idaho, Nevada, and Utah have all devised codes for defining the extent of rarity and level of threat to biotic taxa that are included on species lists maintained by each governmental entity. Definitions of these codes may be found in the technical reports. Concern for the species discussed below has been expressed by agencies contacted during the biological resource inventory.

Idaho - Federally-listed wildlife species known to occupy habitats within the study corridors include the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). Refer to Table BIO-19 in the technical reports for a list of special status wildlife species in the project area in Idaho.

Candidates for federal listing (Category 2) include one species of fish, the Shoshone sculpin (*Cottus greeniei*) and five species of birds: ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), and white-faced ibis (*Plegadis chihi*). The spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*) is the only candidate species of mammal known to occur in the project area in Idaho. The long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*), a fairly common species in the project area, has recently (FWS, 1991) been downgraded to Category 3C, taxa that have been shown to be more abundant than previously thought. The FWS has also recently (1992) found that a petition to list the ferruginous hawk among the threatened or endangered wildlife of the United States was not warranted.

Species identified as sensitive or of concern to state agencies are sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*).

No specific locations of habitat for Swainson's hawk, yellow-billed cuckoo, white-faced ibis or spotted bat were identified within the study corridors. Although other species mentioned above occur within the SWIP study corridors, no specific locations of nests and/or crucial habitats were identified, with the exception of Shoshone sculpin and sage grouse strutting grounds.

Nevada - Federally-listed species identified within the study corridors include the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), White River spinedace (*Lepidomeda albivallis*), bald eagle, and peregrine falcon. See Table BIO-20 in the technical reports for a detailed list of special status wildlife species in the project area in Nevada. The desert tortoise, bald eagle and peregrine falcon were included in the Biological Assessment (refer to Biological Opinion in Appendix C) prepared for the SWIP.

Candidates for federal listing (Category 2) in the project area in Nevada include four butterflies, the Baking Powder Flat blue butterfly (*Euphilotes battoides* spp.) and Mattoni's blue butterfly (E.

pallescens mattoni), White River wood nymph butterfly (*Cercyonis pegala* spp), and Steptoe Valley crescent spot butterfly (*Phyciodes pascoensis*). Candidate fish species include: White River desert sucker (*Catostomus clarki intermedius*), White River speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus* spp.), Pahrangat speckled dace (*R. o. velifer*), Lahontan speckled dace (*R. o. robustus*), Preston White River springfish (*Crenichthys baileyi albivallis*), relict dace (*Relictus solitarius*), and Bonneville cutthroat trout (*Salmo clarki utah*).

One species of amphibian, the Arizona (southwestern) toad (*Bufo microscaphus*), and one species of reptile, the chuckwalla (*Sauromalus obesus*), are classified as a federal Category 2 species.

Category 2 bird species include ferruginous hawk, Swainson's hawk, western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrius nivosus*), western yellow-billed cuckoo, and white-faced ibis. The FWS has received a petition requesting the listing of the ferruginous hawk as a threatened species. This species is included in the Biological Assessment prepared for the SWIP.

Category 2 mammal species identified in the project area are the spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*), Desert Valley kangaroo mouse (*Microdipodops megacephalus albiventer*), Sierra Nevada red fox (*Vulpes vulpes necatur*), North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*), and North American lynx (*Felis lynx canadensis*).

Species classified as sensitive or of concern to state agencies include burrowing owl, sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*), sage grouse, golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Gambel's quail (*Lophortyx gambelii*), bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), pronghorn, elk, and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*).

The breeding range of the loggerhead shrike occurs throughout the study area. The chuckwalla (*Sauromalus obesus*) is a resident of Mojave desertscrub communities. Chuckwallas prefer rocky hillside areas, particularly lava flows. Link 720 traverses chuckwalla habitat in the Arrow Canyon Range. Both species are Category 2 candidates for federal listing.

The burrowing owl is a species of concern to the NDOW. Burrowing owls occur in Mojave desertscrub habitat and, therefore, could occur on Links 690, 700, and 720. Burrowing owls often use desert tortoise burrows and could be found throughout all tortoise habitat.

No locations of habitat were identified within the SWIP study corridors for the following: Arizona toad, western snowy plover, yellow-billed cuckoo, white-faced ibis, Desert Valley kangaroo mouse, spotted bat, red fox, wolverine, lynx, White River springfish, White River spinedace, or Mattoni's and Baking Powder Flat blue butterflies. The White River wood nymph butterfly is known to occur in wetlands near the center of the White River Valley near the White Pine-Nye County lines, in the vicinity of Link 669. The Steptoe Valley crescent spot butterfly is known from wetlands near the Monte Neva Hot Springs in the Steptoe Valley (on Link 291).

Utah - Two federally-listed species occur in the project area in Utah, the bald eagle and peregrine falcon. Refer to Table BIO-21 in the technical reports for list of special status wildlife species in the project area in Utah.

A number of species are candidates for federal listing (Category 2). These include invertebrates such as the Great Basin silver spot butterfly (*Speyeria nokomis nokomis*) and a Category 2 species of amphibian, the western spotted frog (*Rana pretiosa*). Category 2 fish species include the Bonneville cutthroat trout, and least chub (*Notichthys plegethonis*).

Category 2 bird species occurring in Utah are the ferruginous hawk, Swainson's hawk, western snowy plover, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and white-faced ibis. Only one Category 2 mammal species, the spotted bat, is known to occur in the project area in Utah.

Species identified as sensitive or of state concern include the golden eagle, pronghorn, and mule deer.

No specific locations of habitat were identified within the SWIP corridors in Utah for bald eagle, peregrine falcon, Swainson's hawk, western yellow-billed cuckoo, white-faced ibis and spotted bat.

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

Route A

Wildlife - From the Midpoint Substation to the Idaho-Nevada state line (Links 10, 20, 40, 41, 50, and 70) near Eden, Hansen, and Rogerson would traverse habitat for burrowing owls, long-billed curlew nesting populations, ferruginous hawks and pronghorn in Idaho. Sage grouse leks and wintering grounds would also be north of Jackpot, Nevada (Link 70).

Numerous links on the route segment from Jackpot to Robinson Summit would traverse crucial big game habitats including pronghorn winter range from Jackpot to southwest of Wilkins (Links 72, 101, 102, 110, 130, 160, 161, 162), mule deer winter range from Jackpot to Knoll Creek Area (Links 72, 101, 102, 110, 130) and Toano Draw and Goshute Valley (Links 200, 211, and 212), pronghorn yearlong and summer habitat in the Steptoe Valley (link 250), and pronghorn kidding grounds adjacent to Raiff (Link 291). Sage grouse leks and wintering grounds also occur along many links (72, 100, 110, 160, 161, 162, 1612, 200, 211, 212, 291, and 293). Habitat for long-billed curlew and sandhill crane is encountered in the Steptoe Valley (Links 261, 270, 291, and 293). Ferruginous hawk nests are present in the Egan Range (Link 293) on this route. Route A would follow an existing transmission line where the cumulative effects of raptor predation on sage grouse (Links 72, 101, 102, 110, 130, 160, 161, and 162) would not be expected to increase substantially. Route A and the other alternative routes (Midpoint to Dry Lake) converge just north of Robinson Summit (Link 310).

From the Robinson Summit Substation site south to the Dry Lake Substation site, all the routes would follow the same links. A large number of ferruginous hawk nest sites occur on or near the route northwest of Riepetown (Link 340) and near Coyote Wash (Link 673). Other important raptor habitats include golden eagle nests and bald eagle winter habitat in the vicinity of Gap Mountain (Link 672), burrowing owl nesting (Link 363), and crucial raptor (cliff nesting species) nesting areas in the Horse Range (Links 669, 670) and the vicinity of Gap Mountain (Link 672). Extensive areas of mule deer winter use and migration areas are encountered on this part of the route (Links 670, 672, and 673). Sage grouse leks are traversed by alternatives near the north end of White River Valley (Link 340 and 669).

Route A would traverse Mojave desertscrub vegetation in southern Nevada and would encounter habitat for bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, gambel's quail near Delamar Valley (Link 690), Pahrangat Wash (Link 690), Arrow Canyon Range (Link 670), and sandhill crane habitat (Links 690, 670).

Plants - Route A would cover approximately 314 miles (61 percent) of sage scrub and 108 miles (21 percent) of grassland. Sage scrub, as mapped, represents four identified communities: Great Basin sagebrush on the lower foothills, shadscale at low elevation saline basins, greasewood in saline soils, and samphire/iodine bush. Samphire/iodine bush is a unique plant community found where salt

crystals form on the soil as a result of pooling water. Great Basin sagebrush is the most common and is not highly sensitive. Grassland communities, characterized by cheatgrass brome and crested wheatgrass, are found largely ecotonal with other plant communities. Approximately 8 percent of the land that would be crossed is agricultural, including prime farmlands. The route would cross 26 perennial streams through a small riparian area (less than 1 percent). Less than 1 percent of the route would traverse higher elevation piñon-juniper communities.

From Ely to the Dry Lake Substation site, the route would traverse the northern portion of Delamar Valley (Link 690) through sage scrub, most likely blackbrush and other cooler, Great Basin desertscrub species. Where the route would pass the southern edge of Pahrangat Mountains, there is a distinct transition to Mojave desertscrub, characterized by creosote/bursage with some Joshua trees locally present. The route would cross approximately 56 miles (10 percent) of Mojave Desertscrub.

Four plant species of concern occur along 1.3 miles of the assumed centerline of Route A and four occur within one mile on either side of the assumed centerline. In Idaho, four-wing milk-vetch (*Astragalus tetrapterus*) is found on the assumed centerline east of Browns Bench (Link 70), and populations of two-headed onion (*Allium anceps*) occur on the assumed centerline southwest of Eden (Link 41) and within one mile of assumed centerline (Link 70). Both are Priority 2 in the State. In Nevada, Elko rock-cress (*Arabis falcifructa*), a Category 2 species, occurs within one mile of the route east of the Thousand Springs Valley (Link 162). In the Steptoe Valley less than one mile east of the route, Monte Neva Hot Springs (Link 291) provides habitat for Monte Neva paintbrush (*Castilleja salsuginosa*), a Category 1 species, critically endangered in the Nevada.

Two plant species occur on the route from the Ely area to Dry Lake Substation site. One-leaflet Torrey milk-vetch (*Astragalus calycosus* var. *monophyllidius*), a watch species, is found on the assumed centerline of the route through Jakes Valley (Link 670). Meadow Valley range sandwort (*Arenaria stenomerus*), a watch species, occurs on Link 720. Yellow twotone beard tongue and rosy twotone beard tongue (*Penstemon bicolor*, *P. b. roseus*) and Three-cornered pod Geyer milk-vetch (*Astragalus triquetrus*) are Category 2 candidate species which occur in the vicinity of Links 690, 700, and 720. Only the milk-vetch (*Astragalus*) occurs within the one-mile corridor, although there is a high potential for the two varieties of penstemon to occur given habitat requirements and known ranges.

Route B

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, Route B is the same as Route A. South of Jackpot, this route would turn southeast through Trout Creek (Links 91, 92, 140, 141, 142, and 144) instead of paralleling the existing transmission lines south where it would encounter sage grouse leks. Route B would encounter more sage grouse leks in Toano Draw (Link 200) and Goshute Valley (Links 221, 226), and again in the Steptoe Valley (Link 259) and Butte Valley (Link 280). Big game habitat on this route includes mule deer crucial winter range along the Toano Range and Goshute Mountains (Link 200, 222), and crucial summer habitat near Trout Creek (Link 91). Important raptor habitats include peregrine falcon winter habitat (Links 222, 224, and 226), bald eagle winter habitat (Links 259, 260), and ferruginous hawk habitat (Links 259, 260) and nest sites within the Butte Valley (Link 280). Habitat for long-billed curlew and sandhill crane would be encountered in Steptoe Valley (Links 259, 260, 270, and 261). An important water use area comprised of Antone Creek and surrounding springs is traversed by this route in Antone Pass (Link 280). The waters are important for wildlife, especially mule deer and sage grouse. From the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, Route B is the same as Route A.

Plants - Route B would traverse approximately 331 miles (64 percent) of sage scrub and 97 miles (18 percent) of grassland. Other plant communities crossed include agricultural land (8 percent), and less than 1 percent of both piñon-juniper and riparian areas. Twenty-seven perennial streams are crossed. The community types and vegetation described for Route A from the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site also apply to Route B.

The four plant species of concern that occur along 1.3 miles of the route include four-wing milk-vetch (*Astragalus tetrapterus*) east of Browns Bench (Links 64 and 70), two-headed onion (*Allium anceps*) southwest of Eden (Link 41), one-leaflet Torrey milk-vetch (*Astragalus calycosus* var. *monophyllidius*) within the White River Valley (Link 670), and Meadow Valley range sandwort (*Arenaria stenomeres*) within the Coyote Spring Valley (Link 720). These species are identical to those discussed in Route A. One species that occurs in Nevada within the one mile zone adjacent to the Toano Range and Goshute Mountains (Link 222) is Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*). Though it is a Category 3 species, it is protected by the Cactus and Yucca Law in Nevada. Plants along the southern corridors (690, 700, 720) are identical to Route A.

Route C

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to north of (Link 200), Route C is the same as Route B. From the crossing of Interstate 80 (Link 211) to Dolly Varden (Link 230), Route C is the same as Route A. Link segment 250 is unique to Route C. Route C would traverse crucial pronghorn winter range in the Currie Hills (Link 250) and would also cross sage grouse leks and bald eagle habitat. From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, Route C is the same as described for Route A.

Plants - Route C traverses approximately 320 miles (63 percent) of sage scrub and 96 miles (19 percent) of grassland. Approximately 8 percent of the area that would be crossed by this route is agricultural. The remainder is less than 1 percent piñon-juniper and less than 1 percent riparian. Twenty-three perennial streams would be crossed. Refer to Route A for a discussion of the communities and specific description of the Mojave desertscrub found south of the Pahrangat Mountains.

Plant species of concern occur along 1.3 miles of the assumed centerline, as discussed in Route A. Species occurring within the one mile area are *Castilleja salsuginosa* (Link 291) near Monte Neva Hot Springs in Steptoe Valley and *Allium anceps* (Link 41) near Dry Gulch in Idaho. The plants along the southern portion (Links 690, 700, and 720) are identical to those along Route A.

Route D

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to just north of HD Summit, Route D is the same as Route A. From HD Summit to approximately Town Creek, Route D would follow an existing transmission line roughly parallel to U.S. Highway 93 (Link 167) and would traverse crucial pronghorn winter range southwest of Wilkins near Bishops Creek (Link 1611), sage grouse leks west of the Windermere Hills (Link 167) and near Interstate 80 east of Wells (Links 180), long-billed curlew habitat southeast of Wells (Links 180, 190), crucial deer winter range in Independence Valley (Link 180, 190), and in the Goshute Valley north of Dolly Varden (Link 230).

From Dolly Varden to the North Steptoe Substation site (Link 241, 243, and 245), Route D would traverse antelope crucial summer range and antelope yearlong habitat. From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, Route D is the same as Route A.

Plants - Route D would traverse approximately 319 miles (62 percent) of sage scrub and 97 miles (19 percent) of grassland. Approximately 8 percent of the land that would be crossed is agricultural. Other communities consist of less than 1 percent piñon-juniper and less than 1 percent riparian areas. Refer to Route A for a discussion of the communities and specific description of the Mojave desertscrub found south of the Pahrnagat Mountains. Plant species of concern occur along 1.3 miles of the assumed centerline, as discussed in Route A. Those within the one mile zone are also the same as those described for Route A (Links 41, 162, 291, and 700).

Route E

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to north of Interstate 80 (Link 200), Route E is the same as Route A. From north of Interstate 80 to the North Steptoe Substation site (Links 221, 222, 224, 226, 259, 260, 261, and 270), Route E is same as Route B. From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, Route E is the same as Route C.

Plants - Route E would traverse approximately 320 miles (61 percent) of sage scrub and 116 miles (22 percent) of grassland. Agricultural lands constitute approximately 9 percent of the land that would be crossed. Piñon-juniper and riparian communities constitute less than 1 percent of the land that would be crossed. The route would cross 22 perennial streams. Refer to Route A for a description of the communities and a description of the Mojave desertscrub found south of the Pahrnagat Mountains.

Plant species of concern that occur along 1.3 miles of the route are identical to those discussed for Route A. Monte Neva paintbrush (*Castilleja salsuginosa*) found near Monte Neva Hot Springs in Steptoe Valley (Link 291), and two-headed onion (*Allium anceps*) near Dry Gulch (Link 41) in Idaho occur within the one mile the route. Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*) appears adjacent to the Toano Range and Goshute Mountains (Link 222).

Route F

Wildlife - Route F would traverse west from Midpoint Substation (Links 61, 62). Near Hagerman, the route would traverse habitat for burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, long-billed curlew nesting populations, and Shoshone sculpin. North and west of Hagerman, the route would traverse sage grouse leks, habitat for pronghorn and river otter at the Snake River (Link 62). Adjacent to the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument (Link 64), the route would also traverse several cooperative wildlife tracts that are managed for game birds, such as pheasant. On Link 64, the BLM, Burley District, wildlife biologists discovered two nesting pairs of ferruginous hawks during the late spring of 1992. Where the route would parallel Salmon Falls Creek Canyon, some long-billed curlew and burrowing owl habitat occurs.

From Jackpot, Nevada to north of Interstate 80 in Goshute Valley, Route F is the same as Route B. Then, the remainder of this route to Dry Lake Substation site is the same as described for Route C.

Plants - Route F would traverse approximately 317 miles (60 percent) of sage scrub and 110 miles (20 percent) of grassland. Approximately 11 percent of the land that would be crossed by this route is agricultural. Other plant communities that would be crossed consist of less than 1 percent piñon-juniper and less than one percent riparian. Eight perennial streams would be crossed. Refer to Route A for a description of the plant communities a description of the Mojave desertscrub found south of the Pahrnagat Mountains.

Plant species of concern occur along 4.2 miles of the route. In Idaho, mourning milk-vetch (*Astragalus atratus* var. *inseptus*) occurs near Peters Gulch (Link 64), *Lepidium davisii* occurs from near Salmon Creek Falls Creek Reservoir (Link 64), two-headed onion (*Allium anceps*) east of Browns Bench (Link 70), and four-wing milk-vetch (*Astragalus tetrapterus*) adjacent to Salmon Falls Creek (Link 64, 70). In Nevada, one-leaflet Torrey milkvetch (*A. calycosus* var. *monophyllidius*) occurs in Jakes Valley (Link 670) and *Arenaria stenomeres* occurs in Coyote Spring Valley (Link 720). Other species known to exist within the one mile corridor are Torrey's blazing star (*Mentzelia torreyi* var. *acerosa*) northwest of Hagerman (Link 62) and Owyhee mourning milkvetch (*Astragalus atratus* var. *owyheensis*) adjacent to Salmon Falls Creek (Link 64). Three-cornered pod Geyer milk-vetch (*Astragalus triquetrus*), yellow twotone beard tongue and rosy twotone beard tongue (*Penstemon bicolor* var. *bicolor*, and *P. b. roseus*) are as described for Route A along Links 690, 700, and 720.

Route G

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, Route G is the same as Route A. Route G would cross Salmon Falls Creek through the foothills west of Jackpot (Links 711, 714) and would traverse sage grouse leks and wintering grounds, crucial pronghorn and mule deer winter habitat, and bald eagle nesting and winter habitat.

From Jackpot to the Robinson Summit Substation site, Route G is the same as Route A, except Route G uses Links 713 and 715 near Contact Nevada and Links 150 and 151 near Wilkins. Wildlife habitats the would be traversed are essentially the same as those which occur on Links 72, 101, and 102 as described for Route A. In Thousand Springs Valley (Links 150, 151), the route would traverse two sage grouse leks, skirt the edge of another sage grouse lek buffer, and cross an area of pronghorn winter range. From Dolly Varden to the North Steptoe Substation site (Link 241, 243, and 245), Route G would traverse antelope crucial summer range and antelope yearlong habitat.

From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Robinson Summit Substation site, Route G is the same as Route B. From Robinson Summit Substation to Dry Lake wildlife habitats traversed Route G are the same as those described for these links on Route A.

Plants - Route G would traverse approximately 312 miles (62 percent) of sage scrub and 97 miles (19 percent) of grassland. Other plant communities the would be crossed include approximately 16.8 miles (3 percent) of agricultural land, less than 1 percent piñon-juniper at higher elevations, and less than 1 percent riparian. The route would cross about 78 miles (16 percent) Mojave desertscrub along the southern portion. Plant communities and vegetation types are the same as those described for Route A.

The four plant species of concern that occur along 1.3 miles of the route include four-wing milk-vetch (*Astragalus tetrapterus*) east of Browns Bench (Link 70), two-headed onion (*Allium anceps*) southwest of Eden (Link 41), one-leaflet Torrey milk-vetch (*Astragalus calycosus* var. *monophyllidius*) within the White River Valley (Link 670), and Meadow Valley range sandwort (*Arenaria stenomeres*) within the

Coyote Spring Valley (Link 720). These species are identical to those discussed in Route A. Elko rock-cress, a Category 2 species, occurs within one mile of the corridor in the Thousand Springs Valley (Link 151).

Ely to Delta Segment

Direct Route

Wildlife - The Direct Route would originate from the North Steptoe Substation site, cross the Schell Creek Range and continue past the Red Hills to a point south of the Little Hills (Links 262, 263, 265 and 266). This route would cross near areas of ferruginous hawk, long-billed curlew, bald eagle habitat, sage grouse wintering grounds, and lek and crucial pronghorn winter range. On Link 630, the Direct Route crosses the Confusion Wild Horse Management Area (HMA) between mile posts 3 and 27. From mile posts 8 to 14 the Confusion HMA have been designated crucial wild horse habitat. From mile posts 31 to 39 the line would cross the Swasey HMA, with the segment from mile post 33 to 34 crossing crucial habitat within that HMA.

Where this route would traverse the Snake Valley (Link 630), sensitive aquatic/wetland habitats are encountered. One of these, the Leland-Harris Spring Complex, is inhabited by least chub, desert dace, and spotted frog. Wetland areas associated with this spring complex are also habitat for the Great Basin silver spot butterfly. Crucial deer winter habitat would be traversed by this route in the House Range (Link 630). Crucial mule deer winter habitat and a migration corridor would also be encountered in the Drum Mountains (Links 630, 650). The route would traverse pronghorn habitat north of Sugarville (Link 582) at the Intermountain Substation site.

Plants - The Direct Route would traverse a mosaic of sage scrub for approximately 83 miles (64 percent) and grassland communities for 27 miles (20 percent). The route would cross approximately 21 miles (16 percent) of playa in Utah. No sensitive plant species are known to occur within one mile of the route.

Cutoff Route

The Cutoff Route is the same as the Direct Route from the North Steptoe Substation site to just south of the Little Hills. The route would then continue southwest across the Snake Valley (Link 266).

Wildlife - A number of raptor nesting areas would be traversed by this route including golden eagle nest sites within the Snake Valley (Link 268) and Tule Valley (Link 462). Ferruginous hawk nests also occur in the Tule Valley (Link 462). Crucial Mule deer winter range and migration corridors occur in the Confusion Range and Middle Range (Link 462) and a mule deer migration corridor is traversed in the Congor Range (Link 268). Other important wildlife habitats include critical pronghorn habitat and crucial water use areas in the Snake Valley (Link 268). The route would traverse pronghorn habitat west of Smelter Hills (Links 571) and north of Sugarville (Link 582) at the Intermountain Substation site. The Cutoff Route is also likely to affect populations of wild horses. Between miles 11 and 19 on Link 268, the route crosses the Conger Mountain HMA.

Plants - The Cutoff Route would traverse a mosaic of sage scrub for approximately 101 miles (66 percent) and grassland communities for 34 miles (22 percent). The route would cross approximately 18 miles (12 percent) of playa in Utah. One population of Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus*

pubispinus) occurs along the assumed centerline of Link 462. The species is also known to occur on Link 268.

230kV Corridor Route

Wildlife - The 230kV Corridor Route would originate from the Robinson Summit Substation site and parallel two 230kV transmission lines east toward Ely, Nevada (Link 350). The route would traverse sage grouse leks and wintering grounds northwest of Ely (Links 350, 351, and 352) and in the Schell Creek Range (Link 380). Ferruginous hawk nests and long-billed curlew habitat occur on in the Steptoe Valley (Link 351, 352, and 370). From east of the Nevada-Utah state line (Link 460), this route is the same as described for the Cutoff Route. Links 461 and 462 traverse wild horse habitat in the Conger Mountain HMA. Specifically, miles 6 to 13 on Link 461 and miles 1 to 13 on Link 462 involve the Conger Mountain HMA.

Plants - The 230kV Corridor Route would traverse a mosaic of sage scrub for 104 miles (65 percent) and grassland communities for 37 miles (23 percent). In Utah, the route would cross approximately 14 miles (9 percent) of playa. One population of Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*) occurs along the assumed centerline of Link 462.

Southern Route

Wildlife - The southern route exits the Robinson Summit Substation site from the south and follows the west side of the Egan Range. Ferruginous hawk nest sites are encountered along Link 340 northwest of Riepetown and at the north end of the Fortification Range on Link 420. Sage grouse leks occur at the north end of White River Valley (Link 364) and in Spring Valley (Link 420). Long-billed curlew habitat is encountered where Link 420 traverses Steptoe Valley. Antelope kidding grounds occur north of the Fortification Range (Link 420). Key deer winter ranges occur by Big Springs Wash north of GBNP (Link 430) and in the Antelope Valley near Utah State Highway 21 (Link 451). Link 451, between mileposts 11 and 17 cross the Burbank HMA and miles 24 to 34 involve the King Top HMA. Other important habitats include a crucial water use area (Link 364) and critical pronghorn habitat near the Nevada-Utah state line (Link 450). From here Link 571 through 582 are the same for both the 230kV Corridor Route and the Southern Route.

Plants - The Southern Route would traverse predominately sage scrub for approximately 154 miles (73 percent) with grassland intermingled for 27 miles (13 percent). Twenty-two miles (11 percent) of the route would cross areas of playa.

Five species that are known to occur along the route are:

- Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*) along the southern end of the Snake Range (Link 430, 451)
- compact catseye (*Cryptantha compacta*), sand-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum ammophilum*), and low beard tongue (*Penstemon nanus*) at the southern tip of the Tule Valley (Link 451)
- currant milkvetch (*Astragalus uncialis*) located in the Swasey Wash (Link 490)

Populations of species that occur within the one mile corridor include Great Basin fishhook, currant milk-vetch, Jones globemallow (*Sphaeralcea caespitosa*), limestone buckwheat (*Eriogonum eremicum*), Calloway milk-vetch (*A. callithrix*), and terrace buckwheat (*E. natum*).

Environmental Consequences

Introduction

The vegetation types, sensitive wildlife, and plant species inventoried are described in detail in the technical report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where technical reports can be reviewed). Impact matrices were developed to identify the initial impacts anticipated as a result of the SWIP, to recommend mitigation measures to minimize those impacts, and to determine residual impacts.

Issues for wildlife species and important wildlife habitats are related primarily to increased public access into remote areas and/or ground disturbance. Ground disturbance caused by construction of the transmission line could result in habitat destruction and degradation, and future erosion problems where stabilizing plants are lost. Increased public access into remote areas, during and following construction, may result in increased human harassment of all classes of wildlife, increased levels of poaching, and increased take of certain species by legal hunters, trappers, or fishermen. Increased public access can also result in habitat damage from ORV vehicle use, accidentally set fires, and direct mortality of individual animals resulting from increased or higher speed vehicular traffic.

The GIS impact assessment models and matrices are described in the technical reports. In the technical report are narrative descriptions and data tables for each of the alternative route segments studied. The technical reports are available for review at the agency offices listed in Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA.

Methods

Impact types considered in the impact analysis models were:

- 1) Threatened, Endangered, Rare or Unique Species:
 - affect any federally classified threatened or endangered species or critical habitat thereof
 - affect any state listed protected, threatened, unique or otherwise sensitive species or habitat thereof
- 2) General Wildlife:
 - create a barrier or hazard to the migration or movement of any wildlife species (see discussion below on potential hazard to migrating raptors and other larger bird species).
 - alter the diversity of any biotic community or populations of any animal species communities, or areas

3) Increase human activity/public access.

To determine the intensity (level) of impacts that would result from the construction and operation of the SWIP, two models were developed to identify direct and indirect impacts. The access requirements were determined in a model that was compared with sensitive wildlife resources and habitats.

Where access and other ground disturbance would be greater and sensitive biological resources were found (e.g., wildlife habitats, sensitive plants, etc.), initial impacts would be of a higher intensity. These adverse impacts would be long-term unless revegetation would be done.

Where access roads would have to be constructed into currently remote areas, indirect long-term impacts would likely result. These impacts would be from increased pressure on biological resources from potentially greater presence of humans (e.g., legal hunting, poaching, fishing, ORV access, etc.). Refer to cumulative effects for a discussion of some of these indirect impacts that would occur over time.

Adverse, indirect, and long-term impacts would also result simply from the presence of the transmission lines. For example, because golden eagles will use transmission towers for hunting perches, predation on sage grouse within their sensitive habitats (i.e., leks and wintering grounds) may increase. A similar predation issue is found for juvenile desert tortoise where ravens have transmission towers as hunting perches. These impacts were documented where these impact types could be identified and where sensitive habitats corresponded to the potential presence of one of the alternative routes.

Mitigation Planning

In order to reduce potential impacts resulting from ground disturbance and increased levels of public access along the various alternative routes of the SWIP, generic and selectively recommended mitigation measures were applied to initial impact levels.

Generic mitigation as part of the project description, is applied uniformly along the route and tends to reduce impact potential to many resources (refer to Table 1-6). For example, restricting vehicle construction equipment movement to predesignated routes (#1) and recontouring and revegetating disturbed areas where necessary (#3 and #4), and construction of roads at right angles to streams (#13).

Selectively recommended mitigation measures are more specific and are applied to mitigate specific initial impacts (refer to Table 1-5). These measures include overland access to minimize ground disturbance (#2), placement of towers to avoid sensitive features (#6), modified tower design to minimize avian conflicts (#7), use of helicopter construction under certain conditions (#12), and limiting construction activities during sensitive periods (#11).

Results

Midpoint to Dry Lake Segment

Route A

Wildlife - From the Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada (Links 10, 20, 40, 41, 50, 70), initial impact levels (before applying of mitigation) resulting from construction of the project would be generally low and moderate. Mitigation (discussed at the beginning of this section) would reduce these impacts to low. The only high residual impacts on this route in Idaho would be where sage grouse leks are located near the Nevada state line (Link 70).

Federal and state biologists are concerned that the SWIP would add yet another cumulative impact on sage grouse populations in southern Idaho and eastern Nevada (refer to cumulative effects section at the end of Chapter 4 of the DEIS/DPA and the expanded discussion in Chapter 3 of the document). Concern has focused on the increase in public access within sage grouse habitats, placement of towers and access roads in strutting or crucial wintering grounds, and the fact that predators of sage grouse (i.e., golden eagles) use the transmission towers as hunting perches. Adult and immature birds and nests are all thought to be vulnerable. Because there is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse in these areas, these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant. Eliminating access would be difficult, there would be some potential for disturbance and poaching in addition to the loss of habitat and disturbance due to construction activities.

There is potential for impact to wild horses along Route A. Horses occur along the route and some disturbance to these animals is expected, especially during construction. Horses are extremely mobile and readily move large distances on open public lands. Consequently, long-term adverse impacts to horse populations are not anticipated.

There would be high initial impacts to long-billed curlew nesting habitat where the project would significantly increase potential public access (Links 10, 20, 40, 70) due to the difficulty of eliminating access in areas of flat or gentle terrain and the vulnerability of nesting curlews. These impacts would be adverse and long-term. However, mitigation measures (discussed at the beginning of this section) would reduce most of these impacts to insignificant levels.

From Jackpot to northwest of the Windermere Hills (Links 72, 101, 102, 110, 130, 160, 161, 162) in northern Nevada, Route A would cause mainly moderate to high initial impacts. These initial impact would be due primarily to crucial mule deer and pronghorn habitats, bald eagle wintering and potential nesting habitat (Link 72), and sage grouse leks and wintering habitat (Links 160, 161, 162). The impacts to sage grouse are largely unmitigable because of potential predation by golden eagles on adult and immature birds (see discussion above). There would be 0.2 mile of high residual impacts to sage grouse (Link 160). These impacts would be significant, adverse, and long-term. However, applying mitigation measures along this portion of Route A would reduce all other high impacts to insignificant levels.

Moderate residual impacts would occur in some areas along this segment of Route A where public access would be significantly increased in big game habitats and in ferruginous hawk habitats. These impacts would be adverse and long-term, but are not considered significant. Because it is difficult to completely restrict new access where roads and trails have been constructed, there can be increased pressure on these species by hunting/poaching and harassment.

From the Windermere Hills to north of Interstate 80 near Oasis, Nevada (Links 1612, 152, 200), Route A would traverse the northern toe of the Windermere Hills and then southeast to East Squaw Creek. High initial impacts along this portion of the route would be primarily caused by increased public access in pronghorn winter range for 0.5 miles (Link 1612). These high impacts would be reduced to moderate, insignificant levels following mitigation (discussed at the beginning of this section). An additional 1.8 miles of high initial impacts would result to sage grouse winter range and leks north of East Squaw Creek (Link 200). Similar to the impacts to sage grouse described above, these impacts would remain high following mitigation.

In the section of the Route A between north of Interstate 80 and Dolly Varden in the Goshute Valley (Links 211, 212), high initial impacts would be expected to result from increased public access. Potentially high initial impacts from ground disturbance to sage grouse leks would occur on Link 211 at the north end of Goshute Valley (between mileposts 14.7 and 16.3). Following mitigation, these impacts to sage grouse leks would be expected to remain adverse and significant for about 1.6 miles.

From the Dolly Varden in the southern end of Goshute Valley to the North Steptoe Substation site (Links 211, 230, 250, 259, 260), high initial impacts from ground disturbance would occur for 0.2 miles because of sage grouse leks and known occurrences of wintering bald eagles near the north end of Steptoe Valley (Link 259). Despite applying mitigation measures, 0.2 miles of high residual impacts (adverse and significant) would remain.

From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Robinson Summit Substation site (Links 270, 291, 293, 310), increased public access would cause high initial impacts to sage grouse leks, long-billed curlew, and sandhill crane from increased public access near Monte Neva Hot Springs at the base of the Egan Range (milepost 11.8 to 11.9). No high residual impacts would be expected following mitigation. Ground disturbance along this segment of the route would result in high initial impacts along the base of the Egan Range (Link 291) in the Steptoe Valley (mileposts 4.4 to 6.1 and 7.9 to 11.8) and (Link 293) in the Egan Range (mileposts 1.9 to 4.4 and 4.8 to 6.5). Following mitigation (discussed at the beginning of this section), high residual impacts would occur for 3.0 miles in the Steptoe Valley (Link 291) and for 4.5 miles in Dry Canyon (Link 293). High residual impacts (significant impacts) on both links would result from the presence of sage grouse leks (refer to previous discussion of sage grouse effects).

Route A from the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site (Links 340, 362, 363, 669, 670, 672, 673, 675, 690, 700), would cross through Great Basin desertscrub habitats along the north portion of this segment and Mojave desertscrub habitats in the southern portion. Generally, initial impacts for most of the route would be moderate to high. High initial impacts would be most notable where habitat of the desert tortoise is encountered in Coyote Spring Valley (Links 690, 700). Adding a transmission facility would reduce the amount of suitable tortoise habitat because of roads needed to construct and maintain the line, and would increase the potential for human activity.

Links 690, 700, and 720 of the SWIP route traverse 53.2 miles of desert tortoise habitat. Link 690 enters desert tortoise habitat in the extreme southern portion of the Pahrnagat Valley. The first 4.3 miles of habitat are in an area designated as Category III. This area is at the northern limit of species distribution and tortoise densities are very low (0 to 10 tortoises per square mile). The last 15.3 miles of Link 690 are in Category I habitat. Tortoise densities in this area (northern most extension of Coyote Spring Valley) range from low to very high (140+ per square mile).

Links 700 and 720 continue south along U.S. Highway 93 through Coyote Spring Valley, and traverse 30.2 miles of Category I habitat. Fourteen miles is located on private land owned by Aerojet

Corporation and is, therefore, not officially categorized by the BLM. However, for the purposes of this Biological Assessment, it was considered to be Category I habitat as requested by the BLM. Surveys in this area indicate relatively high densities of tortoises (45 to 140+ tortoises per square mile) in portions of the Coyote Spring Valley. The habitat is generally considered to be in good condition. As the SWIP enters the Dry Lake Valley (Link 720), it traverses 3.2 miles of Category III habitat. The dry lake bed itself is not tortoise habitat. Tortoise densities in this portion of the Dry Lake Valley are in the very low to low range (0 to 45 tortoises per square mile).

In general, all new alignments in desert tortoise habitat are in close proximity to the existing roadway and tortoise density may be lower than in adjacent habitat. Typically tortoise numbers are greatly reduced near paved roadways. Therefore, densities within the proposed corridor maybe lower than estimates for outlying areas.

The Coyote Spring Valley has been proposed as a Tortoise Management Area in the Short-term Habitat Conservation Plan for Clark County (Regional Environmental Consultants, 1990). Further, the FWS's Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan is likely to designate the Valley as a protected management area.

Impacts to desert tortoise from increased human activity include being crushed by vehicles, shooting, illegal collecting, and destruction of burrows. Adverse, indirect, and long-term impacts could result simply from the presence of the transmission lines because ravens may use the transmission towers for hunting perches, and predation on juvenile desert tortoise may increase. Predation by ravens is usually a problem near urban areas, water bodies, and solid waste disposal sites, where ravens are typically found. Although raven predation is not considered a significant problem at this time, federal biologists are concerned that the problem may become more significant if Las Vegas and surrounding areas continue to develop and expand.

Mitigation measures applied during construction would effectively mitigate direct impacts to desert tortoise (e.g., tortoise or tortoise burrows being crushed by vehicles, etc.). However, it is unclear how raven predation, if it becomes a significant problem in the future, can be effectively mitigated.

A Biological Assessment has been prepared for desert tortoise, and formal consultation was completed with the FWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (1974). The BLM requires that an opinion be rendered by the FWS on the desert tortoise prior to a Record of Decision on the SWIP. The Biological Opinion, released on May 12, 1993, was favorable to allow construction of the SWIP and the detailed mitigation contained in the opinion will become part of the stipulations required to construct and operate the SWIP. One of the major mitigation measures would be to favor constructing the project through the sensitive area during the winter months when the tortoise are inactive (refer to #11 in Table 1-5). The Stateline Resource Area has released its Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) for public review. The area of Coyote Springs Valley was proposed in several alternatives as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern for desert tortoise. The BLM's RMP process is being prepared in coordination with the Short-term Habitat Conservation Plan for desert tortoise that was prepared by Clark County (1991). Refer to the Technical Report for a description of the habitat classification for desert tortoise (e.g. category I, II, and III). Also refer to Appendix C - Biological Opinion.

The burrowing owl is a species of concern to the NDOW. Burrowing owls occur in Mojave desertscrub habitat and, therefore, could occur on Links 690, 700, and 720. Burrowing owls often use desert tortoise burrows and could be found throughout all tortoise habitat along the project. Limiting construction to winter months to reduce conflicts with owls has been recommended by the BLM.

Other highly sensitive features include ferruginous hawk nest sites (Link 673, 340), crucial raptor nesting areas (Links 669, 672), sage grouse leks (Link 669), crucial mule deer winter range and migration corridors (Links 672, 669, 670, 363, 673), and desert bighorn sheep movement/migration corridors (Links 690, 700). There are two bighorn sheep water developments in the southern end of the Arrow Canyon Range and up to two more may be constructed before construction of the project. The BLM has recommended that construction occur in the winter months and no new access roads be constructed within 2 miles of water sources.

High initial impacts from potentially increased public access along this section of the Route A would result from the higher potential for human interaction with mule deer, desert bighorn sheep, and ferruginous hawks. Specifically, there would be potential high initial impacts to mule deer migration corridors and ferruginous hawk habitat along Sierra Valley into Jake's Wash (Link 363 between mileposts 10.6 and 11.1). There would also be potential high impacts to a mule deer migration between mileposts 11.3 and 11.7 on Link 363 at the southern end of Sierra Valley. Along the foothills at the western edge of White River Valley (Link 669) the route would cause high initial impacts for 6.5 miles in a mule deer migration corridor. There would be 0.3 miles of high initial impacts to key deer winter range at the southern limit of the Egan Range in the White River Valley (Link 672). These impacts would be mitigated to insignificant levels (mitigation discussed at the beginning of this section).

Where Route A would cross the northeast end of Dry Lake Valley (Link 673), there would be 1.7 miles of high initial impacts to ferruginous hawk nest sites and 0.7 miles of similar impacts to key deer winter range. There would be 2.3 miles of potentially high initial impacts relating to increased public access and desert tortoise habitat and bighorn sheep movement corridors along the southern end of Delamar Valley and into Pahrangat Wash (Link 690). These impacts would be mitigated to insignificant levels (mitigation discussed at the beginning of this section).

Along Route A in Sierra Valley and into Jakes Wash (Link 363) there would be 1.0 mile of high initial impacts (from ground disturbing activities) to ferruginous hawk habitat and nesting areas of other raptor species. There would be 12.7 miles of high initial impact from ground disturbance to mule deer migration corridors and staging areas and raptor nesting areas along the foothills at the western edge of White River Valley (Link 669). Where this route would cross the northeast end of Dry Lake Valley (Link 673), there would be 1.7 miles of high initial impact to nesting ferruginous hawks.

Mitigation measures (discussed at the beginning of this section) are expected to be effective in reducing high initial impacts on the Robinson Summit to Dry Lake section of the Route A to insignificant levels.

Moderate residual impacts would occur in some areas along this segment of Route A where public access would be significantly increased in big game habitats and in ferruginous hawk habitats. These impacts would be adverse and long-term, but are not considered significant. Because it is difficult to completely restrict new access where roads and trails have been constructed, there can be increased pressure on these species by hunting/poaching and harassment.

Moderate residual impacts to desert tortoise would likely result in some areas where public access is increased significantly.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - No federally listed endangered or threatened plant species is known to occur. However, this does not mean that none exist, as surveys have not been conducted over much of the area.

Ground disturbance along Route A would result in moderate to high initial impacts where two sensitive plant species, four-wing milk-vetch (*Astragalus tetraapterus*) and two-headed onion (*Astragalus anceps*), occur for 1.3 miles along the assumed centerline east of Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir (Link 70). Additional moderate to high initial impacts would be expected where One-leaflet torrey milk-vetch (*A. calycosus* var. *monophyllidius*) occurs in White River Valley (Link 670) and where Meadow Valley range sandwort (*Arenaria stenomeris*) occurs in Coyote Spring Valley and Arrow Canyon (Link 720). Potential increases in public access would not be considered a serious threat. Following mitigation, residual impacts would be expected to be low. Revegetation of disturbed areas in dry climates is difficult. Rehabilitation and revegetation would be addressed specifically in the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance COM Plan.

One C2 species and one C1 species occur within the one mile of the assumed centerline. monte neva paintbrush (*Castilleja salsuginosa*) (C1), also listed as critically endangered on the state list, occurs near Monte Neva Hot Springs in Steptoe Valley (Link 291). Increased public access to the Springs could result in trampling and destruction of habitat. Elko rock-cress (*Arabis falcifructa*), a C2 species, occurs along the western edge of Thousand Springs Valley (Link 162). Yellow twotoned beard tongue and rosy twotoned beard tongue (*Penstemon bicolor*, *P. b. roseus*) and three cornered pod Geyer milk-vetch (*Astragalus triquetrus*) (the only one with known locations within the one-mile corridor) are Category 2 candidate species which could occur on Links 790, 800, 830 and 840. These plant species would most likely not be impacted by construction, if overland access to tower sites along the assumed centerline were predesignated. Pre-construction surveys may not be adequate, as these species will only germinate during years when climatic conditions are favorable. Mitigation measures, such as removing and saving topsoil which may contain the seed base, would be addressed in the COM Plan.

Route B

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, the initial and residual impacts expected for Route B would be the same as those described for Route A.

From Jackpot to north of Interstate 80 near Oasis, Nevada (Links 91, 92, 140, 141, 142, 144), there would be high initial impacts for 3.3 miles to sage grouse leks and crucial mule deer summer habitat along Trout Creek (Link 92) and 0.3 mile to sage grouse winter grounds in the Trout Creek area (Link 91) that would result from increased public access and ground disturbance. There would be high initial impacts to a sage grouse lek and 1.5 miles high initial impacts to sage grouse winter range in Toano Draw (Link 142). Near the headwaters of Trout Creek (Link 92), there would be 2.2 miles of initial high impacts associated with sage grouse leks. Another 4.4 miles of high initial impacts associated with sage grouse leks and sage grouse winter range would occur in Toano Draw (Link 142). Following mitigation (defined at the beginning of this section), there would remain 0.3 miles of high residual impacts to sage grouse winter range in Trout Creek (Link 91), 1.5 miles to sage grouse leks at the headwaters of Trout Creek (Link 92), and 4.4 miles to sage grouse leks and sage grouse winter grounds in Toano Draw (Link 142).

Federal and state biologists are concerned that the SWIP would add yet another cumulative impact on sage grouse populations in southern Idaho and eastern Nevada (refer to cumulative effects section at the end of Chapter 4). Concern has focused on the increase in public access within sage grouse

habitats, placement of towers and access roads in strutting or crucial wintering grounds, and the fact that predators of sage grouse (i.e., golden eagles) use the transmission towers as hunting perches. Adult and immature birds and nests are all thought to be vulnerable. Because there is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse in these areas, these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant. Eliminating access would be difficult. There would be some potential for disturbance and poaching in addition to the loss of habitat and disturbance due to construction activities.

Ground disturbance would result in 0.3 mile of high initial impacts to key deer winter range, and pronghorn winter range in the Trout Creek area (Link 91). Near the headwaters of Trout Creek (Link 92), there would be 2.2 miles of initial high impacts associated with critical deer summer range. Mitigation measures (discussed at the beginning of this section) would be expected to effectively reduce high impacts to insignificant levels along this segment of Route B, except for long-term impacts of raptor predation on sage grouse.

Generally, impacts along the segment of Route B, from the north of Interstate 80 to the North Steptoe Substation site (Links 221, 222, 224, 226, 259, 260), would be low, with some moderate impacts. Moderate initial impacts along this segment of the route would be associated with occurrences of peregrine falcon and sage grouse. High initial impact to sage grouse leks would occur along this segment of Route B in the Goshute Valley (Links 221) and to sage grouse leks and bald eagle habitat in Antelope Valley (Link 226). Mitigation measures (discussed at the beginning of this section) would be expected to effectively reduce high impacts to insignificant levels along this segment of Route B, except for long-term impacts of raptor predation on sage grouse.

From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Robinson Summit Substation site, initial impacts for Route B would be generally low to moderate where Route B would cross through Antone Pass at the north end of the Egan Range into Butte Valley (Link 280). High initial impacts along this section of the route would occur where increased public access would be significant in important water use areas (milepost 5.7 to 6.1) and in an area that is used by bald eagle, ferruginous hawk, and sage grouse (milepost 11.8 to 11.9). Potential impacts from ground disturbance along this section of Route B would range from low to high, with a fairly extensive potential for high initial impacts in areas where sage grouse leks and long-billed curlew and sandhill crane occur. Key water use areas are also identified as locations where high impacts could occur, as are areas of sage grouse wintering grounds. High initial impacts would occur for 14.2 miles where this route crosses through at the north end of the Egan Range into Butte Valley (Link 280). Mitigation (discussed at the beginning of this section) would be expected to reduce the impacts from increased public access along this segment of Route B to insignificant levels. A total of 11.1 miles of high residual impact would be expected to persist from the construction and operation of the transmission line in the vicinity of Antone Pass (Link 280). Most of these high residual impacts would be associated with sage grouse leks (refer to discussion above regarding raptor predation).

Construction of the SWIP on Route B would likely affect wild horse populations along the route. The Butte HMA is partly located within the route. Given the mobility of this species, however, impacts are expected to short-term and little significance.

From the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, the potential impacts of Route B would be the same as those described for Route A.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - Generally, the plant species described along the assumed centerline of Route A would be the same as those for Route B. One species of cactus, Great Basin

fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*), occurs within one mile of the assumed centerline of the section of this route along the eastern foothills of the Toano Range and Goshute Mountains (Link 222). It is often collected for horticultural purposes and may be impacted by increased public access. Suitable habitat for this species extends to areas on the assumed centerline where ground disturbance could directly impact habitat and populations. This plant species is protected by the Cactus and Yucca Law in Nevada, which requires that permits be obtained from the Division of Forestry for removal of any plants.

Route C

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada (Links 10, 20, 40, 41, 50, 70), potential impacts to wildlife for Route C would be the same as described for Route A. From Jackpot to the southern end of Toano Draw north of Interstate 80 (Links 91, 92, 140, 141, 142, 144, 200), potential impacts to wildlife for Route C would be the same as described for Route B.

Then, from north of Interstate 80 in Toano Draw to the Dry Lake Substation site, potential impacts to wildlife for Route C would be the same as described for Route A.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - Potential impacts to sensitive plants for Route C would be the same as discussed for Route A, except for impacts described for Elko rock-cress (*Arabis falcifructa*) (Link 162).

Route D

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada (Links 10, 20, 40, 41, 50, 70), potential impacts to wildlife for Route D would be the same as described for Route A. Potential impacts to wildlife for Route D, from Jackpot to northwest of the Windermere Hills (Links 72, 101, 102, 110, 130, 160, 161, 162), would also be the same as described for Route A.

From the Windermere Hills to Dolly Varden in Goshute Valley (Links 1611, 166, 167, 1613, 180, 190, 230), initial impacts to wildlife resources for Route D from potentially increased public access and ground disturbance would be generally low or indiscernible. Some potential high initial impacts would occur in pronghorn winter range west of HD Summit in the Bishops Creek area (Link 1611). Because of the relatively good access along this segment of this route, other impacts from increased public access would be low or indiscernible. In addition, some other high initial impacts would occur further south in Bishops Creek (Link 167). There would also be some moderate to high initial impacts to sage grouse leks and pronghorn winter range in this area (Link 166). Potential high initial impacts to sage grouse leks and long-billed curlew habitat would also occur along the western toe of the Wood Hills (Link 180). Where this segment of Route D would cross Independence Valley to the Pequop Mountains (Link 190), there would be some moderate initial impacts to long-billed curlew, sandhill crane, and key deer winter habitat.

Mitigation (discussed at the beginning of this section) would be expected to reduce potential high initial impacts from increased public access to moderate or low residual impacts. Potential high impacts to sage grouse leks would be expected to remain high following mitigation in Clover Valley (between mileposts 17.6 and 18.7) along the western toe of the Wood Hills (Link 180). Other residual impacts for this segment of the route would be expected to be moderate to low.

Federal and state biologists are concerned that the SWIP would add yet another cumulative impact on sage grouse populations in southern Idaho and eastern Nevada (refer to cumulative effects section at the end of Chapter 4). Concern has focused on the increase in public access within sage grouse habitats, placement of towers and access roads in strutting or crucial wintering grounds, and the fact that predators of sage grouse (i.e., golden eagles) use the transmission towers as hunting perches. Adult and immature birds and nests are all thought to be vulnerable. Because there is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse in these areas, these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant. Eliminating access would be difficult. There would be some potential for disturbance and poaching in addition to the loss of habitat and disturbance due to construction activities.

From the Dolly Varden area to the North Steptoe Substation site, Route D would result in some moderate and high initial impacts at the north end of the Steptoe Valley near Currie, Nevada (Link 241). These impacts would be associated with significant access increases in important pronghorn antelope habitat, long-billed curlew and sandhill crane habitat, Bonneville cutthroat trout habitat, and sage grouse leks. Other potential impacts in the Steptoe Valley would be expected to be moderate to low, with some high impacts. There would be high initial impacts to sage grouse leks, critical pronghorn habitat, and habitat of sandhill crane and long-billed curlew for 11.5 miles in the northern portion of Steptoe Valley (Link 241) and for 0.1 miles where the route would cross Steptoe Valley (Link 243).

Following mitigation (discussed at the beginning of this section), potential high initial impact levels from increased public access and ground disturbing activities along this segment of Route D would be reduced to moderate or low residual (insignificant) impacts. Approximately 1 mile of high residual impacts would be expected to sage grouse leks that occur (mileposts 28.3 to 29.4) in the northern portion of Steptoe Valley (Link 241) (refer to discussion above for long-term predation impacts to sage grouse).

From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, potential impacts to wildlife for Route D would be the same as described for Route A.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - The potential for impacts to occurrences of unique plant communities and/or sensitive plants on Route D would be the same as that described for Route A.

Route E

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, potential impacts to wildlife for Route E would be the same as described for Route A. From Jackpot to northwest of the Windermere Hills (Links 72, 101, 102, 110, 130, 160, 161, 162), potential impacts to wildlife for Route E would be the same as described for Route A. Then, from the northwest of the Windermere Hills to north of Interstate 80 near Oasis, Nevada (Links 1612, 152, 200), potential impacts to wildlife for Route E would also be the same as described for Route A.

Continuing from the north of Interstate 80 near Oasis, Nevada to the North Steptoe Substation site (Links 221, 222, 224, 226, 259, 261), potential impacts to wildlife for Route E would be the same as described for Route B.

From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Robinson Summit Substation site (Links 270, 291, 293, 310), potential impacts to wildlife for Route E would again be the same as described for Route A.

Then, from the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, potential impacts to wildlife for Route E would also be the same as described for Route A.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - The potential for impacts to occurrences of unique plant communities and/or sensitive plants on Route E, from Midpoint Substation to north of Interstate 80, would be the same as those described to Route A. From north of Interstate 80 to the North Steptoe Substation site, the potential for impacts to occurrences of unique plant communities and/or sensitive plants for Route E would be the same as that described for Route B. Then, from the North Steptoe Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, Route E would again be the same as described for Route A.

Route F

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada (Links 61, 62, 64, 70), 1.3 miles of high initial impacts occur to pronghorn habitat and long-billed curlew nesting areas from where Route F would traverse areas of open range east of Hagerman, Idaho (Link 61). In addition, considerable moderate initial impacts associated with pronghorn habitat and sage grouse leks would result in plateau areas along Salmon Falls Creek Canyon (Link 64). Ground disturbing activities and increased public access in the area east of Hagerman (Link 61) would result in mostly moderate initial impacts. In the plateau areas along Salmon Falls Creek Canyon (Link 64) initial impacts would vary from low to moderate. Wildlife species that would be affected include pronghorn, burrowing owl, long-billed curlew, pheasant, and sage grouse leks.

Following mitigation (discussed at the beginning of this section), no high residual impacts would be expected to remain along this segment of the Route F.

From Jackpot to the north of Interstate 80 near Oasis, Nevada (Links 72, 91, 92, 140, 141, 142, 144), potential impacts to wildlife for Route F would be the same as described for Route B. Then, from north of Interstate 80 near Oasis, Nevada to the Dry Lake Substation site, potential impacts to wildlife for Route F would be the same as described for Route A.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada (Links 61, 62, 64, 70), six sensitive plant species would be directly impacted by ground disturbance where they would occur along 4.2 miles of the assumed centerline on plateau areas above the Snake River (Links 61, 62) and along Salmon Falls Creek Canyon (Links 64, 70).

Two of the species that would be affected by the route are federal candidate species (C2). mourning milk-vetch (*Astragalus atratus* var. *inseptus*) (also a BLM sensitive species) occurs along the route near Peters Gulch (Link 70) and Davis' peppergrass (*Lepidium davisii*) on the plateau above Salmon Falls Creek Canyon (Link 64). Populations of four-wing milk-vetch (*A. tetrapterus*) also occur over a two square mile area along Salmon Falls Creek (Link 64) and two-headed onion (*Allium anceps*) occurs in the foothills west of Jackpot (Link 70). Both are Priority 2 species in the State of Idaho. One candidate species, Montane paintbrush (*Castilleja salsuginosa*), and two watch species in Nevada, One-leaflet Torrey milk-vetch (*Astragalus calycosus* var. *monophyllidius*) and Meadow Valley range sandwort (*Arenaria stenomeres*), occur within a one mile area and may experience indirect impacts (refer to discussion under Route A).

From Jackpot, Nevada, to the Dry Lake Substation site, the potential for impacts to occurrences of unique plant communities and/or sensitive plants for Route F would be the same as that described for Route A.

Route G

Wildlife - From Midpoint Substation to Jackpot, Nevada, potential impacts to wildlife for Route E would be the same as described for Route A.

From Jackpot to northwest of the Windermere Hills, moderate to high initial impacts would be expected to occur where Route G would traverse crucial mule deer and pronghorn winter habitat, bald eagle potential nesting and wintering habitat and sage grouse leks and wintering grounds in the rolling hills between Jackpot and Contact (Links 711, 714). In addition, increased public access and ground disturbing activities would result in some high initial impacts to crucial mule deer and pronghorn habitats, and bald eagle nesting and wintering habitats in this area (Links 101, 713, 715). No high residual impacts would be expected to occur along this segment of Route G following the mitigation.

North of the Windermere Hills near Wilkins, Nevada (Link 150) in the Thousand Springs Valley, initial impacts would be moderate to high where pronghorn winter range and sage grouse leks occur along the assumed centerline. There would be some high initial impacts to sage grouse leks on the northern end of Link 151. Initial impacts on Link 150 would be moderate to high. Following mitigation there would be no high residual impacts expected to occur along this segment of Route G, except for the long-term significant impacts to sage grouse.

Federal and state biologists are concerned that the SWIP would add yet another cumulative impact on sage grouse populations in southern Idaho and eastern Nevada (refer to cumulative effects section at the end of Chapter 4). Concern has focused on the increase in public access within sage grouse habitats, placement of towers and access roads in strutting or crucial wintering grounds, and the fact that predators of sage grouse (i.e., golden eagles) use the transmission towers as hunting perches. Adult and immature birds and nests are all thought to be vulnerable. Because there is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse in these areas, these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant. Eliminating access would be difficult. There would be some potential for disturbance and poaching in addition to the loss of habitat and disturbance due to construction activities.

From the Windermere Hills to Dolly Varden (Links 200, 211, 212, 230), potential impacts to wildlife for Route G would be the same as described for Route A. Then, from Dolly Varden to the North Steptoe Substation site (Links 241, 243, 245), potential impacts to wildlife for Route G would be the same as described for Route D.

From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Robinson Summit Substation site (Links 270, 280, 310), potential impacts to wildlife for Route G would be the same as described for Route B. Then, from the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Dry Lake Substation site, potential impacts to wildlife for Route G would again be the same as described for Route A.

Construction on Route G would likely have short-term effects on wild horse populations in the area. Part of the Butte HMA is included within this route and it is expected that construction activity would

likely result in horses moving away from human activity. No long term or significant impacts to these animals is anticipated, however.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - Elko rock-cress (*Arabis falcifructa*), a C2 species, occurs within one mile the assumed centerline of Route G in Thousand Springs Valley (Link 151). This plant would not be impacted if access to the right-of-way is adequately controlled. Other sensitive plant species potentially impacted along Route G are described under Route A (Links 41, 70, 670, 720).

Ely to Delta Segment

Direct Route

Wildlife - In Nevada, from the North Steptoe Substation site to the Little Hills (Links 262, 263, 265, 266), increased public access and ground disturbing activities would generally cause low to moderate impacts. High initial impacts would occur for 1 mile in Antelope Wash (Link 266) where increases in public access would be significant in areas of crucial pronghorn winter habitat and ferruginous hawk habitat. Mitigation measures (described at the beginning of this section) would reduce these impacts to insignificant levels.

Moderate initial impacts would also be expected along this route in the Schell Creek Range (Links 262, 263, and 620). There would be high initial impacts for 1.0 mile where sage grouse leks occur at the northern end of Spring Valley (Link 263). 2.6 miles of high initial impacts in sage grouse winter grounds would be expected to occur (between mileposts 3.0 and 5.0), where this route would cross Spring Valley (Link 266). 2.1 miles of high residual impacts to wintering bald eagle use areas would be expected to occur in the valley east of the Little Hills (Link 620). On Link 620, this route would result in high initial impacts from ground disturbance to bald eagle wintering areas for 2.1 miles.

Further east, the Direct Route would cross the Snake Valley, Tule Valley, and Swasey Bottom (Links 621, 630, 640) in Utah. Initial impacts would generally be low, moderate, and indiscernible in the vicinity of Delta (Links 572, 580, 581, 582). High initial impacts would occur for 3.6 miles from increased public access in the vicinity of the Leland-Harris Spring Complex (Link 630), where four federal candidate species (least chub, spotted frog, desert dace, and Great Basin silver-spot butterfly) are known to occur. High residual impacts from increased public access to the Leland-Harris Spring Complex would remain due to the potential long-term and cumulative effects of repeated public entry to this sensitive area. The BLM biologists are concerned that any direct impacts from construction activities or indirect, long-term impacts from increased public accessibility could endanger the survival of these sensitive species. Crossing of the Leland-Harris Spring Complex area would also require a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (1972) if any filling were to occur within jurisdictional wetland areas. In addition to concern for the Leland Harris Spring complex on Link 630, the Direct Route also crosses the Confusion Mountain and Swasey designated HMA's for wild horses. Included are 7.0 miles that are designated crucial wild horse habitat. Impacts to horses resulting from construction of the SWIP on Link 630 are likely to be of short term, related primarily to disturbance due to the presence of people and equipment. Initial impacts are considered to be moderate and residual impacts are projected to be low.

Except for the impacts to sage grouse leks (Links 263, 266, and 620) and the potential impacts to the Leland-Harris Spring Complex (Link 620), committed mitigation measures (described in the beginning of this section) would effectively mitigate these high initial impacts to insignificant levels. Residual impacts to sage grouse would be adverse, long term, and significant despite mitigative measures.

Federal and state biologists are concerned that the SWIP would add yet another cumulative impact on sage grouse populations in southern Idaho and eastern Nevada (refer to cumulative effects section at the end of Chapter 4). Concern has focused on the increase in public access within sage grouse habitats, placement of towers and access roads in strutting or crucial wintering grounds, and the fact that predators of sage grouse (i.e., golden eagles) use the transmission towers as hunting perches. Adult and immature birds and nests are all thought to be vulnerable. Because there is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse in these areas, these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant. Eliminating access would be difficult. There would be some potential for disturbance and poaching in addition to the loss of habitat and disturbance due to construction activities.

Initial high impacts to critical deer winter range and pronghorn habitat would occur for 0.7 miles from increased public access south of the Drum Mountains (Link 640). Mitigation measures (discussed in the beginning of this section) would effectively mitigate these impacts to insignificant levels.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - No known populations of sensitive plant species or communities are known to occur along the Direct Route.

Cutoff Route

Wildlife - From the North Steptoe Substation site to the Little Hills (Links 262, 263, 265, 266), this route would result in the same potential impacts to wildlife as described for the Direct Route.

Impacts from increased public access and ground disturbance activities along the remainder of the Cutoff Route (Links 267, 268, 462, 470, 540, 571, 572, 580, 581, 582) would be to pronghorn, mule deer, wild horses, bald eagles, sage grouse leks and sage grouse wintering grounds. In the northern portion of the Snake Valley (Link 267), high initial impacts would occur in pronghorn winter range, sage grouse leks, and bald eagle habitats. Further south in the Snake Valley (Link 268), the route would result in a total of 2.2 miles of high initial impacts to crucial pronghorn habitat and key deer winter range, as well as one golden eagle nest location. Five miles of high initial impact would occur where public access would increase significantly in critical deer and antelope winter range further south in the Snake Valley (Link 268). Moderate initial impact to wild horses can also be expected on Link 268 in the Conger Mountain HMA (mileposts 11 to 19). This route would result in another 2.4 miles of high initial impact to key deer winter range and migration corridors (between mileposts 21.3 to 23.6) in the Confusion Range (Link 462). Mitigation measures (discussed in the beginning of this section) would effectively mitigate these impacts to insignificant levels, except for the adverse and significant impacts to sage grouse leks on Link 267.

Federal and state biologists are concerned that the SWIP would add yet another cumulative impact on sage grouse populations in southern Idaho and eastern Nevada (refer to cumulative effects section at the end of Chapter 4). Concern has focused on the increase in public access within sage grouse habitats, placement of towers and access roads in strutting or crucial wintering grounds, and the fact that predators of sage grouse (i.e., golden eagles) use the transmission towers as hunting perches. Adult and immature birds and nests are all thought to be vulnerable. Because there is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse in these areas, these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant. Eliminating access would be difficult. There would be some potential for disturbance and poaching in addition to the loss of habitat and disturbance due to construction activities.

3.5 miles of initial high impacts to critical pronghorn habitat, key deer winter range, and deer migration routes would occur in the Confusion Range (Link 462). In addition, the route would result in 0.3 miles of high initial impact to pronghorn habitat in Whirlwind Valley (Link 470). No other high initial impacts would be expected to occur on the Cutoff Route. Mitigation measures (described at the beginning of this section) would be expected to effectively reduce these high impacts to insignificant levels.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - One known population of Great Basin Fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*) is known to occur along the assumed centerline of Link 462. Direct impacts could result from ground disturbance during the construction period and increased public access might result in the loss of specimens to plant collectors. Pre-construction surveys and mitigation measures designed to avoid populations of special status plant species would reduce residual impacts to a low level.

230kV Corridor

Wildlife - From the Robinson Summit Substation site to the Buckskin Hills, initial impacts along the 230kV Corridor Route from increased public access and ground disturbing activities would generally be moderate with scattered areas of high impact. On Link 350, 1.1 miles of initial high impacts would result because of sage grouse leks. Initial high impacts on Link 351 are associated with sage grouse leks and long-billed curlew habitat (0.8 miles), ferruginous hawk nests and habitat, sage grouse winter grounds, long-billed curlew and sandhill crane habitat (2.1 miles).

Link 370 has 4.5 miles of potentially high initial impacts as a result of the presence of ferruginous hawk nests and habitat, long-billed curlew and sandhill crane habitat, and bald eagle wintering grounds. On Link 380, a total of 9.4 miles of high initial impacts would be expected due to the presence of ferruginous hawk nests and habitat, sage grouse leks, long-billed curlew habitat, bald eagle wintering areas, elk and deer summer range, and crucial elk winter range.

A total of 1.6 miles of high initial impacts to key habitat areas for elk, critical pronghorn habitat, key deer winter range, (key) water source, and nesting areas for ferruginous hawks, and long-billed curlews would occur where the route crosses the southern end of the Schell Creek Range (Link 380) on the Humboldt National Forest and traverses the Snake Valley (Link 461). Initial high impacts on Link 462 (3.5 miles) would be reflected by the presence of critical pronghorn habitat, key deer winter range, and a deer migration area. There would be 0.3 miles of potential high initial impact associated with Link 470 (critical pronghorn habitat). No other high initial impacts from increased public access would be expected on the 230kV Corridor route.

Moderate initial impacts to wild horses are projected along portions of Links 461 and 462 in the Conger Mountain HMA. Impacts are expected along 7 miles of Link 461 and 12 miles of Link 462. These impacts are anticipated to be short term, occurring as a result of the presence of men and equipment during construction. Residual impacts within HMAs would be low to indiscernible.

Applying mitigation would result in only 0.1 miles of high residual impact to wildlife on the 230kV Corridor. Moderate residual impact persists in the Schell Creek Range (Link 380) where potential public access to long-billed curlew and ferruginous hawk habitat would increase significantly. With mitigation, most high initial impacts would be expected to be reduced to low or indiscernible for most of the route.

From the Buckskin Hills, in Utah, to the Intermountain Substation site (Links 462, 470, 540, 571, 572, 580, 581, and 582), potential impacts to wildlife for the 230kV Corridor Route would be same as those described for the Cutoff Route.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - One known population of Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*) is known to occur along the assumed centerline of Link 462. Direct impacts could result from ground disturbance during the construction period and increased public access might result in the loss of specimens to plant collectors. Pre-construction surveys and mitigation measures designed to avoid populations of special status plant species would reduce residual impacts to a low level.

Southern Route

Wildlife -The Southern Route originates at the Robinson Summit Substation site and traverses south through Jake's Valley. Increased public access and ground disturbing activities would result in a total of approximately 54 miles of high initial impacts. On Link 364, 12.1 miles of high initial impact would be attributable to the presence of sage grouse leks on the route. Federal and state biologists are concerned that the SWIP would add yet another cumulative impact on sage grouse populations in southern Idaho and eastern Nevada (refer to cumulative effects section at the end of Chapter 4). Concern has focused on the increase in public access within sage grouse habitats, placement of towers and access roads in strutting or crucial wintering grounds, and the fact that predators of sage grouse (i.e., golden eagles) use the transmission towers as hunting perches. Adult and immature birds and nests are all thought to be vulnerable. Because there is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse in these areas, these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant. Eliminating access would be difficult. There would be some potential for disturbance and poaching in addition to the loss of habitat and disturbance due to construction activities.

Link 420 would have 6.2 miles of high initial impact due to potential disturbance to ferruginous hawk nests, ferruginous hawk habitat, antelope kidding grounds, and long-billed curlew habitat. There would also be high initial impacts to key deer winter range on Link 430, and critical pronghorn habitat on Link 450. Link 451 would be characterized by a substantial 28.5 miles of potentially high initial impact associated with the presence of a number of sensitive features including critical pronghorn habitat, key deer winter range, important water sources, raptor nesting areas, and ferruginous hawk nests. Most of the initial high impacts on this link (23.0 miles) would be associated with important pronghorn habitat. An additional 16 miles of moderate initial impact to wild horses are projected for Link 451 where it traverses the Burbank and King Top HMAs. There would be 0.5 miles of high initial impact on Link 490 associated with a known ferruginous hawk nest. In addition to these potentially high initial impacts, additional moderate effects to pronghorn, deer winter range, sage grouse leks, ferruginous hawk habitat and long-billed curlews would be anticipated.

Mitigation measures (described at the beginning of this section) would be expected to effectively reduce most of the high impacts along this route to insignificant levels, except for 10.3 miles of high residual impacts would remain due to unavoidable, long-term, deleterious effects on sage grouse leks on Link 364 (refer to discussion above).

From the Smelter Hills Substation site to the Intermountain Substation site (Links 571, 572, 580, 581, and 582), potential impacts to wildlife would be the same as described for the Cutoff Route. Residual impacts to wild horses within the Burbank and King Top HMAs are expected to be low to indiscernible.

Vegetation/Sensitive Plant Species - Isolated areas of high initial impacts are expected in areas where five species of sensitive plants that occur along the assumed centerline of this route would be directly impacted by ground disturbance. Two Category 2 species, compact catseye (*Cryptantha compacta*) and sand-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum ammophilum*) occur at the southern tip of the Tule Valley (Link 451). A third Category 2 species, currant milk-vetch (*Astragalus uncialis*) occurs in the Swasey Wash on Link 490. low beard tongue (*Penstemon nanus*), an S3 species in Utah, has also been found along the assumed centerline in the Tule Valley (Link 451). Great Basin fishhook (*Sclerocactus pubispinus*), a species protected by the Cactus and Yucca Law of Nevada occurs along the assumed centerline near the southern end of the Snake Range (Link 430). This species, which is also a federal Category 3 candidate, also occurs on Link 451 in the Tule Valley of Utah.

Residual impacts to these species would be expected to be low following application of appropriate mitigation measures.

Populations of Great Basin fishhook (*S. pubispinus*), currant milk-vetch (*A. uncialis*), Jones globemallow (*Sphaeralcea caespitosa*), limestone buckwheat (*Eriogonum eremicum*), Calloway milk-vetch (*A. callithrix*), and terrace buckwheat (*E. natum*) occur within one mile of the study corridor assumed centerline in various areas. These plants, however, should not be directly impacted if access to the right-of-way is adequately controlled.

Avian Collision Hazards

An area of considerable concern for both the public and agency biologists is the potential of creating a significant collision hazard for raptors, waterfowl, and other larger species of birds by placing transmission lines in areas frequented by such species. Of particular concern is placement of such facilities in areas where such species occur during migration (i.e., Goshute Mountains) or may concentrate during some season(s) due to an abundance of forage, water, and/or cover (i.e., seasonally wet meadows such as the Murphy Meadows near the Kirch Wildlife Management Area in Nevada).

That man-made structures cause mortality in birds as a result of birds colliding with such structures is quite well documented (see Avery, et al., 1978 which contains 853 records of published accounts of such occurrences). The majority of avian mortality at man-made structures involves nocturnally migrating songbirds that collide with lighted structures including radio and television towers, airport celiometers, lighthouses, lightships, lighted chimneys or smokestacks, and cooling towers. Birds also collide with a variety of overhead wires, buildings, and windows. There have been documented cases of thousands of songbirds being killed over the span of only a few nights.

Most mortality occurs during the spring or fall migration, involves lighted structures, and occurs during periods of overcast weather. There are, however, virtually no data on songbird collisions with overhead wires. This problem is most often associated with large birds (waterfowl, pelicans, herons, etc.) with relatively low maneuverability and tendency to move about in flocks (Hoover, 1978; Beer and Ogilvie, 1972; Harrison, 1963; Ogilvie, 1967; Willard et al., 1977). Field feeding "puddle ducks" (i.e., pintail, mallard, shoveler, wigeon, and teal) are the most likely to sustain mortality from wire strikes due to their high speed flight and flocking behavior (Thompson, 1978; Boyd, 1961; Krapu, 1974).

The amount of mortality that occurs where conflicts exist between overhead lines and waterfowl appears to be quite low, possibly because overhead lines do not have the "attracting" qualities that

characterize lighted or light bearing structures. Kroodsmas (1977) found that less than 1 percent of nonhunting mortality sustained by waterfowl at Redwing, Minnesota was due to collisions with overhead wires. Similarly, Stout and Cornwell (1976), summarizing available literature, generated a figure of 0.1 percent mortality due to line strikes. Lee (1978) estimated that 0.05 percent of bird flights (mostly waterfowl) in the vicinity of Bonneville Power Authority lines in Oregon resulted in fatal strikes.

The visibility of overhead wires is a major factor in the extent to which there is conflict with bird populations. Most collisions occur at night, during periods of foul weather, and/or at dusk and dawn (Thompson, 1978). High voltage transmission lines (i.e., 230kV and larger) may be less of a problem than smaller distribution lines or telephone/telegraph lines because of their greater size and, therefore, visibility (Thompson, 1978; Scott, et al., 1972). Lee (1978) found that 89 percent of birds flew over 230kV conductors, 9 percent flew under them, and 2 percent flew between conductors. This points up a problem with high voltage lines that has been discussed by Scott (1972). Most bird fatalities at such structures occur when birds attempt to fly over conductors and strike the smaller static or shield wires located a few to many feet above the conductors.

Within a local setting, the placement of transmission lines can have major significance relative to potential conflict with birds. Lines running parallel to movement corridors are much less of a problem than lines that run perpendicular to such corridors (Scott, et al., 1977). Thompson (1978) recommends clustering lines at river crossings, for example, in order to increase their visibility.

For new 230kV lines in corridors that already contain 230kV lines Thompson (1978) recommends that lines should be clustered in areas of bird concentration in order to make them more visible. The same is true in open country and feel it more appropriate to concentrate transmission lines within a single corridor rather than having numerous corridors, each with its own single line and separated from other such corridors by large distances (e.g., more than a mile).

A factor to consider in the placement of transmission lines is the behavior of birds in the placement area. This can be of significance to diurnal and nocturnal (i.e., migrating) birds alike. Areas where birds are likely to be landing or taking off in numbers rather than simply moving through an area represent poor locations for transmission line siting, especially smaller distribution lines.

Raptors are diurnal migrants, noted for their keen visual acuity. Given the size of conductor bundles that would be utilized in the SWIP, it is highly unlikely that collisions with the transmission lines would be significant. There is a possibility of occasional collisions between migrating raptors and the overhead shield wires that would be placed between towers to protect the system from lightning strikes. However, even these lines are fairly large (3/8 to 1/2 inch in diameter) and are likely to be avoided by the vast majority of migrating raptors.

Olendorff (1986) completed an analysis of raptor collisions with utility lines and concluded that "collisions with utility lines will always contribute to the proximate mortality of individuals, it does not seem likely that collisions could become an ultimate cause of population declines, except for critically endangered species such as the California condor." Olendorff's summary of known collisions by raptors with utility lines indicated that electrical transmission lines were involved in 26 of 72 documented collisions. Of the 26, 17 (65.4 percent) involved transmission lines with metal tower configurations. No data were available, however, on the relative importance of static wires versus conductor bundles as factors in these strikes (Olendorff, 1986, pg. 11).

It is interesting that an EIS in California estimated 20 cases of raptor mortality per year for a 50 mile transmission line. Olendorff and Lehman (1986, Raptor collisions with utility lines: an analysis using subjective field observations, Pacific Gas and Electric Co., San Ramon, CA.) issued a worldwide call for information on raptor mortality from collisions with utility lines. They received a total of 121 responses to their request for information. Of this number, only 88 could be analyzed due to inadequacy of information. Their conclusion: "Collision with utility lines apparently is a random, low level, and inconsequential mortality factor in raptor populations."

Collisions involving high voltage lines, regardless of the bird species considered, are very infrequent, highly random events that are unlikely to affect the long term probability of survival of any species within the SWIP corridors. There would undoubtedly be an increased level of raptor and other bird mortality within the SWIP corridors. However, the level of increased mortality likely to occur would not be measurable and would not adversely affect the population status of any raptor species. The annual mortality of raptors from illegal shooting in western Utah and eastern Nevada is probably far higher than would be experienced in a decade or two of presence of the SWIP transmission lines.

Potential Raptor Electrocution Hazard

Given the structural configuration of 500kV electrical transmission lines, the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission systems proposed for the SWIP would utilize tubular steel H-frame and/or steel lattice towers. Spacing of conductors on such structures is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. In order to achieve this safety measure, conductors are hung on the supporting structure in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart. Moreover, conductors are hung on insulating systems that would be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (see the SWIP DEIS/DPA pp. 2-12 through 2-14). Because of the distance of conductors from the support structure, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower.

Leland Harris Spring Complex

The Leland Harris Spring Complex is located in Snake Valley, Juab, and Millard Counties, in western Utah. Link 630 of the Direct Route between Ely, Nevada and Delta, Utah crosses the Snake Valley (Mileposts 0.0 - 10.0) just to the north of the spring complex (mileposts 3.0 - 5.0).

The Leland Harris Spring Complex provides habitat for several sensitive species: least chub (*Iotichthys phlegethontis*), western spotted frog (*Rana pretiosa*), western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), Great Basin silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria nokomis nokimis*), and a currently undescribed subspecies of dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*). With the exception of *Rhinichthys osculus*, all of these species are currently federal Category 2 candidates for listing among the threatened or endangered wildlife of the United States (FWS, 1991). The least chub is classified by the Utah Division of UDWR as a threatened species in Utah. The current distribution and occurrence of each of these species in the Leland Harris Spring complex is not completely known. The least chub was known to occur in the Leland Harris complex in 1977 and were also found there during surveys in 1985 (Osmundson, 1985). Osmundson (1985) did not find *Rhinichthys osculus* at Leland Harris. The western snowy plover, western spotted frog, and Great Basin silverspot butterfly are known to

have occurred at the Gandy Salt Marsh south of Leland Harris, and the silverspot butterfly has been recorded at Leland Harris as well (Richard Fike, BLM, Personal Communication to Geoffrey Pool, Dames & Moore, August, 1992). Given habitat similarities and proximity of the Gandy Salt Marsh to the Leland Harris complex, it seems reasonable to assume that most or all of these species are present at Leland Harris.

Link 630 of the Direct Route crosses the Snake Valley about one mile north of the northern-most spring in the Leland Harris complex that was sampled by Osmundson in 1985. To the east, in the Snake Valley, the link passes about 0.5 miles south of Miller Spring (S22, R18W, T14S). At its origin, Link 630 is 0.8 miles south of Coyote Spring. There are no identified springs directly on the assumed centerline. Consequently, it is expected that construction of the SWIP could occur on Link 630 with little or no impact to the Leland Harris Spring complex or the associated wetlands. Biologists with the BLM in Utah, however, disagree with this assessment and have expressed considerable concern over construction of Link 630. The BLM is concerned that even a small impact could cause the four species of concern known to occur in the vicinity of Link 630 to "go over the edge" which would require the request to the FWS for listing one or more them as Category 2 candidate species.

TABLES

TABLE 3-1
MILEAGE OF ALTERNATIVE ROUTES IN MILITARY AIRSPACE

	Alternative Routes										Ely to Delta			
	Link	Route A	Route B	Route C	Route D	Route E	Route F	Route G	Utility	Agency Preferred	Direct	Cutoff	230 Corridor	Southern
Hill AFB														
Lucin A MOA	221	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
	222	0	13.7	0	0	13.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	223	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9.7	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>		0	16.7	0	0	16.7	0	0	0	12.7	0	0	0	0
Lucin C MOA	211	0.7	0	0.7	0	0	0.7	0.7	0.7	0	0	0	0	0
	212	0.9	0	0.9	0	0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0	0	0	0
	223	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.5	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>		1.6	0	1.6	0	0	1.6	1.6	1.6	4.4	0	0	0	0
Gandy MOA	222	0	8.3	0	0	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	226	0	17.4	0	0	17.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	266	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	0	0
	267	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17.1	0	0
	620	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.8	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>		0	25.7	0	0	25.7	0	0	0	0	19.8	34.1	0	0
Restricted-6405	222	0	0.7	0	0	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	224	0	5.9	0	0	5.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	226	0	4.4	0	0	4.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	620	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.4	0	0	0
	621	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.2	0	0	0
	630	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44.5	0	0	0
	640	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.6	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>		0	11	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	57.7	0	0	0
Sevier A	267	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.5	0	0
	268	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.8	0	0
	451	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.2
	461	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.3	0
	462	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27.9	27.9	0
	470	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.6	12.6	0
	630	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
	640	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.6	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10.6	62.8	52.8	1.2

Table 3-1, Mileage of Alternative Routes in Military Airspace (Continued)

	Alternative Routes										Ely to Delta			
	Link	Route A	Route B	Route C	Route D	Route E	Route F	Route G	Utility	Agency Preferred	Direct	Cutoff	230 Corridor	Southern
Hill AFB														
Sevier B	451	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	67.9
	470	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.3	6.3	0
	490	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9.1
	510	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.6
	540	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.9	6.9	0
	560	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.6
	571	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.6	7.6	7.6
	572	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4
	580	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	640	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.3	0	0	0
Total		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13.8	26.3	26.3	101.3
Grand Total		1.6	53.4	1.6	0	53.4	1.6	1.6	1.6	17.1	101.9	123.2	79.1	102.5
Nellis AFB														
Reveille MOA	672	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1	0	0	0	0
	673	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	0	0	0	0
Total		37.3	37.3	37.3	37.3	37.3	37.3	37.3	37.3	37.3	0	0	0	0
Caliente West	673	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0
	675	26.8	26.8	26.8	26.8	26.8	26.8	26.8	26.8	26.8	0	0	0	0
	690	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8	0	0	0	0
Total		41.6	41.6	41.6	41.6	41.6	41.6	41.6	41.6	41.6	0	0	0	0
Sally Corridor	690	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	23.6	0	0	0	0
	700	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	0	0	0	0
	720	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	0	0	0	0
Total		41.4	41.4	41.4	41.4	41.4	41.4	41.4	41.4	41.4	0	0	0	0
Caliente Alpha	690	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	0	0	0	0
Total		129.5	129.5	129.5	129.5	129.5	129.5	129.5	129.5	129.5	0	0	0	0
Grand Total		131.1	182.9	131.1	129.5	182.9	131.1	131.1	131.1	131.1	90.9	123.1	79	105.7

TABLE 3-2

MILES NEAR WILDERNESS AREAS AND WSAs
MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

Wilderness/WSA	Alternative Routes										Distance from Route		
	Route A	Route B	Route C	Route D	Route E	Route F	Route G	Utility	Agency Preferred	Link	0-1/4 MILE	1/4-1 MILE	1-3 MILES
Lower Salmon Falls Creek WSA										64	4.3	5.8	8.1
Goshute Canyon WSA										241	0	1.5	5.8
										244	0	0	5.4
Goshute Peak WSA										226	1.3	2.0	1.1
										225	0	1.4	4.5
										224	0	0	0.9
										222	0	0	5.9
Bluebell WSA										222	2.4	2.5	9.8
South Pequop WSA										190	0.7	2.5	7.6
										230	0	0	6.2
Delamar Mountain WSA										690	23.0	0.8	1.6
										680	7.0	4.5	5.1
Evergreen WSA										690	8.8	1.2	0
Meadow Valley Mountain WSA										680	0.0	4.1	16.4
Fish & Wildlife 1, 2, & 3 WSA										690	0.5	0	0
										700	0	12.0	0
										720	4.0	6.8	7.8
										750	3.5	0.7	2.4
Arrow Canyon WSA										720	4.3	3.2	4.1
										730	3.7	5.5	1.6
										740	1.5	0.5	1.2
										770	1.2	0.5	0.2
										750	3.5	0.7	2.4

TABLE 3-3
MILES NEAR WILDERNESS AREAS AND WSAs
ELY TO DELTA ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

<i>Wilderness/WSA</i>	<i>Alternative Routes</i>					<i>Distance from Routes</i>		
	Direct	Cutoff	*230 Corridor	Southern	Link	0-1/4 MILE	1/4-1 MILE	1-3 MILES
Mount Moriah Wilderness					267	0	0	2.6
Mount Grafton WSA					364	0.4	4.1	5.3
Marble Canyon WSA					267	0	0.4	9.0
Wah Wah Mountains WSA					451	0	0	0.9
King Top WSA					451	3.0	0.1	6.1
Notch Peak WSA					451	4.4	2.3	1.1
					480	3.2	0.6	0
					462	6.2	0.9	1.7
Howell Peak WSA					462	2.4	2.6	2.4
					470	0.8	0.4	1.7
					480	0.2	0.1	0.3
Swasey Mountain WSA					470	0	0	5.3
					630	0	0	3.1
Fish Springs WSA					630	0	0	4.8

* Agency Preferred Alternative

TABLE 3-4
MILES THROUGH HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS
MIDPOINT TO DRY LAKE SEGMENT

<i>Herd Management Area (HMA)</i>	<i>Alternative Routes</i>									Link	MILES WITHIN HMA
	Route A	Route B	Route C	Route D	Route E	Route F	Route G	Utility	Agency Preferred		
Toano HMA										222	6.2
Goshute HMA										222	9.0
Spruce-Pequop HMA										190	7.9
Cherry Creek HMA										241	14.7
										242	0.9
										243	0.6
										244	1.0
Antelope Valley HMA										226	22.0
										230	0.8
										241	15.0
										250	20.9
Antelope HMA										226	8.6
										245	3.0
										250	3.8
										259	6.0
										260	4.7
										261	4.9
Butte HMA										280	23.4
										293	6.5
Jakes Wash HMA										331	2.1
										332	2.7
										340	5.8
										361	23.0
										362	9.9
										363	11.7
										660	2.8
White River HMA										669	0.7
										669	13.6
Seaman HMA										670	3.4
										671	20.5
										672	6.1
Dry Lake HMA										671	21.2
										672	5.3
										673	20.5
										674	23.1

TABLE 3-5
MILES THROUGH HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS
ELY TO DELTA SEGMENT

<i>Herd Management Area (HMA)</i>	<i>Alternative Routes</i>				<i>Link</i>	<i>MILES WITHIN HMA</i>
	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Cutoff</i>	<i>*230 Corridor</i>	<i>Southern</i>		
Confusion HMA					630	21.1 (7.6)
Swasey HMA					630	6.9 (0.2)
Conger HMA					268	8.0 (2.5)
					461	6.8
					462	7.5
Antelope HMA					262	4.1
					263	9.6
					264	10.4
					265	4.0
					266	6.9
					610	4.9
Jakes Wash HMA					364	4.1
Moriah HMA					267	5.4
					610	6.0
					620	7.9
King Top HMA					451	6.2
Burbank Hills HMA					451	6.9

Note : () miles of area in high concern
 * Agency Preferred Alternative

TABLE 3-6

Cultural Resource Data By Link

GISID	Site Number	Class	Type	Sensitivity	Comments
Link 463					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
	CR5320	Historic	Trash	Moderate	early 1900s bottles and cans; project 921p
	26WP1930/CR5638	Historic	Concrete footings & trash	Moderate-High	mill site associated with Black Horse mine; ca 1903-1913; project 928p
	26WP1931/CR5639	Historic	Dump	Moderate	about 85 bottles & 300 cans; ca 1900-1950; project 928p
Link 464					
7804	26WP1557/CR2544	Prehistoric	Artifact scatter	Moderate	<100 jasper & obsidian flakes; <20 Shoshone sherds; possible mano; project 555p
7804	26WP1558/CR2541	Prehistoric	Isolate	Moderate	jasper flake; project 555p
7804	26WP1560/CR2543	Prehistoric	Isolate	Moderate	4 flakes; project 555p
7804	26WP1561/CR2540	Prehistoric	Artifact scatter	Moderate	<100 jasper & chert flakes; project 555p
7804	26WP1637/CR2714	Prehistoric	Lithic scatter	Moderate	6 jasper flakes; project 555p
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 465					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 466					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 467					
9904	26WP1380/CR781	Historic	Trash	Moderate	about 50 cans; also 1 obsidian flake
9905	CR5631	Prehistoric	Artifact scatter	Moderate	project 928p
9906	CR5454	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	1 flake, 1 shatter; project 315p
9907	CR5417	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	quartzite lithic debris; project 315p
9907	CR5418	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	projectile point, lithic debris; project 315p

Table 3-6, Cultural Resource Data by Link (Continued)

GISID	Site Number	Class	Type	Sensitivity	Comments
Link 467 (Cont'd.)					
9908	CR5461	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	2 flakes
9908	CR5462	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	obsidian flake
9908	CR5463	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	quartz core
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 468					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 469					
	CR5322	Historic	Ranch house	Moderate-High	1880s adobe; project 921p
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 471					
	CR767	Prehistoric	Lithic scatter	Moderate	about 30 flakes; 1 projectile point fragment; project 315p
	CR768	Historic	Corral and chute	Moderate	may not be 50 years old; project 315p
	CR769	Prehistoric	Artifact scatter	Moderate	flakes and several project point fragments (Desert side-notched, Rosegate, large corner notched); 2 Snake Valley Gray sherds; project 315p
	CR773	Prehistoric	Lithic scatter	Moderate	several hundred obsidian biface thinning flakes; Rosegate and Humboldt concave base point fragments; project 315p
	CR5405	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	<10 flakes; project 315p
	CR5406	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	chert flake; project 315p
	CR5407	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	obsidian biface; project 315p
	CR5408	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	chert flake; project 315p
	CR5409	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	obsidian point fragment; project 315p
	CR5410	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	obsidian flake; project 315p
	CR5411	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	obsidian flake; project 315p
	CR5412	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	obsidian flake; project 315p
	CR5413	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	1 chert and 1 quartzite flake; project 315p
	CR5414	Prehistoric	Artifact scatter	Moderate	Shoshone pot drop & 1 obsidian flake; project 315p

Table 3-6, Cultural Resource Data by Link (Continued)

GISID	Site Number	Class	Type	Sensitivity	Comments
Link 471 (Cont'd.)					
	CR5415	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	1 chert and 1 obsidian flake; project 315p
	CR5416	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	basalt scraper; project 315p
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 472					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 473					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280

Table 3-6, Cultural Resource Data by Link (Continued)

GISID	Site Number	Class	Type	Sensitivity	Comments
Link 471 (Cont'd.)					
	CR5415	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	1 chert and 1 obsidian flake; project 315p
	CR5416	Prehistoric	Isolate	Low	basalt scraper; project 315p
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 472					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280
Link 473					
28010	Snake Valley	Ethnohistoric	Goshute habitation area	Moderate	Malouf 1974:280

TABLE 3-7

**Cultural Resources Recorded Along the
Sacramento Pass Subroutes**

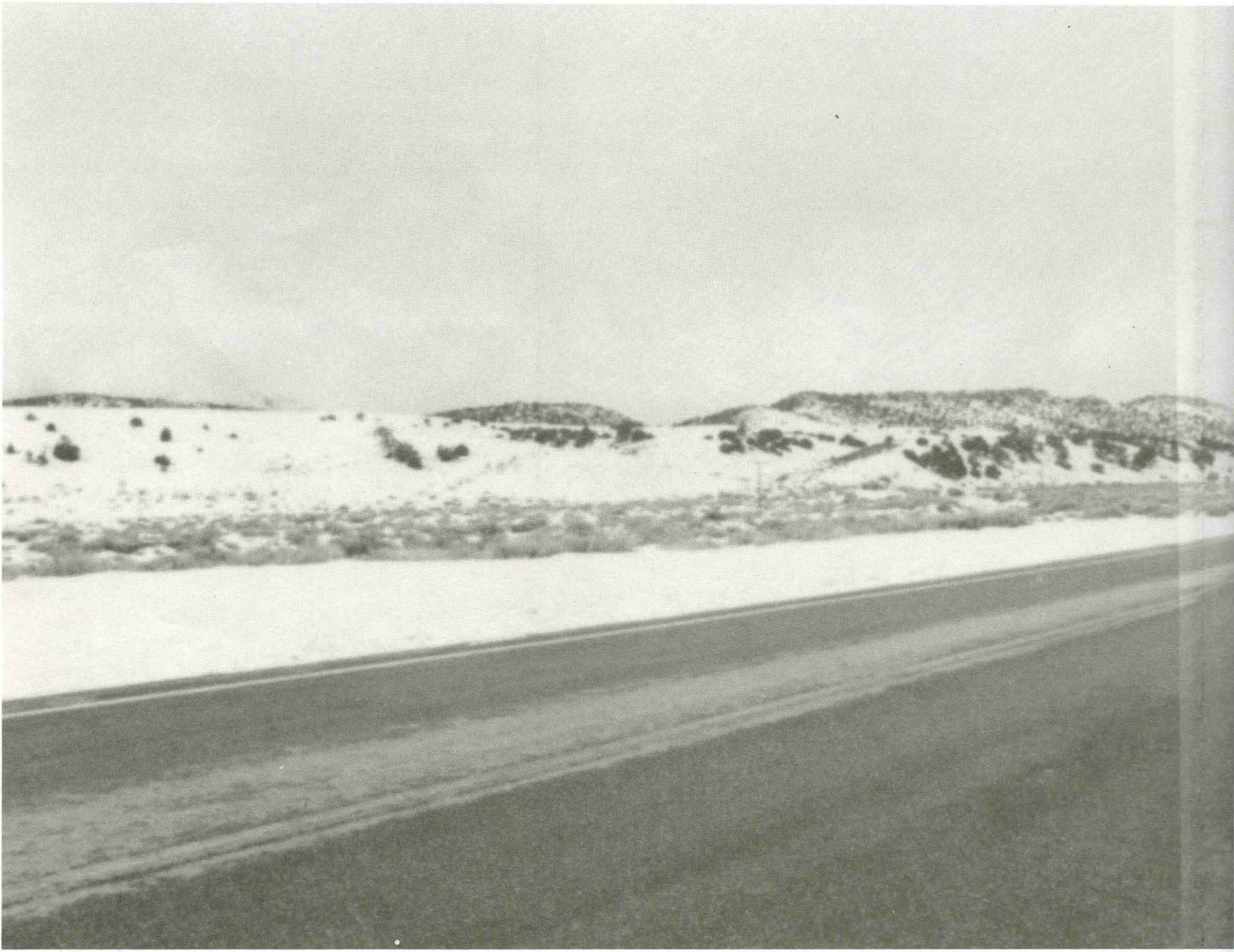
Resource Sensitivities	Subroute 1	Subroute 2	Subroute 3	Subroute 4
Prehistoric				
Low	11 (isolates)	13 (isolates)	13 (isolates)	8 (isolates)
Moderate	4 (lithic or artifact scatters)	7 (lithic or artifact scatters)	7 (lithic or artifact scatters)	4 (lithic or artifact scatters)
Ethnohistoric				
Moderate	1 (habitation area)	1 (habitation area)	1 (habitation area)	1 (habitation area)
Historic				
Moderate	3 (trash sites and a corral)	1 (corral)	1 (corral)	1 (trash)
Moderate-High	2 (ranch and mill site)	1 (ranch)		
All Resources				
Low	11	13	13	8
Moderate	8	9	9	6
Moderate-High	2	1	0	0
Totals	21	23	22	14

TABLE 3-8**Cultural Resources Along the Sacramento Pass Subroutes**

Resource Sensitivities	Subroute 1	Subroute 2	Subroute 3	Subroute 4
Prehistoric				
Low	11 (isolates)	13 (isolates)	13 (isolates)	8 (isolates)
Moderate	4 (lithic or artifact scatters)	7 (lithic or artifact scatters)	7 (lithic or artifact scatters)	4 (lithic or artifact scatters)
Ethnohistoric				
Moderate	1 (habitation area)	1 (habitation area)	1 (habitation area)	1 (habitation area)
Historic				
Moderate	3 (trash sites and a corral)	1 (corral)	1 (corral)	1 (trash)
Moderate-High	2 (ranch and mill site)	1 (ranch)		
All Known Resources				
Low	11	13	13	8
Moderate	8	9	9	6
Moderate-High	2	1	0	0
Totals	21	23	22	14
Predicted Sensitivities				
None	9.4	8.8	9.0	8.9
Low	3.8	3.2	2.3	1.1
Moderate	5.9	4.8	4.5	3.8
Moderate-High	1.4	4.9	4.9	5.6
Total Miles	20.5	21.7	20.7	19.4

TABLE 3-9**Summary of Cultural Resource Impacts**

	None	Low	Moderate	Moderate-High	Total Miles
Subroute 1					
Direct Construction Impacts on Known Sites	20.5	0	0	0	20.5
Direct Construction Impacts on Predicted Sensitivity Zones	9.0	5.0	6.5	0	20.5
Public Accessibility Increase	20.5	0	0	0	20.5
Subroute 2					
Direct Construction Impacts on Known Sites	19.7	0.3	1.7	0	21.7
Direct Construction Impacts on Predicted Sensitivity Zones	8.4	4.3	9.0	0	21.7
Public Accessibility Increase	17.1	2.0	0	0	21.7
Subroute 3					
Direct Construction Impacts on Known Sites	18.7	0.3	1.7	0	20.7
Direct Construction Impacts on Predicted Sensitivity Zones	8.6	4.3	7.8	0	20.7
Public Accessibility Increase	17.6	2.0	0	0	20.7
Subroute 4					
Direct Construction Impacts on Known Sites	17.4	0.3	1.7	0	19.4
Direct Construction Impacts on Predicted Sensitivity Zones	8.9	3.4	7.1	0	19.4
Public Accessibility Increase	16.9	2.0	0	0	19.4



Prepared by: Dames & Moore

Southwest Intertie Project



SACRAMENTO PASS MITIGATION REROUTE
Subroute 1 - Crossing of U.S. Highway 6/50
(Link 463)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3-13



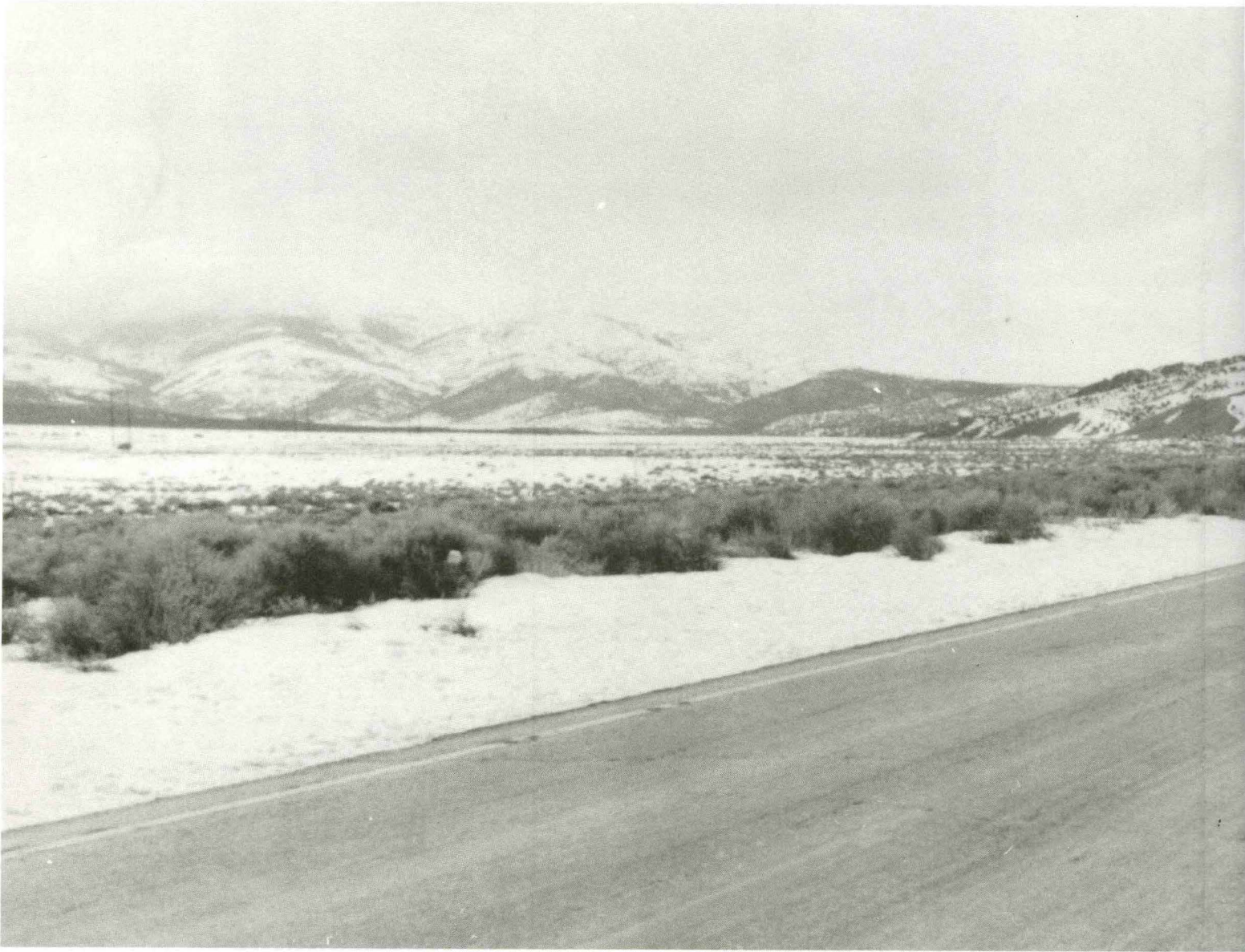
Prepared by: Dames & Moore

Southwest Intertie Project



SACRAMENTO PASS MITIGATION REROUTE
Subroute 1 - Crossing of U.S. Highway 6/50
(Link 463)

SIMULATION
Figure 3-14



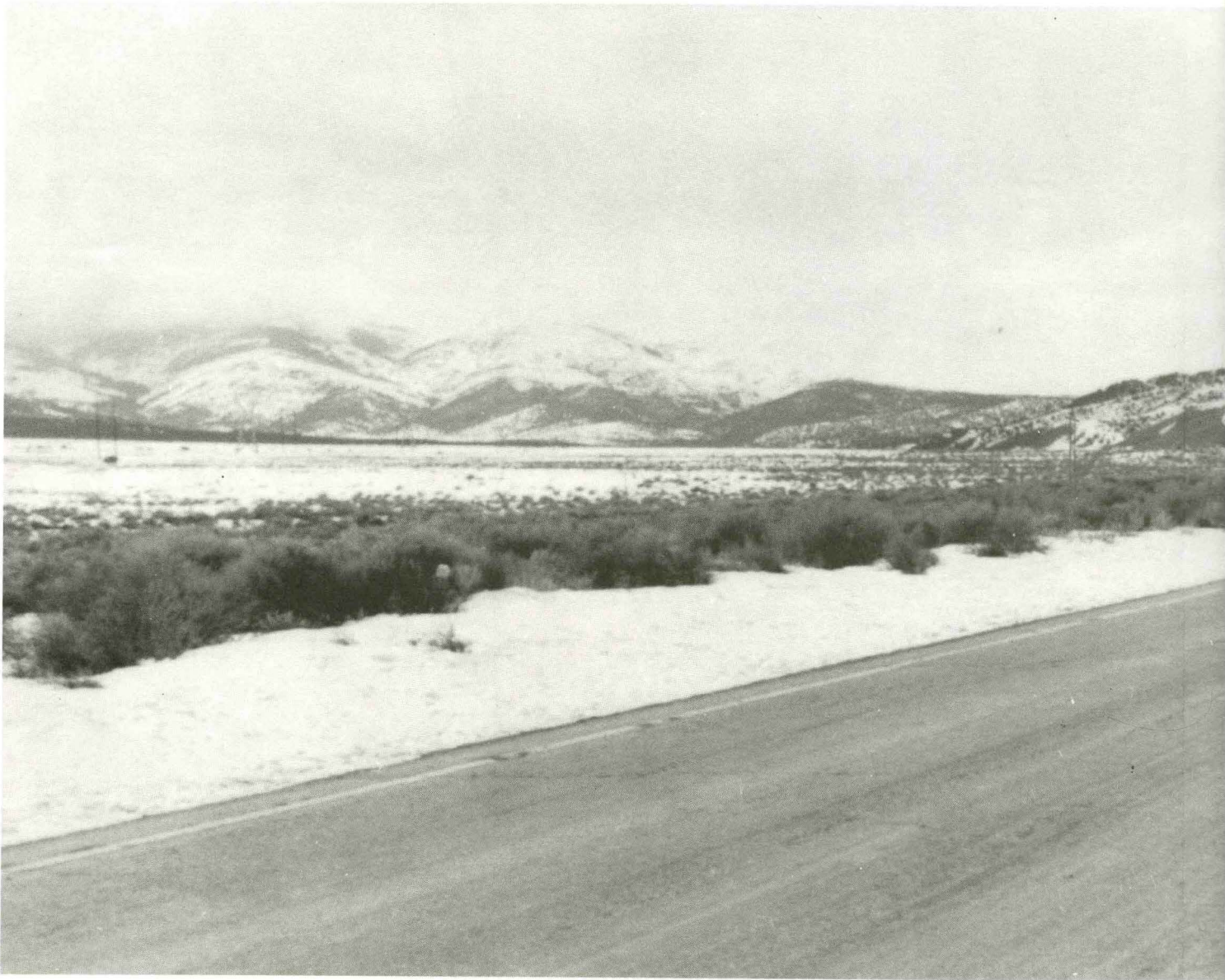
Prepared by: Dames & Moore

Southwest Intertie Project



SACRAMENTO PASS MITIGATION REROUTE
Subroute 2 - Crossing of U.S. Highway 6/50
(Link 465)

EXISTING CONDITIONS
Figure 3-15



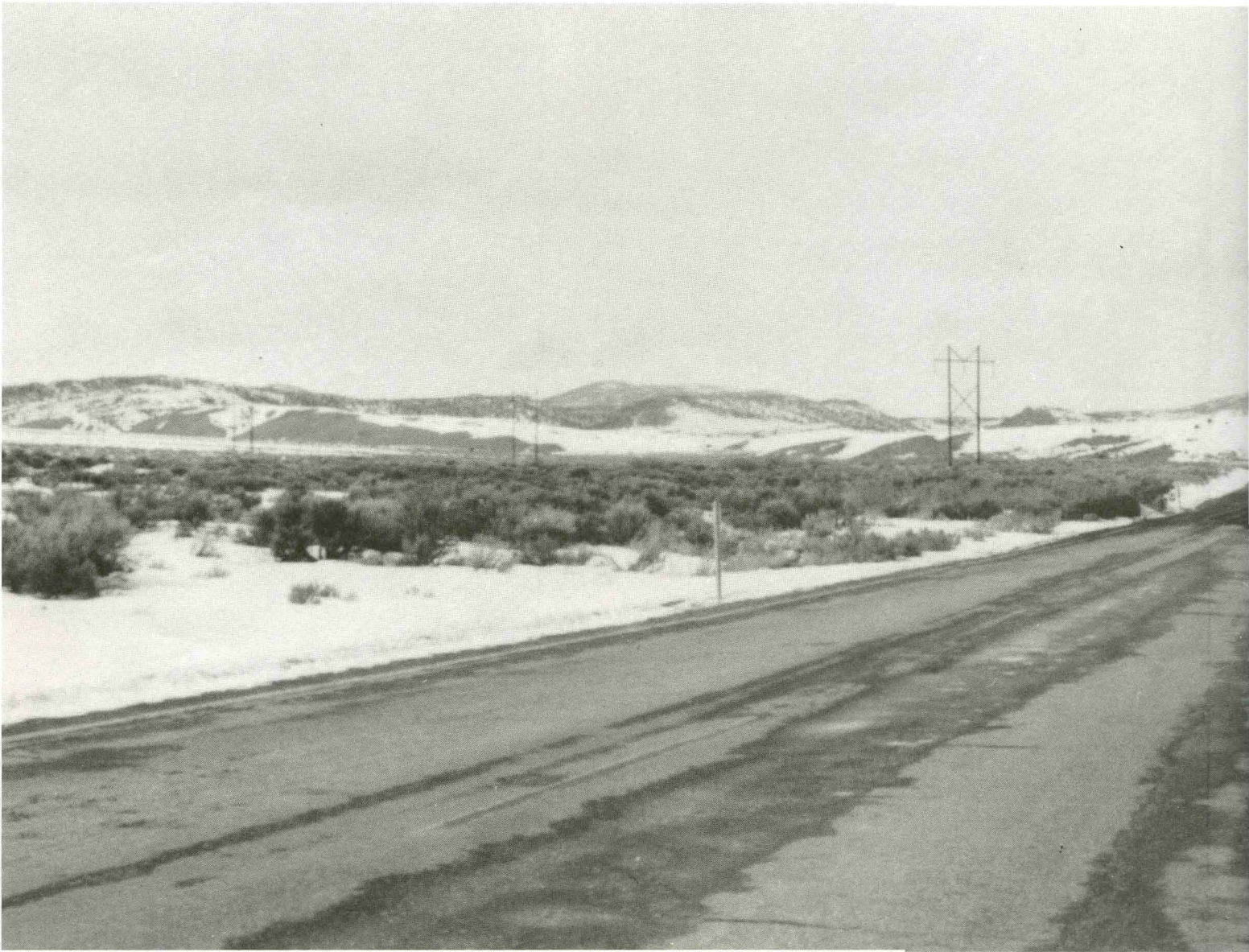
Prepared by: Dames & Moore

Southwest Intertie Project



SACRAMENTO PASS MITIGATION REROUTE
Subroute 2 - Crossing of U.S. Highway 6/50
(Link 465)

SIMULATION
Figure 3-16



Prepared by: Dames & Moore

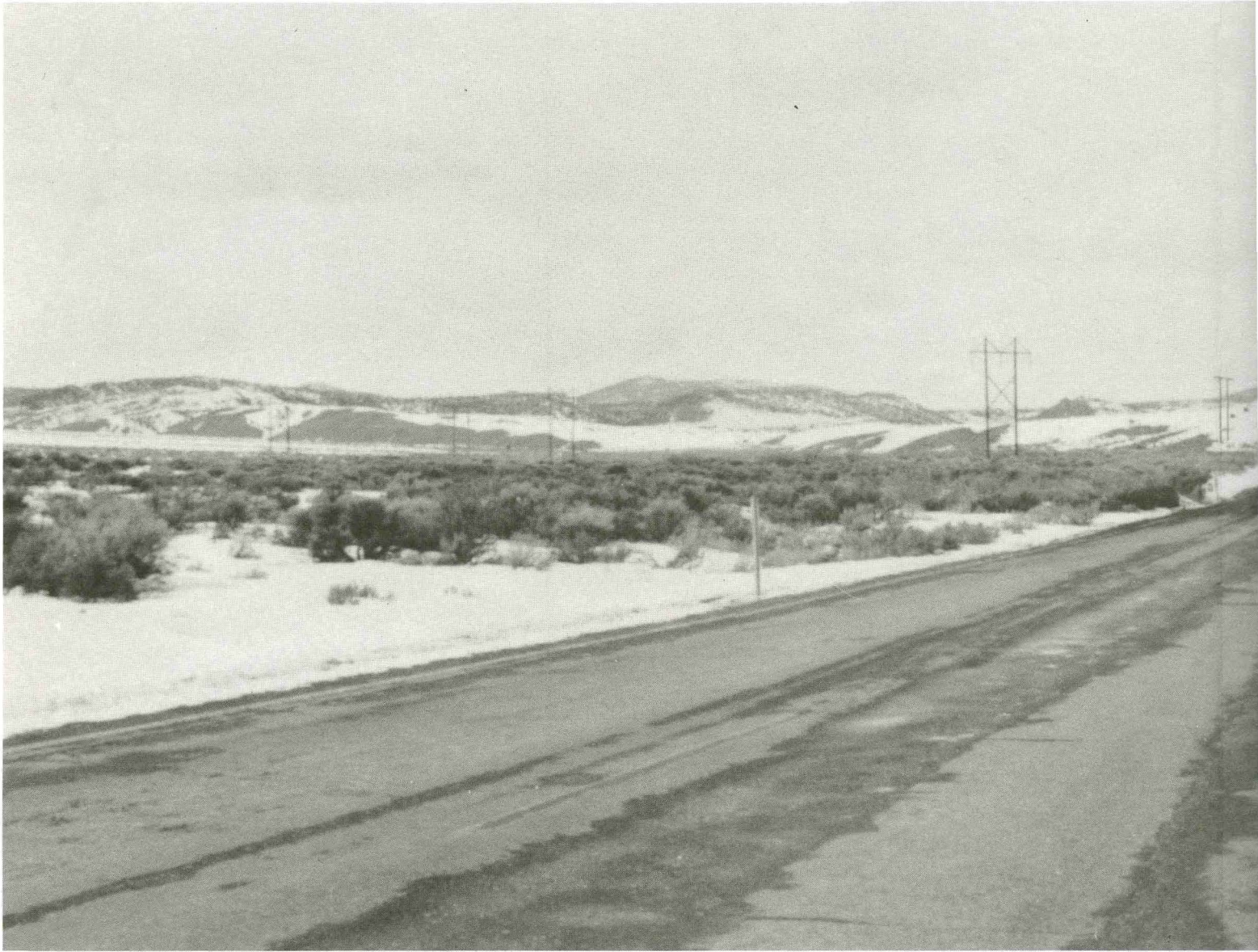
Southwest Intertie Project



SACRAMENTO PASS MITIGATION REROUTE
Subroute 3 and 4 - Crossing of U.S. Highway 6/50
(Link 467 & 468)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 3-17



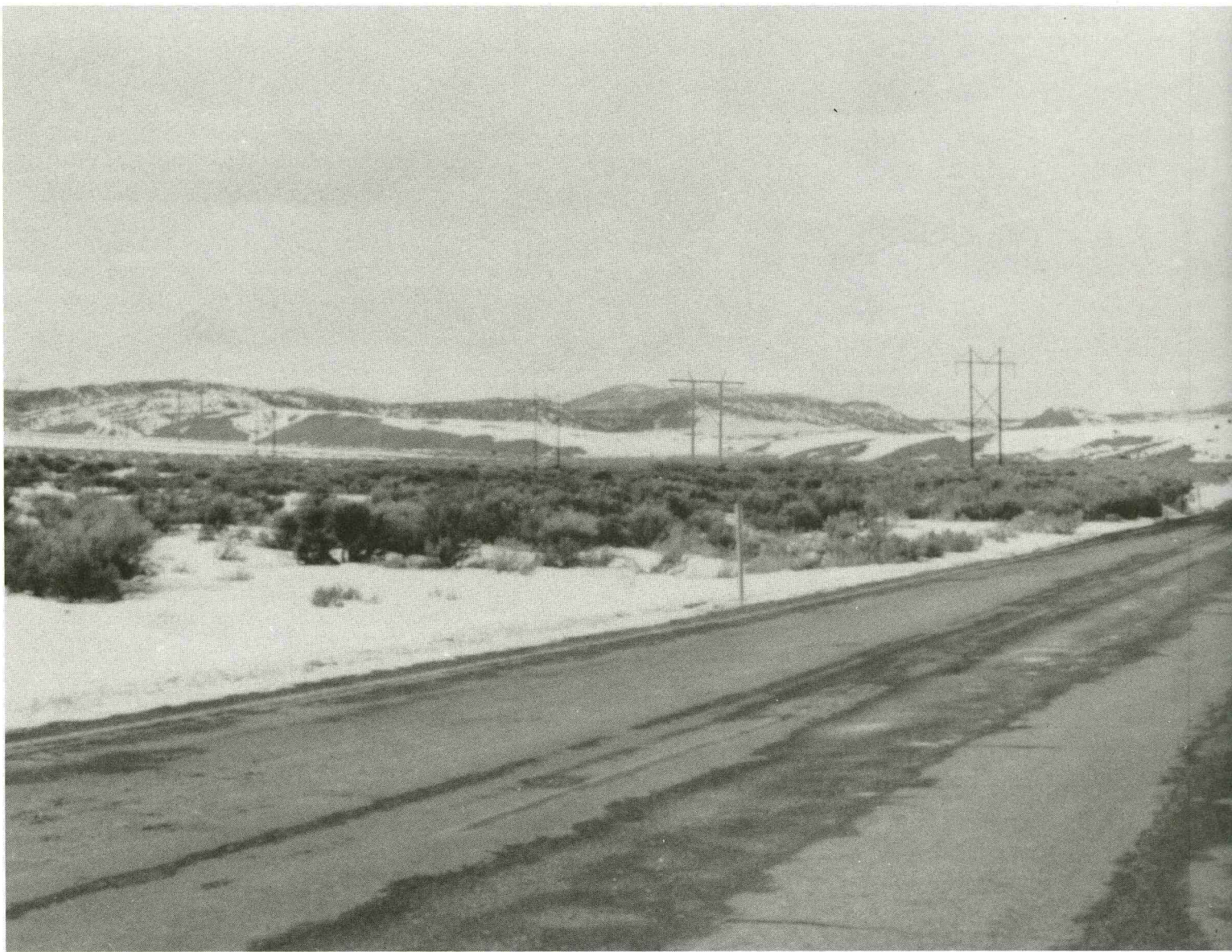
Prepared by: Dames & Moore

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SACRAMENTO PASS MITIGATION REROUTE
Subroute 3 - Crossing of U.S. Highway 6/50
(Link 468)

SIMULATION
Figure 3-18



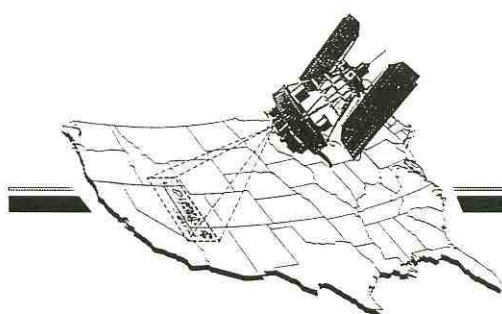
Prepared by: Dames & Moore

Southwest Intertie Project



SACRAMENTO PASS MITIGATION REROUTE
Subroute 4 - Crossing of U.S. Highway 6/50
(Link 467)

SIMULATION
Figure 3-19



CHAPTER 4

ERRATA

CHAPTER 4

ERRATA

COVER SHEET

Page 2, 1st paragraph, 3rd line: change "...eight..." to "...seven...".

Page 2: change the heading "Crosstie Alternatives" to "Ely to Delta Alternatives"

SUMMARY

Page 1, 3rd paragraph, following 2nd sentence: Add the sentence: "Tower types between Ely to Delta would be constructed using:

- self-supporting steel lattice structures
- steel pole H-Frame for visual mitigation and agricultural areas".

Page 5, 2nd paragraph: Delete the last sentence starting with "The line would be..." and replace with:

"Tower types between Midpoint and Dry Lake would be constructed using V-guyed and self-supporting steel lattice structures, and steel pole H-Frame towers in agricultural areas. Tower types on the Crosstie would be constructed using self-supporting steel lattice structures and steel pole H-Frame for visual mitigation and in agricultural areas. The average span between towers would be approximately 1500 feet."

Page 5, 3rd paragraph, 6th line: change "This series..." to "The series...".

Page 6, under the heading "Midpoint Substation to Dry Lake", after Route G, add:

- " • **Utility** - 345kV*-Cottonwood Creek-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative
- **Agency** - 345kV*-Cottonwood Creek-Thousand Springs-Goshute Valley-Steptoe-Egan Range-Dry Lake Alternative"

Page 6: change the heading "Crosstie Routes from Ely, Nevada to Delta, Utah" to "Ely to Delta (Crosstie) Routes".

Page 7, 4th paragraph, 2nd line: change "...provinces." to "...province."

Page 8, 2nd bullet at bottom of page: change "Curry" to "Currie". Also add: "Oasis"

Page 10, 4th paragraph, 1st line: change "other" to "otherwise".

Page 12, 2nd paragraph, 1st line: change "Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Page 12, under the heading "Direct Route" add: bullet item "• 118.8 miles outside of designated corridor".

Page 13, under the heading "Cutoff Route" add: bullet item "• 78.6 miles outside of designated corridor".

Page 13, under the heading "230kV Corridor Route", 5th line: change "...bald" eagle nesting areas" to "...golden" eagle nesting areas".

Page 14, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence: change "Although the impacts to riparian areas and desert tortoise can be largely mitigated, they are considered significant because of the sensitivity of the resources." to "Although riparian areas and desert tortoise are significant issues, the impacts would be largely mitigated."

Page 14, 3rd paragraph, last sentence: change to "Impacts to sage grouse habitat would be significant where there are no existing transmission lines."

CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

Figure 1-1, in Nevada on the Map: change "Tonapah" to "Tonopah".

Page 1-1, 2nd paragraph, 5th line: change "...resource construction." to "...generation facilities."

Page 1-1, 3rd paragraph, 6th line: change "...new..." to "...proposed..."

Page 1-1, 4th paragraph, 1st and 2nd lines: change "...two electrical utility systems in two different geographic areas..." to "...the SWIP and the existing Utah system, which includes the IPP-Adelanto DC transmission line, ...".

Page 1-1, 4th paragraph, 2nd line: change "...open marketplace substation..." to "...open marketplace..."

Page 1-2, 3rd paragraph, add to the end of the paragraph: "Future system modifications may allow an increased rating for the SWIP."

Page 1-2, delete 4th paragraph beginning with "A direct current..." replace with the following four paragraphs:

"The IPCo chose not to develop this project as a Direct Current (DC) transmission system because a DC system for transmitting 1200 MW of power between Midpoint and the Dry Lake area would cost about \$488 million compared to \$356 million for the proposed AC project. The DC terminal installations (i.e., stations that convert AC to DC and DC to AC) cost about \$144 million each. Two DC terminals are required. The cost of a DC transmission line is generally less than its AC counterpart by about \$200 million. However, the line savings are overshadowed by the additional terminal expense.

Additionally, an AC system was selected because it would allow the SWIP more flexibility to connect to other AC systems. There is more difficulty and expense associated with connecting the DC system to intermediate AC busses. Such interconnections for a DC system would require construction of additional converter stations for local AC electricity use. The cost of each converter site is an order of magnitude greater than an AC interconnection (\$100+ million versus \$10+ million). This inflexibility does not meet the objectives of the SWIP.

DC systems can be an economical alternative to AC systems in some circumstances. DC systems can become economical when the distance exceeds 400 to 500 miles and the desired capacity exceeds the capability of a single AC line (generally above 1600 MW). One primary benefit of a DC transmission system is greater control of power flows. However, this benefit does not justify the considerable increase in project costs.

The actual efficiency of a comparable DC alternative would depend upon economic factors used in the design of that system (i.e., voltage rating and conductor selection). For example, for a 1200 MW flow on the existing Pacific DC Intertie line, the losses are currently about 5.7 percent compared to the estimated 6 percent for the SWIP."

Page 1-2, 6th paragraph, 1st line: change "...between the Midpoint Substation and Las Vegas..." to "...between the Midpoint Substation and a proposed substation in Dry Lake located northeast of Las Vegas..."

Page 1-2, 1st paragraph, 2nd line: change "...and a new substation near Las Vegas." to "...and a proposed substation in Dry Lake Valley near Las Vegas."

Page 1-4, last Paragraph, 1st sentence: change "(Midpoint to Ely to Las Vegas line)" to "(Midpoint to Dry Lake line)".

Page 1-10, 2nd paragraph, 3rd line: change "...defer the construction of new capacity..." to "...defer the construction of new generation capacity..."

Page 1-11, 5th paragraph, 2nd line: change "buyer to the seller." to "seller to the buyer".

Page 1-13, 1st paragraph, 5th line: change "...feasible alternative to building new resources." to "...feasible alternative to building new generation resources."

Page 1-13, Summary, last line: change "...defer new resource construction." to "...defer new generation resource construction."

Page 1-13, Planning Requirements, Environmental Review and Licensing: Reference BLM Manual 1620, "Supplemental Program Guidance" and BLM Manual 1623.5, "Supplemental Program Guidance for Land Resources."

Page 1-14, 2nd Paragraph, lines 2 through 5: change "The Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs would have lands affected by various routing alternatives and are federal cooperating agencies during the EIS process." to,

"The Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, , and the Bureau of Indian Affairs would have lands or resources (potential visual impacts to NPS lands) affected by various routing alternatives and are federal cooperating agencies during the EIS process."

Table 1-1, page 1 of 8, under Agency, last item: delete "Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LMNRA)".

Table 1-1, page 1 of 8, under Permit, Approval or Review: change "Authorization to Cross LMNRA Lands" to "Compliance with Land and Water Conservation Act".

Table 1-1, page 1 of 8, under Relevant Legislation: change "Title 18 USC, 36 CFR 14" to "Title 16 USC, 460L-4".

CHAPTER 2 - ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

Page 2-5: add the following section:

"Without adequate regional transmission, the cost effectiveness of conservation programs must be determined on the basis of the avoidable generating resource costs of an individual or local utility. Utilities having a lower avoided cost will be able to develop conservation resources to a lesser degree than utilities with a higher avoided cost.

Conservation is an integral part of the resource strategy of every utility considering partnership in the SWIP. Regulatory requirements dictate that conservation should be considered on an equal basis in a utility's plan to acquire the lowest cost resources. Conservation and other demand management programs are expected to reduce, but not eliminate, the region's need for new generating resources. Therefore, conservation plans cannot alone be considered an alternative action to meet the stated need for the project.

Transmission facilities like the SWIP would contribute to the region's task of meeting future load growth most efficiently with the least amount of new generating capacity. First, seasonal load diversity within the WSCC regions would allow transmission to meet the requirements in one part of WSCC with another region's existing generating capacity. Total regional resource requirements can be reduced as a result of such use. Secondly, when new generating capacity is needed within WSCC, transmission such as the SWIP would make more options available for the selection and location of those resources to minimize their cost and environmental impact.

Because of the seasonal diversity which exists between the Pacific Northwest and the Desert Southwest loads and resources, purchases and exchanges over the SWIP are expected to help the entire WSCC region meet load growth by utilizing existing resources more efficiently. Regional conservation potential may be developed more fully given the availability of adequate regional transmission."

Page 2-6, 2nd paragraph, 5th sentence: change "The LTIAP allows a very small amount of firm intertie access to the northwest utilities. IPCo's share of firm access is 87 MW, and uses an allocation method to limit other northwest utilities non-firm access to the Intertie. Moreover, LTIAP restricts use of a utility's firm access for non-firm sales or firm contracts which BPA considers advance arrangements to sell non-firm energy." to "The LTIAP allows a very small amount of firm intertie access to the northwest utilities and uses an allocation method to limit other northwest utilities' non-firm access to the Intertie. The IPCo's share of firm access is 87

MW. Moreover, LTIAP restricts use of a utility's firm access for non-firm sales or firm contracts which BPA considers advance arrangements to sell non-firm energy."

Page 2-7, add the following paragraphs:

"A direct current (DC) system can be an economical alternative to an AC system when a line exceeds 400-500 miles in length with no intermediate substations. The SWIP, however, would provide interconnections to other utilities at intermediate substations and would have the capability to integrate regional generation resources. Such interconnections for a DC system would require construction of expensive converter stations for local AC electricity use.

A DC transmission alternative for transmitting 1200 MW of power from Midpoint to the Dry Lake Area would cost about \$488 million compared to \$356 million for the proposed AC project (\$200M for line and \$144M for each line terminal). There must be a requirement for substantial additional capacity to justify a DC alternative.

The actual efficiency of a comparable DC alternative would depend upon the design of that system (i.e. voltage rating and conductor selection). For example, the Pacific DC Intertie line has been uprated twice in its history, once to increase its voltage rating and the other to increase its current rating. The line was originally designed to operate at 1600 MW at +/- 400kV. A 1200 MW flow at +/- 400kV would have generated 8.6 percent loss. In the 1980s, the Pacific DC Line was uprated to +/- 500kV and is now capable of 3100 MW. For a 1200 MW flow on the current DC system, the losses are currently about 5.7 percent compared to 6 percent for the SWIP.

Additional load taps are not nearly as feasible with a DC alternative. The cost of each site is an order of magnitude greater (\$100+ million vs. \$10 million) and are not included in the \$488 million for the basic line.

From an environmental point of view, the DC vs. AC alternative would be similar in nature. DC line structures have one less conductor than those of an AC line. However, the DC substations are larger and also require neutral ground mats that are quite large."

Following page 2-10, Figure 2-1, Legend: change "identified" to "identified".

Page 2-16, replace last paragraph with: "If installed, access to the fiber optic ground wire by a commercial communications company would be allowed upon completion of all environmental permitting activities (e.g., NEPA) and obtaining the right-of-way. Regeneration stations, which are typically small concrete buildings approximately 10 feet by 10, would be needed at 20-40 mile intervals along the transmission line right-of-way. They would likely be placed on or immediately adjacent to the SWIP right-of-way.

Page 2-17, 2nd paragraph: change "land rights" to "rights-of-way".

Page 2-17, 4th paragraph, add the following to the end of the paragraph: "The conveyance of the Delta Grant would be contingent on the BLM's approval."

Page 2-19, 1st paragraph, after "...overhead lines,...": add "(both Midpoint to Dry Lake and Ely to Delta routes)".

- Page 2-19, 4th paragraph, after "...natural source for new growth.": add "...however, reseeding may be required."
- Page 2-20, 6th paragraph, end of last sentence: add "...and approved by the permitting agency."
- Page 2-21, 5th paragraph, after first sentence: add "About one acre per mile would be used for construction yards and batch plants."
- Page 2-22, 4th paragraph, under "Ground Rod Installation": add to end of paragraph "Counterpoise could extend to the edge of the right-of-way, but are typically parallel with conductors in the right-of-way."
- Page 2-22, 6th paragraph, 4th line: change to "Oils, explosives, pesticides, chemicals and other hazardous materials would be hauled to a disposal facility authorized to accept such materials."
- Page 2-22, 6th paragraph, before the last sentence in the paragraph: add "Explosives would also be disposed of at an authorized disposal facility."
- Page 2-23, insert before last sentence in the 1st paragraph: "The IPCo would be responsible to fully remediate (i.e., clean up) any releases of any hazardous substances, hazardous materials, or petroleum products."
- Page 2-23, 6th paragraph, 1st sentence: change "...would be permitted.." to "...could be allowed by the permitting agency..."
- Page 2-23, 6th paragraph, 1st sentence: delete "...adjacent to..."
- Page 2-23, 7th paragraph, 1st sentence: delete "...adjacent to..."
- Page 2-24, 6th paragraph, add to the end of the last sentence: "...as specified by the permitting agency."
- Page 2-28, under "Develop Scope/Preparation Plan", third bullet item: add "..., and the Schell Resource Area of the Ely District in Nevada".
- Page 2-28, under "Develop Scope/Preparation Plan", fourth bullet item: change "...the Elko and Ely Districts..." to "...the Elko and Ely Districts, and the Caliente Resource Area of the Las Vegas District..."
- Page 2-29, under "Human Environment", first bullet item: add "..., and prime/unique farmlands".
- Page 2-29, 4th paragraph, "Prehistory" entry: change "lithic scatters" to "artifact scatters".
- Page 2-30, 5th paragraph, 5th line: change "Fossil Beds National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".
- Page 2-31, 9th paragraph, 5th line: change "...new..." to "...proposed..."
- Page 2-35, 6th Paragraph, last line: change "(refer to page 2-23)" to "(refer to page 2-25)".

Page 2-38, under "Midpoint to Dry Lake Transmission Alternatives": add "260" to Route B: add "250, 259, 260," to Route D: and add "260" to Route E.

Page 2-41, 6th paragraph under "Route B: 345kV-Trout Creek-Wendover-Steptoe-Antone Pass-Dry Lake Alternative": after "...Nevada Northern Railroad right-of-way..." add "(Link 270)."; after "...Egan Range..." add "(Link 280)."; in the third sentence, after "...", the route would traverse Butte Valley..." insert "(Link 280)"; at the end of the last sentence "...site from the north." add "(Link 310).".

Page 2-46, the lists of microwave communication facilities sites under the headings at the top of this page are transposed. They should read as follows:

" Robinson Summit

Path 1

Hansen Butte*
Cottonwood
Ellen D (L&D)*
Six-Mile
Rocky Peak*
Spruce Mountain*
Long Valley
Copper*
Cave Mountain*
Mount Wilson*
Highland Peak*
Beaver Dam Mountain*
Glendale*

North Steptoe

Path 2

Hansen Butte*
Cottonwood
Ellen D (L&D)*
Rocky Point*
Proctor
Bald Peak*
Raiff
Squaw Peak*
Cave Mountain*
Mount Wilson*
Highland Peak*
Beaver Dam Mountain*
Glendale*

* - indicates existing developed microwave communication facilities sites"

Page 2-47, under "Direct Route", 3rd paragraph, last sentence: should be "If the SWIP is constructed on this route, Hill AFB would request that towers be designed and built at a height no taller than 30 feet. This would make this route technically infeasible because the minimum clearance for conductors on the proposed 500kV transmission line is 31 feet, per the National Electric Safety Code.".

Page 2-48, 6th paragraph: delete last sentence and replace with "The proposed wayside stations discussed in the Draft Great Basin National Park (GBNP) General Management Plan have been included in the SWIP analysis. The GBNP Enabling Act specifies that the Park Service may enter into cooperative agreements for the purpose of interpretive facilities outside the park. However, the SWIP document should not be considered as an allowance or non-allowance of this proposed action for GBNP. No agreement for the proposed interpretive facilities has been entered into as of this date. In any case, the National Park Service will require appropriate authorization and input for any project involving the BLM and Forest Service administered lands. The Notice of Intent for the SWIP was published on March 3, 1989, prior to the release of the Draft GBNP General Management Plan on September 9, 1991.".

Page 2-51, 7th paragraph, 1st sentence: change "The alternative substations sites at Robinson Summit (Sites #9 or #10) are very similar environmentally and there is no distinctive preference (also refer to Appendix E)." to "The alternative substations sites at Robinson Summit (Sites #9 or #10) are very similar environmentally, but because none of the alternative routes pass through Site #9, Site #10 is preferred."

Page 2-53, under "Ely to Delta", 3rd paragraph, 8th line: after "...Hill AFB." add "(refer to Table 2-5)." Start new paragraph with the sentence that begins "The cumulative..."

CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Page 3-1, under "Cultural Environment": delete "archaeology".

Page 3-3: replace the 2nd full paragraph with "Three Class I areas, as defined by the federal Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) rules (40 CFR 51.166), are identified as being within or near the study area corridors:

- Jarbidge Wilderness Area
64,667 acres; approximately 26 miles from a study corridor

Under the federal PSD Program, Class I areas are afforded the most stringent degree of protection from air pollution sources, in the form of maximum allowable ambient air pollutant concentration increments over baseline concentrations (refer to Table AQ-1 of the Volume II - Natural Environment technical report).

Class I areas are identified as international parks of any size, national parks exceeding 6,000 acres, national wilderness areas exceeding 5,000 acres and national memorial parks exceeding 5,000 acres.

All other lands within the United States were initially designated under the PSD rules as Class II. These areas are afforded a less stringent level (e.g., higher ambient air pollutant concentration increments) of protection from air pollution sources (refer to Table AQ-1 of the Volume II - Natural Environment technical report).

The federal PSD rules also provide that certain other lands which exceed 10,000 acres in size and were established prior to August 7, 1977, may be redesignated as Class I. However, only national parks and national wilderness areas exceeding 10,000 acres and established after August 7, 1977 can be designated as Class I through state or federal legislation."

Page 3-10, "Route F", 2nd paragraph, 13th line: change "Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Page 3-11, "Route G", 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence, 3rd line: change "180" to "280".

Page 3-34, 2nd paragraph, 2nd bullet: add "Oasis".

- Page 3-37, 3rd paragraph, last sentence: revise to "The AGL for the Restricted Area R-6405 (located in all or portions of Links 222, 224, 225, 226, 611, 610, 620, 621, 630) is 100 feet, the Lucin A MOA (Links 211, 221, 222), Gandy MOA (Links 222, 226, 266, 267, 610, 620), and Sevier A and B MOAs (Links 267, 268, 451, 461, 462, 470, 480, 490, 500, 510, 520, 530, 540, 550, 560, 571, 572, 580, 590, 600, 640, and 650) all have an AGL of 200 feet."
- Page 3-37, 4th paragraph, last sentence: revise to "There is a 100 foot AGL in the R-6405 Restricted Area (Links 222, 224, 225, 226, 610, 611, 620, 621, 630, 640, 650). There is a 200 foot AGL in the Lucin C MOA (Link 222); the Gandy MOA (222, 226, 266, 267, 610, 620); the Sevier A (Links 268, 461, 462, 470, 480, 630, 640, 650); and the Sevier B (Links 451, 470, 480, 490, 500, 510, 520, 530, 540, 550, 560, 571, 572, 580, 590, 600, 640, 650)."
- Page 3-39, 7th paragraph, end of the last sentence: add "...and in the Conger Range (Link 452)."
- Page 3-49, under "Southern Route", 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence: change "Nevada State Highway 21" to "Utah State Highway 21".
- Page 3-60, 5th paragraph under "Route F", 3rd line: change "Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".
- Page 3-61, 2nd paragraph under "Route G": "...along the southern edge of the Windmere Hills (Link 180), in the Pequop Mountains (Link 190) and..."
- Page 3-63, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence: revise to "Views from dispersed recreation users in the Notch Peak WSA (Link 462), the Swasey Mountain WSA (Link 470), the Howell Peak WSA (Link 462), Mt. Moriah Wilderness (Link 267), and the Marble Canyon WSA (Link 267) were also considered to be of high sensitivity."
- Page 3-64, 4th paragraph, after the fourth sentence: add "The proposed wayside stations discussed in the Draft Great Basin National Park (GBNP) General Management Plan have been included in the SWIP analysis. The GBNP Enabling Act specifies that the Park Service may enter into cooperative agreements for the purpose of interpretive facilities outside the park. However, the SWIP document should not be considered as an allowance or non-allowance of this proposed action for GBNP. No agreement for the proposed interpretive facilities has been entered into as of this date. In any case, the National Park Service will require appropriate authorization and input for any project involving the BLM and Forest Service administered lands. The Notice of Intent for the SWIP was published on March 3, 1989, prior to the release of the Draft GBNP General Management Plan on September 9, 1991."
- Page 3-81, last paragraph, 3rd line: replace "RI" with "...radio interference (RI)."
- Page 3-81, 2nd paragraph, 1st line: change "...Idaho or Nevada." to "...Idaho, Utah, or Nevada."
- Page 3-82, 1st paragraph, 1st line: replace "TVI" with "...television interference (TVI)...".
- Page 3-83, under "Methods", 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence: change "define a process" to "mandate a process".

Page 3-85, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence: change to "Other than old buildings, historic resources include ghost towns, mines, historic ranches, and a variety of structures, roads, railroads, and trails."

Page 3-86, 4th paragraph, 1st sentence: change to "At about AD 1200 to 1300, the Formative and Archaic cultures are hypothesized to have been replaced by Numic speaking groups."

Page 3-88, under "Regional Studies", 3rd paragraph, end of sentence: add "... (refer to p. 2-26)."

Page 3-89, 1st paragraph, end of paragraph: add "It must be noted that this analysis is based only on information about the most significant known cultural resources. Although this is a reasonable methodology for such regional siting studies, it must be recognized that because much of the region has never been thoroughly inventoried, it is likely that other significant unrecorded cultural resources are present within the various alternative corridors."

Page 3-90, 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence: revise and insert "Historic resources in this group include such sites as:

- the Minidoka Japanese-American Relocation Center
- segment of the Nevada Northern Railroad operated as a historic tourist train
- segments of the Oregon, California, and Hastings Cutoff trails
- Kelton Road
- the Old Spanish Trail/Mormon Road
- the Pony Express/Lincoln Highway and other Pony Express routes
- the Osceola Ditch
- various historic cemeteries, burials, residences, and town sites

In addition, the remaining 133 miles of the Nevada Northern Railroad that now lie unused were ranked as having moderate-high sensitivity. The entire railroad was recently determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and was considered to be an important historic resource as impacts were assessed."

Page 3-91, 5th paragraph, last sentence: revised to "The highest sensitivity sites along this segment of the route are two alignments of the California Trail and the historic town of Contact."

Page 3-91, 7th paragraph, end of the paragraph: add "This segment of Route A parallels portions of the historic Nevada Northern Railroad, as do other segments to the south. A total of 51 miles of the 150-mile-long railroad are within the Route A corridor."

Page 3-92, 6th paragraph, after first sentence: add "This segment of Route B parallels 4 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad."

Page 3-93, 2nd paragraph, end of paragraph: add "Route C parallels 51 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad."

Page 3-93, 4th paragraph, after 5th sentence: add "Route D parallels approximately 35 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad."

Page 3-93, 6th paragraph, end of paragraph: add "Route E parallels 19 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad."

Page 3-94, 1st paragraph, end of paragraph: add "Route F parallels 51 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad."

Page 3-94, 3rd paragraph, end of paragraph: add "Route G parallels 66 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad."

Table 3-1: Add a double asterisks ("**") after 230kV Corridor.

CHAPTER 4 - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Page 4-31, under "Route B", 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence, after "R-6405 Restricted Area (Link 222, 224, 226)": add "...and 42.3 miles of low residual impacts to portions of the Gandy MOA (Links 222, 226) and the Lucin A MOA (Links 221, 222) which are..."

Page 4-32, under "Route E", 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence, after "...R-6405 Restricted Area (Links 222, 224, 226)...": add "...and 42.3 miles of low residual impacts to portions of the Gandy MOA (Links 222, 226) and the Lucin A MOA (Links 221, 222) which are..."

Page 4-33, under "Direct Route", 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence: change to "The route would result in a total of 55.1 miles of moderate residual impacts to the R-6405 Restricted Area (Link 620, 621, 630) and would cross 44.1 miles through portions of the Gandy MOA (Links 266, 620), the Sevier A MOA (Links 630,640), and Sevier B MOA (Links 572, 580, 640)."

Page 4-34, 1st paragraph, 1st line: change "30-foot-2" to "30-foot".

Page 4-34, under "Cutoff Route", 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence, 2nd line: change Link "265" to "266".

Page 4-34, under "230kV Corridor Route", 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence: add "..., Utah" after "Delta".

Page 4-34, under "230kV Corridor Route", 3rd paragraph, 2nd line: add Link "461".

Page 4-35, 1st full paragraph, 2nd line: delete Link "450" and add Links "572 and 580".

Page 4-43, 1st full paragraph, 4th line: change "Fossil Beds National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Page 4-45, 2nd paragraph, third sentence: add "The proposed wayside stations discussed in the Draft Great Basin National Park (GBNP) General Management Plan have been included in the SWIP analysis. The GBNP Enabling Act specifies that the Park Service may enter into cooperative agreements for the purpose of interpretive facilities outside the park. However, the SWIP document should not be considered as an allowance or non-allowance of this proposed action for GBNP. No agreement for the proposed interpretive facilities has been entered into as of this date. In any case, the National Park Service will require appropriate authorization and input for any project involving the BLM and Forest Service administered lands. The Notice of Intent for the SWIP was published on March 3, 1989, prior to the release of the Draft GBNP General Management Plan on September 9, 1991."

Page 4-45, 2nd paragraph, last sentence: change "...Spring Valley..." to "...Snake Valley..."

Page 4-72, 1st paragraph: change to "Construction of Route A would introduce visual intrusions into the settings of the Minidoka Relocation Center (Link 20), the Oregon Trail (Link 41), the historic Shafter town site (Link 211), Pony Express/Lincoln Highway route (Link 291), the California Trail (Link 1612), the City of Rocks archaeological district (Link 362), and for 51 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad (Links 212, 230, 270, and 291).".

Page 4-72, 5th paragraph, end of paragraph: add "In addition, Route B would result in visual intrusions along about 4 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad (Link 270).".

Page 4-72, 8th paragraph: revise to "Potentially high indirect impacts could result from visual intrusion into the setting of the Minidoka Relocation Center (Link 20), Oregon Trail (Link 140), the California Trail (Link 140), the historic Shafter town site (Link 211), the Hastings Cutoff (Link 212), the Pony Express/Lincoln Highway route (Link 291), and the City of Rocks archaeological district (Link 362). In addition, Route C would result in visual intrusions along 51 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad (Links 212, 230, 270, and 291).".

Page 4-73, 3rd paragraph, end of paragraph: add "In addition, Route D would introduce visual intrusions along 35 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad (Links 230, 270, and 291).".

Page 4-73, 6th paragraph, end of paragraph: add "In addition, Route E would introduce visual intrusions along 19 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad (Links 212, 230, 241, 242, 244, and 270)".

Page 4-74, 2nd paragraph, end of paragraph: add "In addition, Route F would introduce visual intrusions along 51 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad (Links 212, 230, 270, and 291)".

Page 4-74, 5th paragraph, end of paragraph: add "In addition, Route G would introduce visual intrusions along 66 miles of the 150-mile-long Nevada Northern Railroad (Links 212, 230, 241, 242, 244, and 270)".

Page 4-78, under "BLM Utility Corridors", last sentence: change "...utility projects within the corridors that is established." to "...utility projects adjacent to compatible existing rights-of-way and within designated or planning corridors established by the BLM".

Page 4-79, 3rd paragraph, 4th line: change "...600kV..." to "...500kV...".

Page 4-82, 4th paragraph, 4th line: change "Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Page 4-86, 2nd paragraph: revise to "In general, site densities throughout the region seem to average about 2 to 6 per square mile. Linear features would encounter a disproportionately larger number of sites because of a statistical "edge effect," but there are few directly comparable prior linear surveys through the region to indicate how many sites might be encountered. The surveys for the Intermountain Power Plan project in southwestern Utah and southern Nevada resulted in the discovery of an average of one cultural resource occurrence every linear mile, but three-fourths of these were isolated artifacts. Occurrences designated as sites were found on average of every 4 to 5 miles. Some additional sites were found on access roads that had to diverge from the corridor. It can be conservatively estimated that surveys along the various alternative SWIP

corridors might encounter a cultural resource every 2 to 3, miles on the average. This indicates that some 200 to 400 cultural sites could be present along the selected alternative. Many of these could probably be avoided by minor adjustments in the project, but the project would undoubtedly diminish the regional resource base".

Page 4-89, 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence: revise to "The pipeline planned to transport the water from north of Clark County would utilize existing corridors designated by the BLM or Congress, or prepare a plan amendment".

Table 4-1, page 2 of 3, #13, end of paragraph: add "Towers would be sited with a minimum distance of 200 feet from streams".

Table 4-1, page 1 of 3, #5: add "...natural springs and/or..." before "developed".

Table 4-2, page 1 of 2, second line: change "Recommended" to "Committed".

Table 4-2, page 1 of 2, #6: change "water courses" to "perennial or intermittent streams with riparian vegetation".

Table 4-3a, page 1 of 2, under Allotment Name: add

	CUTOFF			230kv Corridor	
	Total Acres	Total Acres	Viable Acres	Total Acres	Viable Acres
"Conger Spring	78,971	26.3	21.9	43.00	38.60"

Table 4-3a, page 2 of 2, in the "Smith Creek" row: change

	CUTOFF			230kv Corridor	
	Total Acres	Total Acres	Viable Acres	Total Acres	Viable Acres
"Smith Creek	17,820	14.3	6.0	0.0	0.0"

Table 4-4, page 1 of 1, table is revised to include Tax Revenues for Agency Preferred and Utility Routes.

TABLE 4-4

Estimated County Tax Revenues¹ by Alternative Route

State/ County	Midpoint to Dry Lake Alternative Routes							Agency Preferred	Utility Preferred
	Route A	Route B	Route C	Route D	Route E	Route F	Route G		
IDAHO									
Cassia	20,800	20,800	20,800	20,800	20,800	-----	20,800	20,800	20,800
Gooding	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	211,500	-----	-----	-----
Jerome	455,700	455,700	455,700	455,700	455,700	144,100	455,700	455,700	455,700
Twin Falls	570,700	570,700	570,700	570,700	570,700	916,600	570,700	570,700	570,700
NEVADA									
Elko	759,200	769,100	727,100	767,600	801,200	727,100	729,200	729,200	729,200
White Pine	582,000	588,300	582,000	576,200	596,100	582,000	568,400	560,000	552,200
Lincoln	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400
Nye	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800
Clark	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,300	150,300	150,300

State/ County	<u>Ely to Delta Alternative Routes</u>			
	<u>Direct</u>	<u>Cutoff</u>	<u>230kV Corridor*</u>	<u>Southern</u>
UTAH				
Millard	355,200	846,000	853,700	998,700
Juab	296,100	-----	-----	-----
NEVADA				
White Pine	255,700	289,200	320,500	494,900

¹ Estimates are based on average 1990 property tax rates in each county and an average cost for the transmission lines and associated microwave communication and substation facilities. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Estimates represent revenues during the first year of operation without depreciation.

* Agency Preferred Route

CHAPTER 5 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Page 5-10, 3rd paragraph, last sentence: change to "The only route preference identified was an alternative that would traverse Dry Lake Valley from west to east (Link 671 to Link 673).".

CHAPTER 6 - PREPARERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Page 6-4, under "Philip Zeig": add the title "Soil Conservationist".

Page 6-5, under "Mark A Pierce": add the title "Wildlife Conservationist".

Page 6-5, under "Melanie Mendenhall": add the title "Range Conservationist".

Page 6-5, under "F. Rex Rowley": add the title "Area Manager - House Range".

Page 6-5, under "Lynn T. Fergus": add the title "Outdoor Recreation Specialist".

Page 6-9, under "William J. Lindsey": change to "Supervisory Range Conservationist".

Page 6-9, under "Mark Henderson": change "13 years with BLM" to "seven years with the BIA and seven years with the BLM".

Page 6-13, first item under Name/Title: change "Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Page 6-13, first item under Involvement, change "Hagerman Fossil Beds" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument"

REFERENCES

Add to list: Chadwick, D.H. 1989. Mission for the 90's: The Biodiversity Challenge. Defenders Magazine Special Report.

APPENDICES FOR THE SWIP DEIS/DPA

Appendix C

Page C-7, under "National Park Service", under "Idaho": delete "Fossil Beds National Monument - Twin Falls".

Appendix D

Page D-5, under "Subroute Set 22", last sentence: add "Link 680 would traverse 5.6 miles of Category I, 7.4 miles of Category II, and 5.6 miles of Unclassified desert tortoise habitat while Link 690 would traverse approximately 15.5 miles of Category I and 4.3 miles of Category III desert tortoise habitat".

Appendix F

Page F-5: the lists of microwave communication facility sites under the headings at the top of this page are transposed, they should read as follows. Also, Beaver Dam Mountain and Glendale should have been added.

Robinson Summit

Path 1

Hansen Butte
Cottonwood
Ellen D (L&D)
Six-Mile
Rocky Peak
Spruce Mountain
Long Valley
Copper
Cave Mountain
Mount Wilson
Highland Peak
Beaver Dam Mountain
Glendale

North Steptoe

Path 2

Hansen Butte
Cottonwood
Ellen D (L&D)
Rocky Point
Proctor
Bald Peak
Raiff
Squaw Peak
Cave Mountain
Mount Wilson
Highland Peak
Beaver Dam Mountain
Glendale

Table F-1, page 2 of 3, under "Location for the Six Mile site": change "E. of Oasis" to "W. of Oasis".

Table F-1, page 2 of 3, under "Jurisdiction for the Six Mile site": change "BLM" to "private".

Table F-4, page 2 of 2, under "SOILS, for Cave Mountain Site": change "Calcic" to "carbonatic" and delete "carbonic".

Appendix G

Page G-2, under "National Park Service": change "Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Appendix H

Page H-3, Additional Technical reports available for review at the following locations:

University of Nevada Las Vegas
James Dickenson Library
4505 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89154

Charleston Heights Library
800 Brush Street
Las Vegas, NV 89108

Henderson Library
55 Water Street
Henderson, NV 89105

Lincoln County Library
Pioche, NV 89043

Rainbow Library
6010 W. Cheyenne
Las Vegas, NV 89108

Clark County Library
1401 E. Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89109

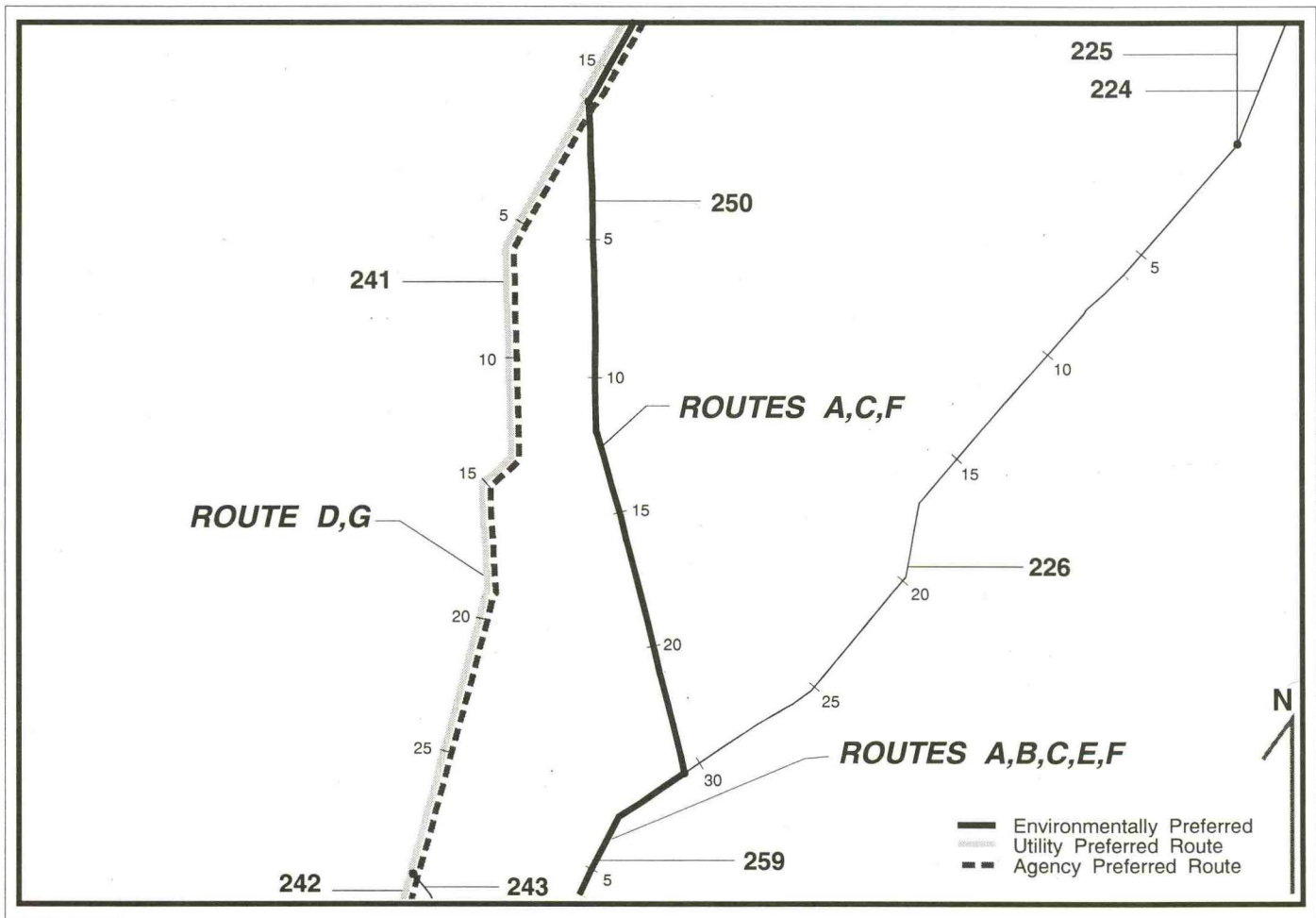
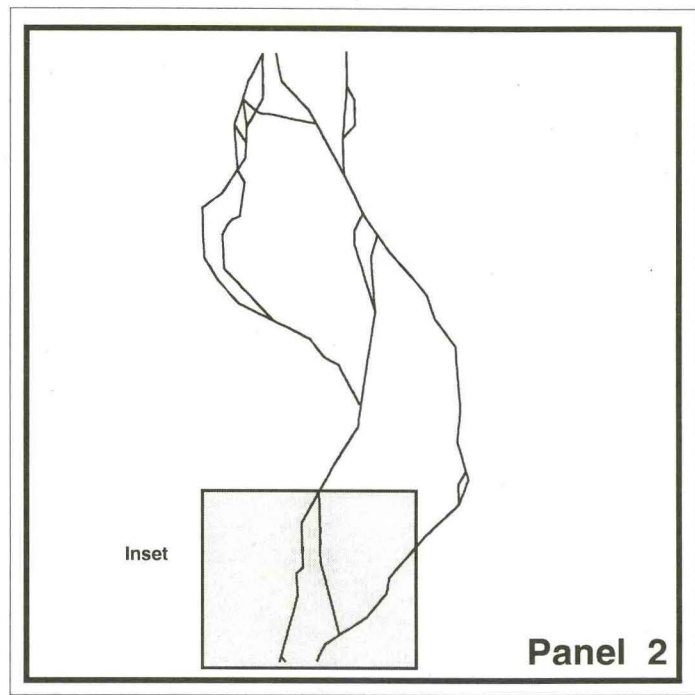
Sunrise Public Library
100 N. Nellis Boulevard
Las Vegas, NV 89110

MAP VOLUME

- Panel 2 - Alternative Routes Map:** Route D was incorrectly labeled on this map. The map shows Route D following Links 250, 259, and 260. Route D should actually follow Links 241, 243, and 245. Figure 4-1 indicates the corrected labeling of the alternative routes.
- Panel 3 - Alternative Routes Map:** Route D was incorrectly labeled on this map. The map shows Route D following Links 250, 259, and 260. Route D should actually follow Links 241, 243, and 245. Figure 4-2 indicates the corrected labeling of the alternative routes.
- Panel 4 - Alternative Routes Map:** The labels for the "230kV Corridor Route" and "Cutoff Route" are transposed on this map. Figure 4-3 indicates the corrected labeling of these alternative routes.
- Panel 2 - Land Use Resources:** The Big Springs Ranch private grass airstrip is missing from this map. Figure 4-4 indicates the location of the airstrip.
- Panel 3 - Land Use Resources:** Marble Canyon WSA is not shown on this map. It is located on Link 267 and illustrated in Figure 4-5.
- Panel 3 - Land Cover:** Between miles 15 and 20 on Link 267, portions identified as playa are labeled incorrectly. The correct identification is sage scrub.
- Panel 4 - Land Use Resources:** - The label indicates this map to be "Panel 3 - Land Resources", it should read "Panel 4 - Land Resources".
- Panel 4 - Map Index:** correct the name "Wah Wah Mountains" to "Wah Wah Mountains North"
- Panel 4 - Land Use Resources:** The R-6405 Restricted Area is mapped incorrectly. Figure 4-6 shows the corrected boundary and labeling. The proposed Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds was not mapped. The location of the Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds is illustrated in Figure 4-7.
- Panel 5 - Land Use Resources:** Labels identifying MOAs operated by Nellis AFB are missing. Figures 4-8 and 4-9 illustrate the labels for these MOAs.
- Panel 4 - Jurisdiction Map:** This map is missing a small area of State land at T14S, R18W, Section 28, NW1/4, SW1/4 and a small area of private land of T14S, R18W, Section 28, NE1/4, SW1/4, S1/2SW1/4. Figure 4-10 indicates the locations of these parcels.
- Panel 2 - Visual Resources:** The BLM low visibility corridor around Interstate 80 did not appear on the map. The VRM Class II area is shown in Figure 4-11.
- Panel 3 - All Maps:** The boundary of the Humboldt National Forest South of Ely was left off of all the Panel 3 Maps. Figure 4-12 shows the approximate location of the boundary.

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 2 - Alternative Routes

The labels for Route D were incorrect on this map. The correct labeling for Route D is shown below.



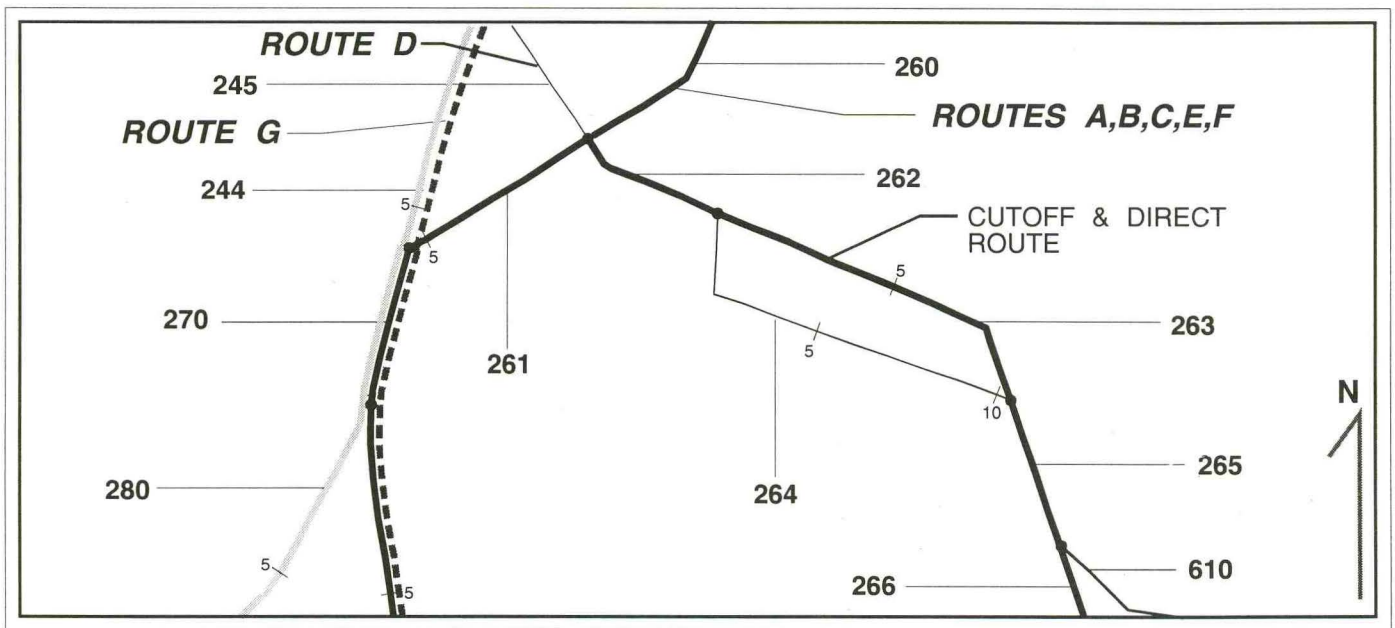
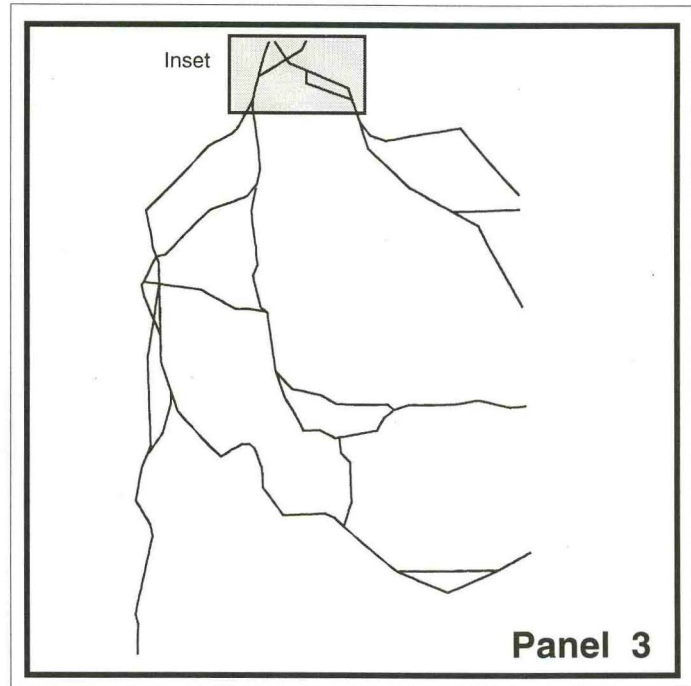
Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

Figure 4-1

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 3 - Alternative Routes

The labels for Route D were incorrect on this map. The correct labeling for the Route D is illustrated below.



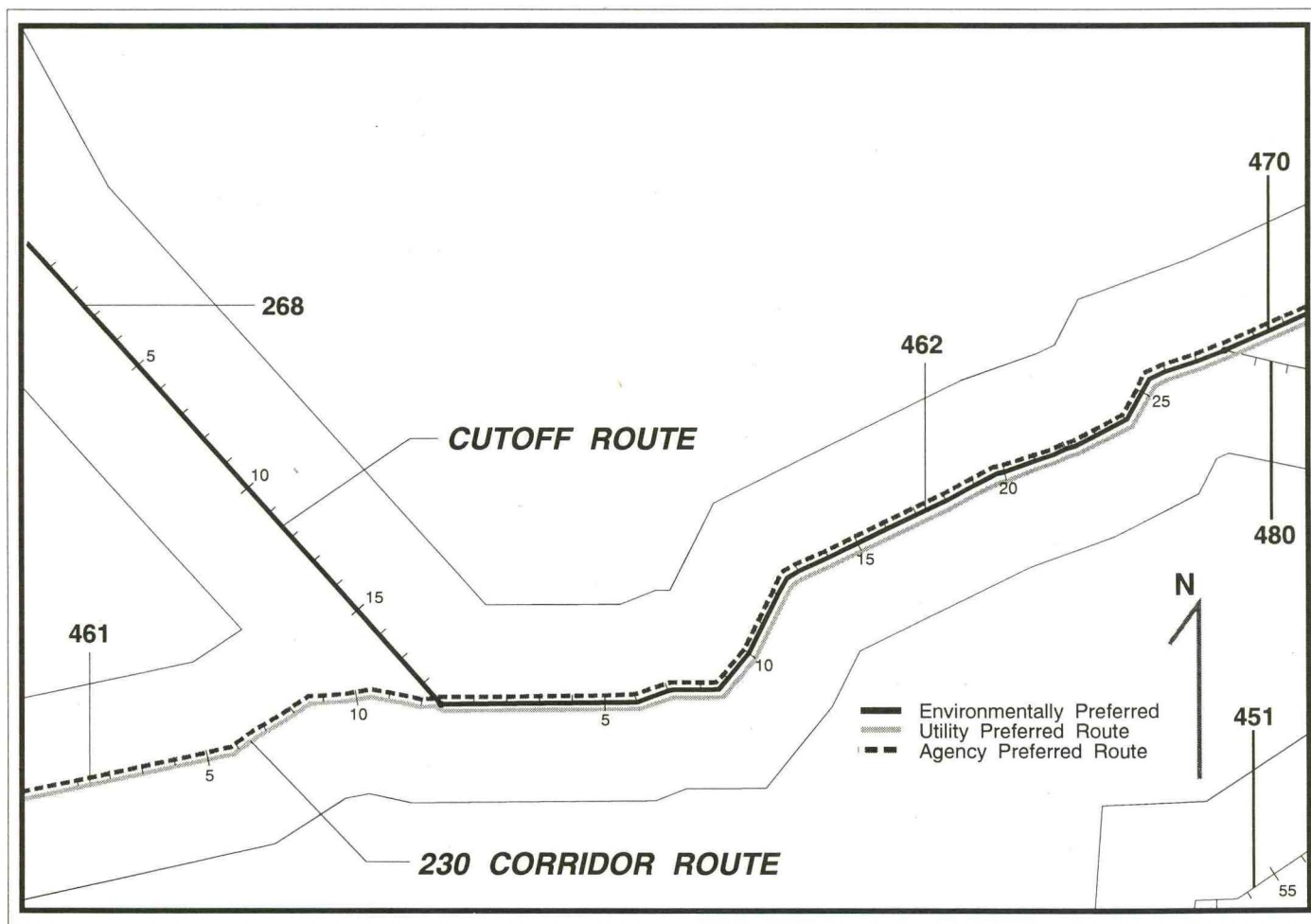
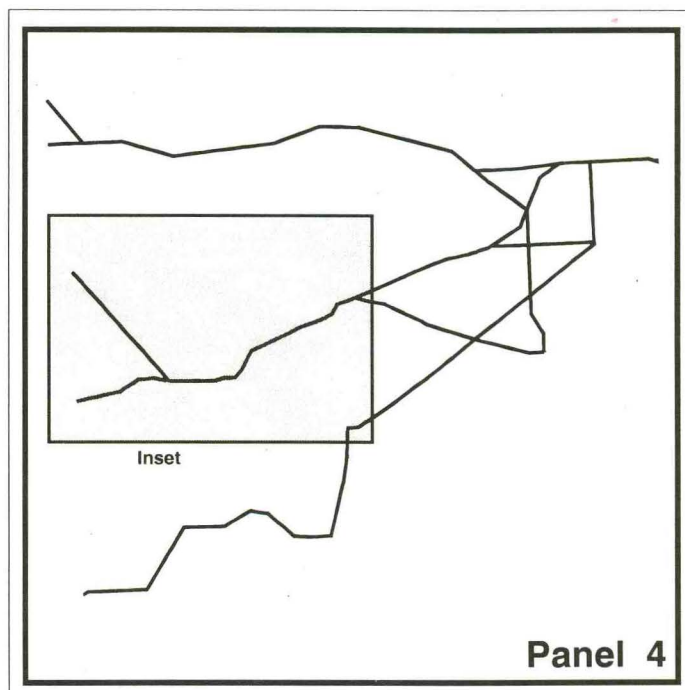
Note: Not to Scale

- Environmentally Preferred
- Utility Preferred Route
- - Agency Preferred Route

Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 4 - Alternative Routes

The labels for "230 kV Corridor Route" and "Cutoff Route" were transposed on this map. The correct labeling is illustrated below.

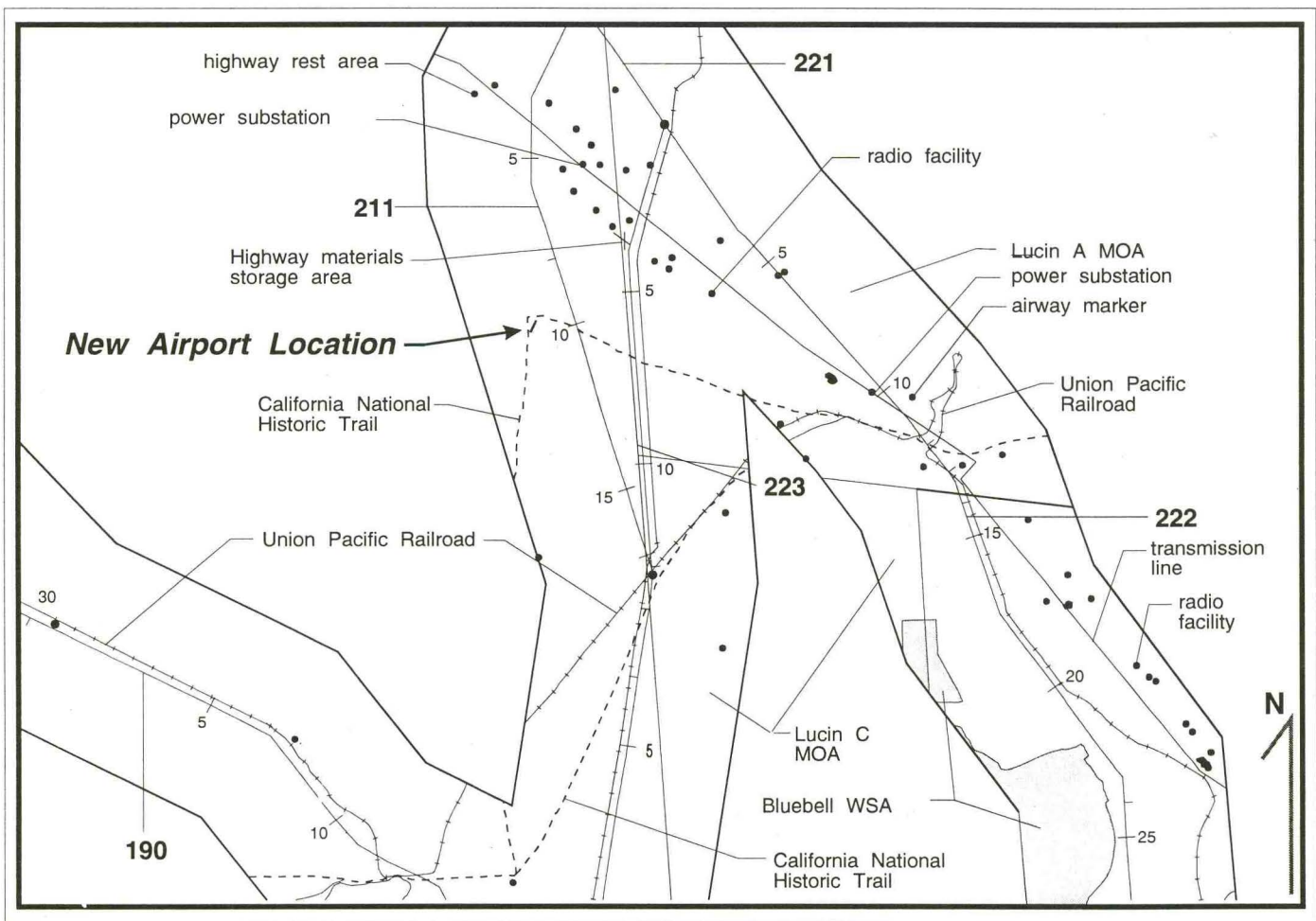
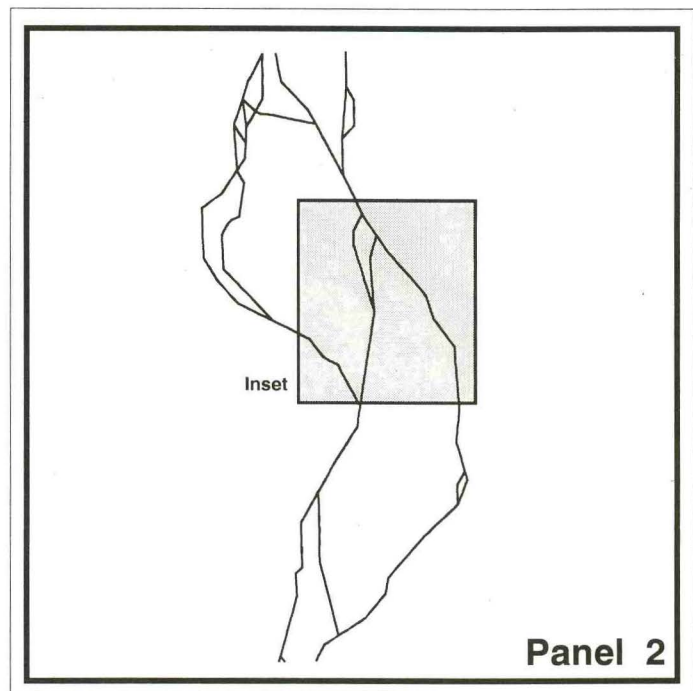


Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 2 - Land Use Resources

A private grass airstrip near Big Springs Ranch was not shown on this map. Its location is illustrated below.

Note: The black dots on the map indicate corrals, wells, gravel pits, and various other land uses. Please refer to the map volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for specific color identification of these land uses.



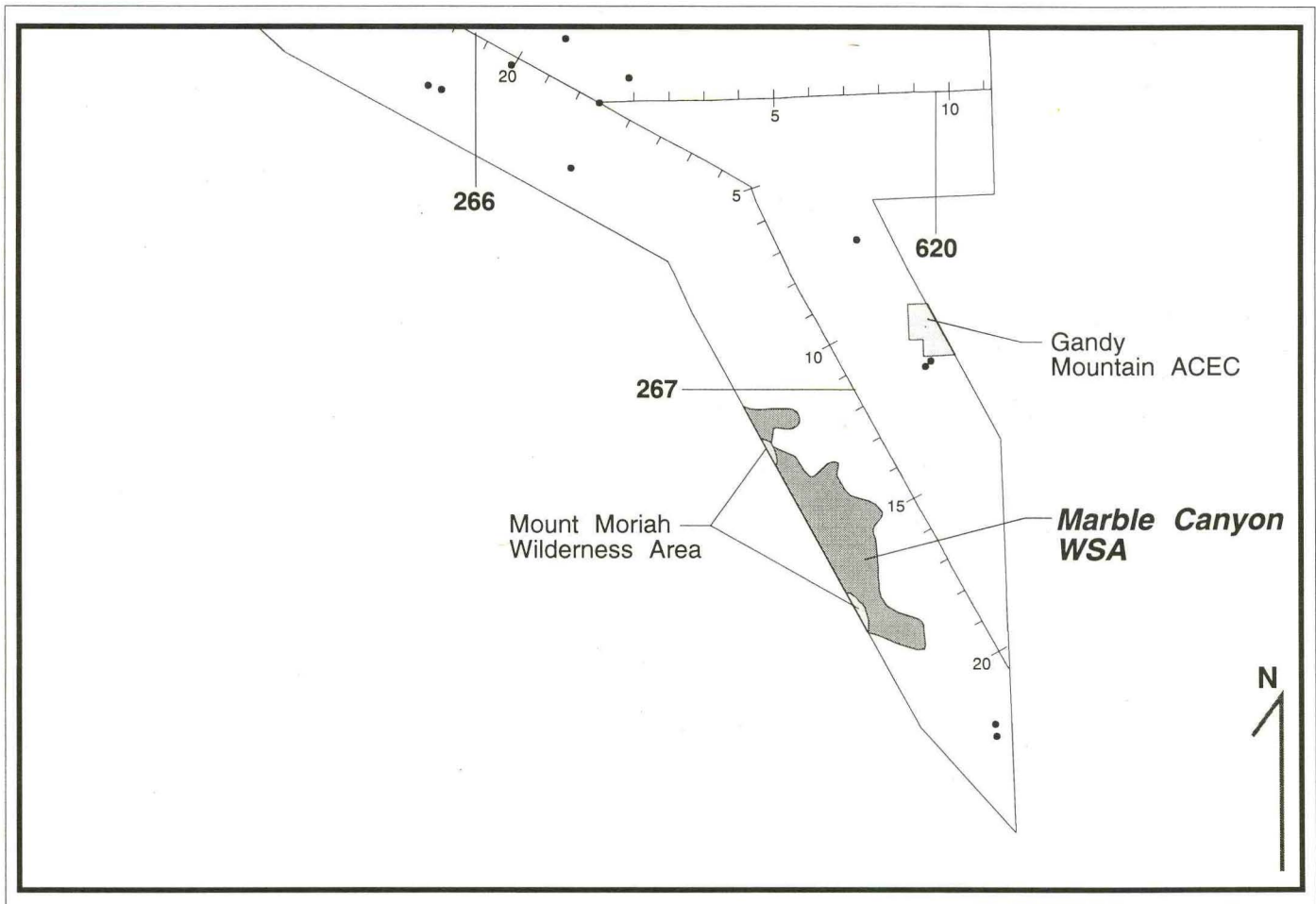
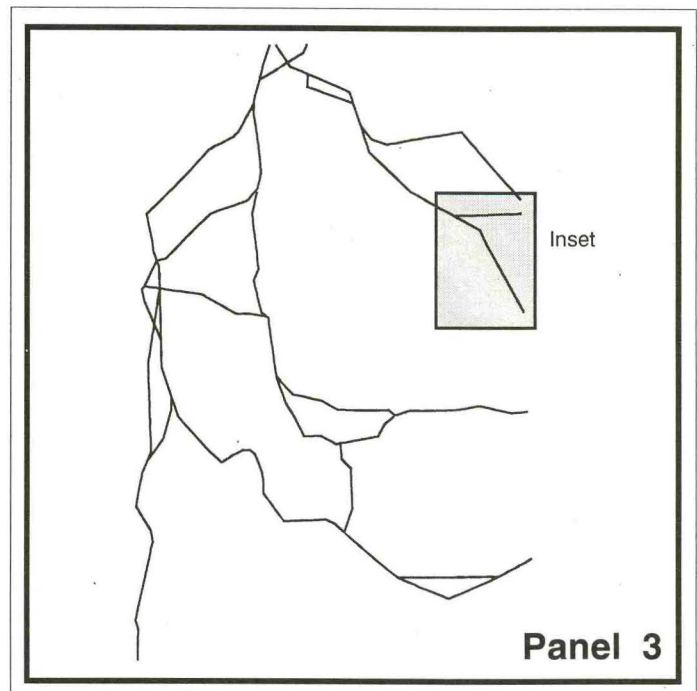
Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 3 - Land Use Resources

Marble Canyon WSA was not shown on this map. The boundary for this area is illustrated below.

Note: The black dots on the map indicate corrals, wells, gravel pits, and various other land uses. Please refer to the map volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for specific color identification of these land uses.



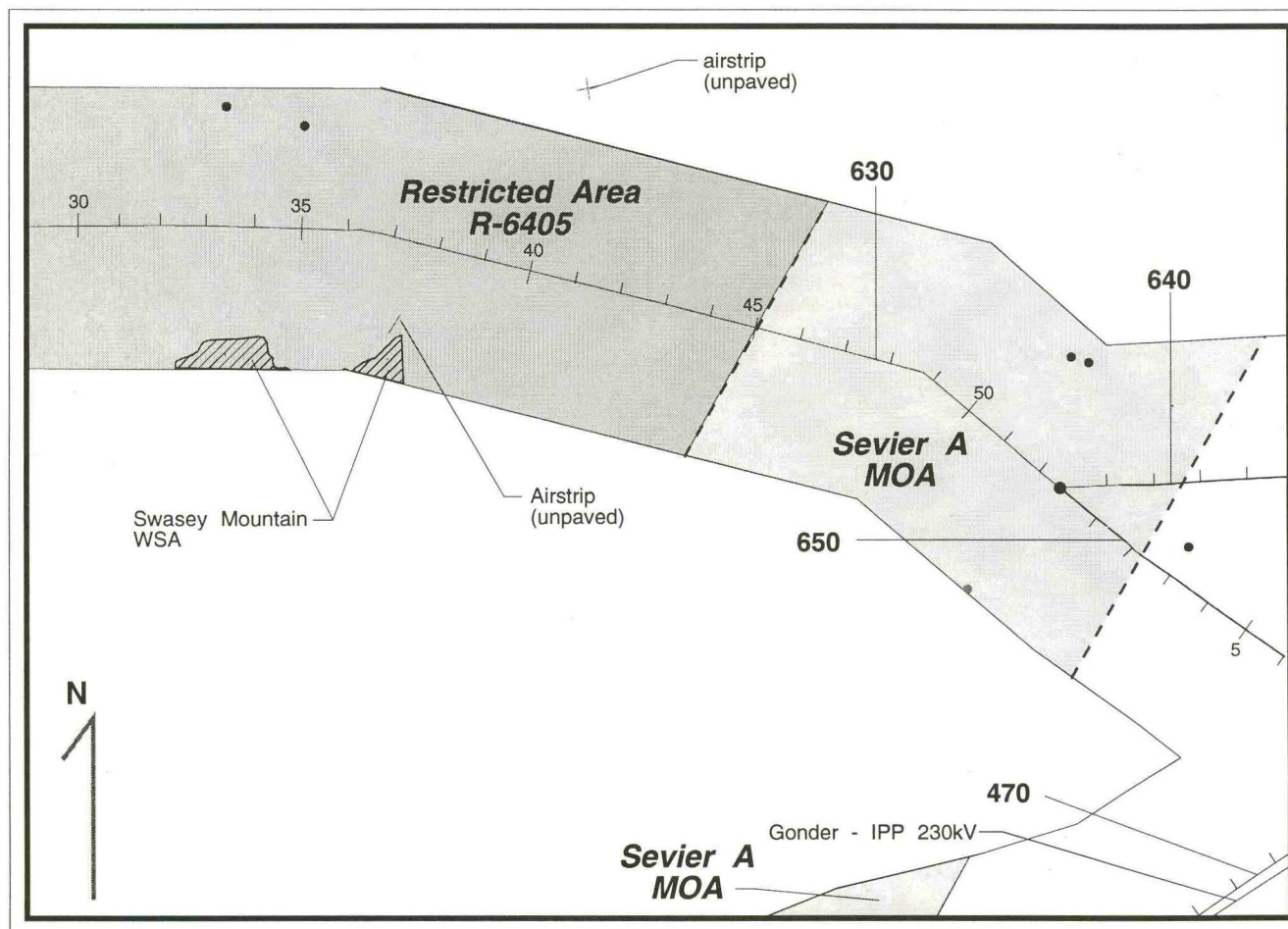
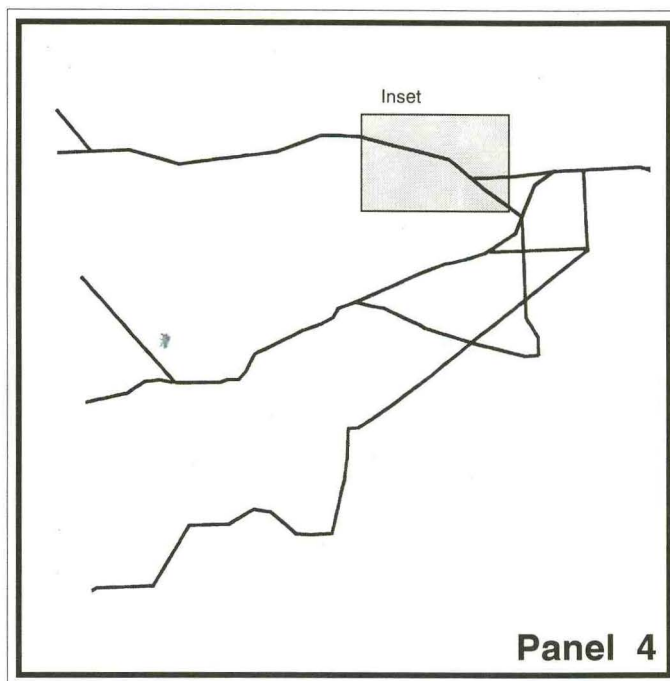
Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 4 - Land Use Resources

The Restricted Area R-6405 was mapped incorrectly on the Panel 4 - Land Use Resources Map. It is illustrated in the below diagram.

Note: The black dots on the map indicate corrals, wells, gravel pits, and various other land uses. Please refer to the map volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for specific color identification of these land uses.



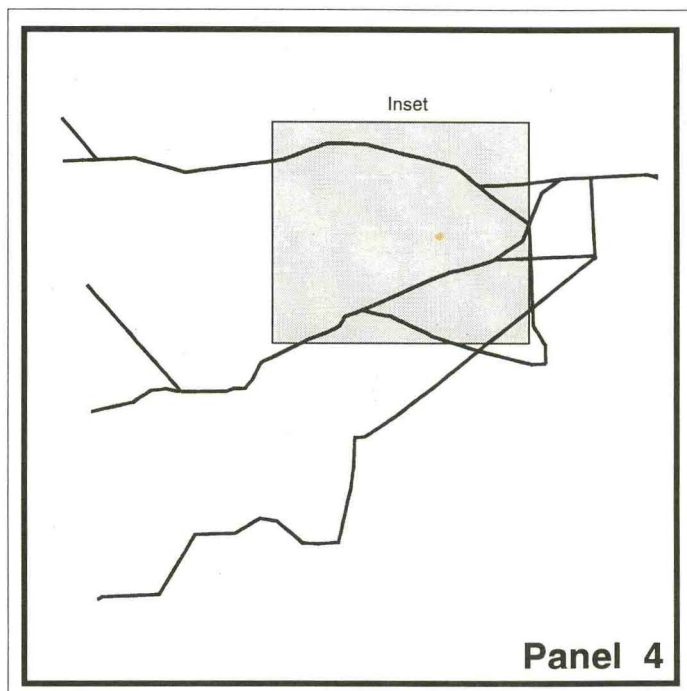
Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

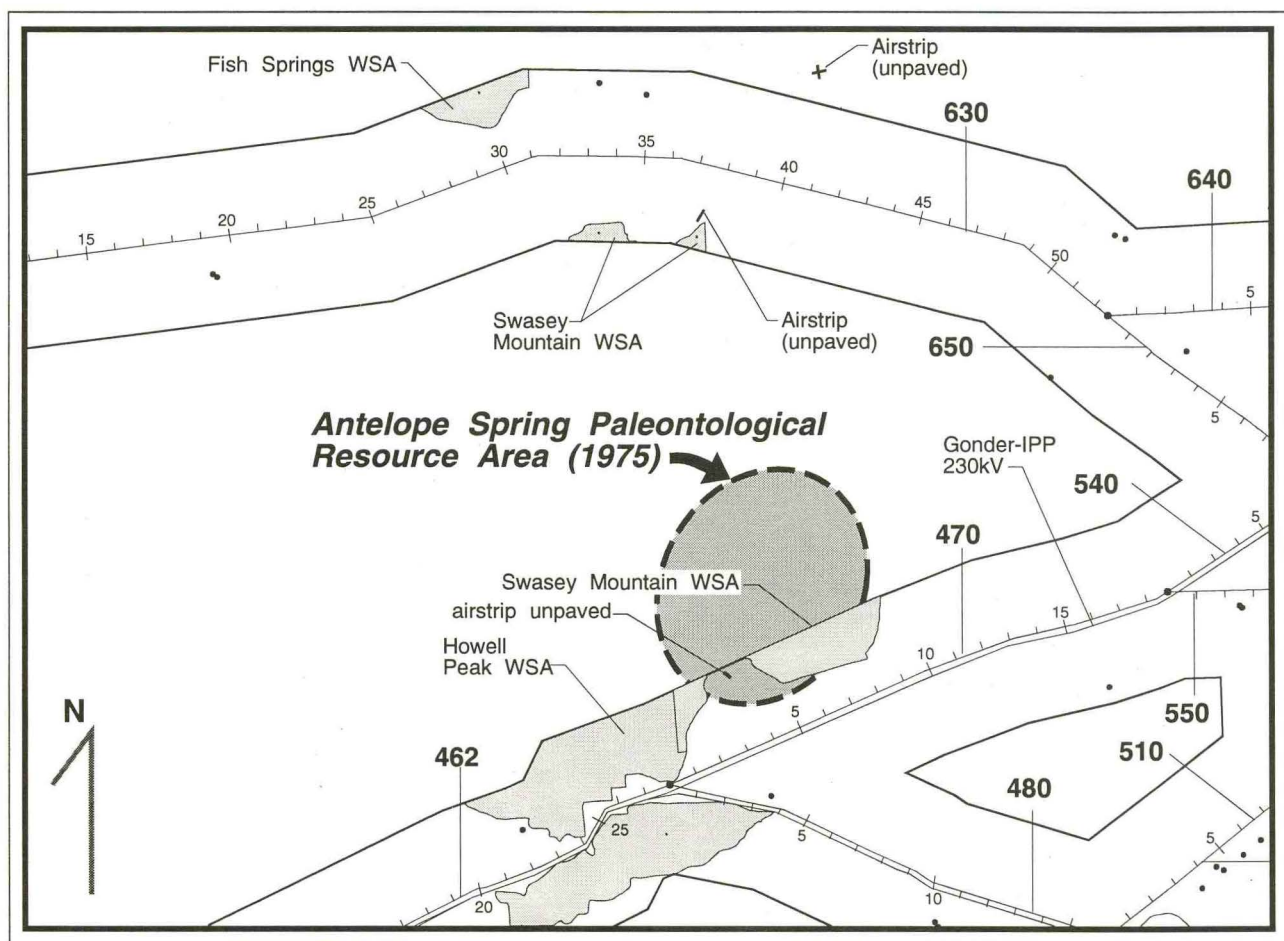
CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 4 - Land Use Resources

The Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds were not shown on the land use map in the Map Volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA. The boundary of this is illustrated below.

Note: The black dots on the map indicate corrals, wells, gravel pits, and various other land uses. Please refer to the map volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for specific color identification of these land uses.



Panel 4



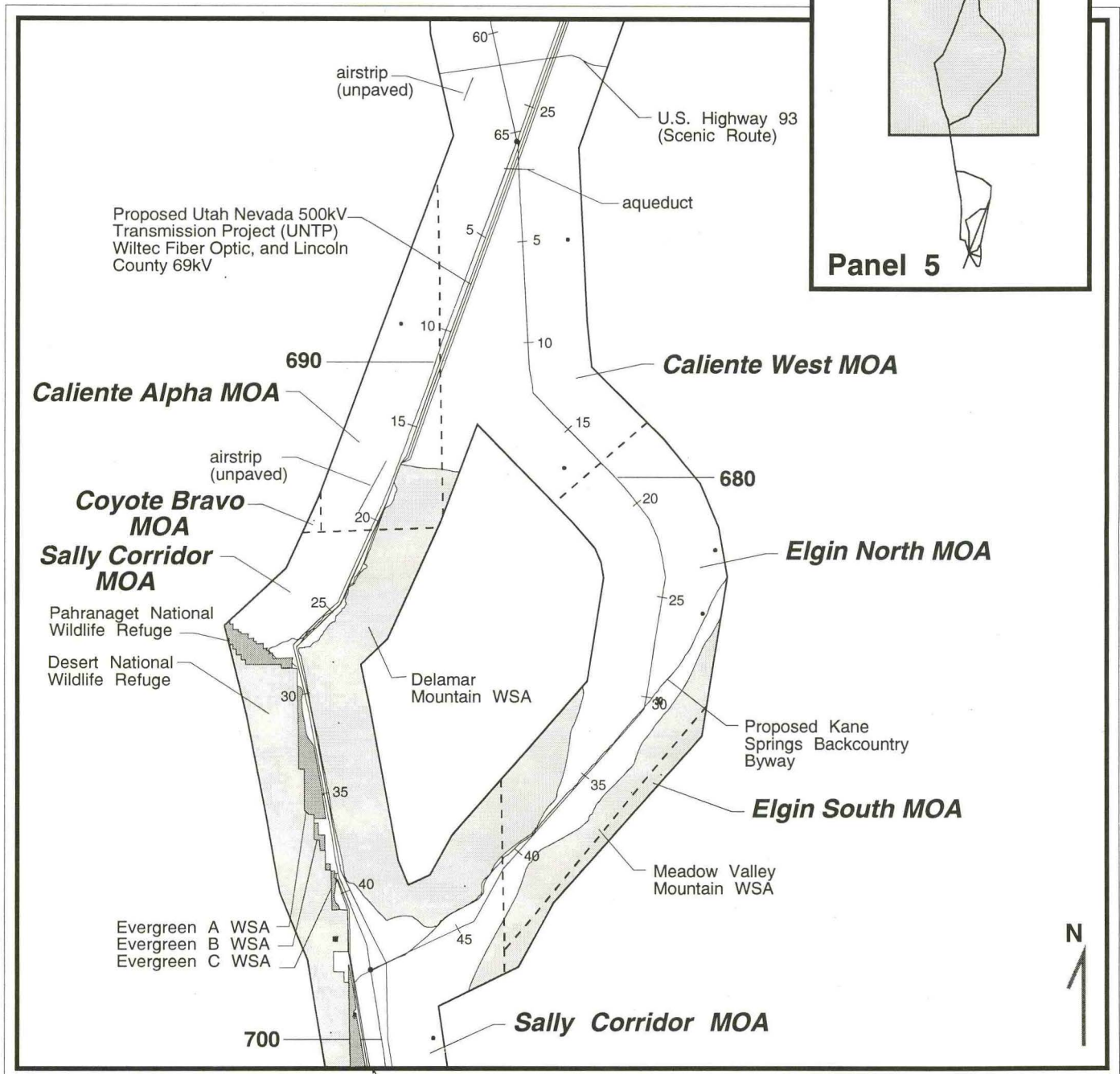
Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 5 - Land Use Resources

The labels identifying MOAs are missing on this map. These additional labels are illustrated below.

Note: The black dots on the map indicate corrals, wells, gravel pits, and various other land uses. Please refer to the map volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for specific color identification of these land uses.



Note: Not to Scale

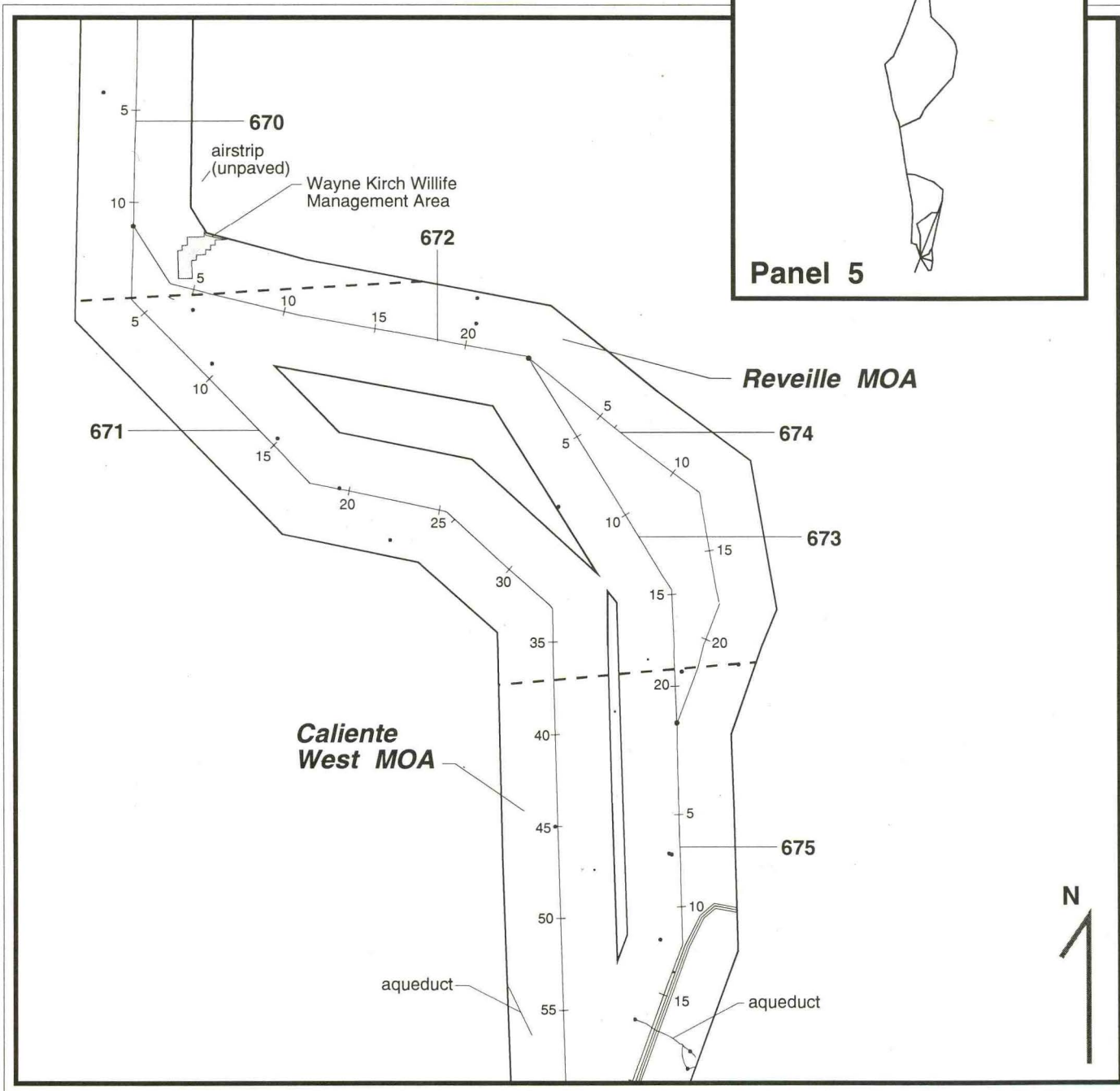
Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO:

Panel 5 - Land Use Resources

The labels identifying MOAs are missing on this map. These labels are illustrated below.

Note: The black dots on the map indicate corrals, wells, gravel pits, and various other land uses. Please refer to the map volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for specific color identification of these land uses.



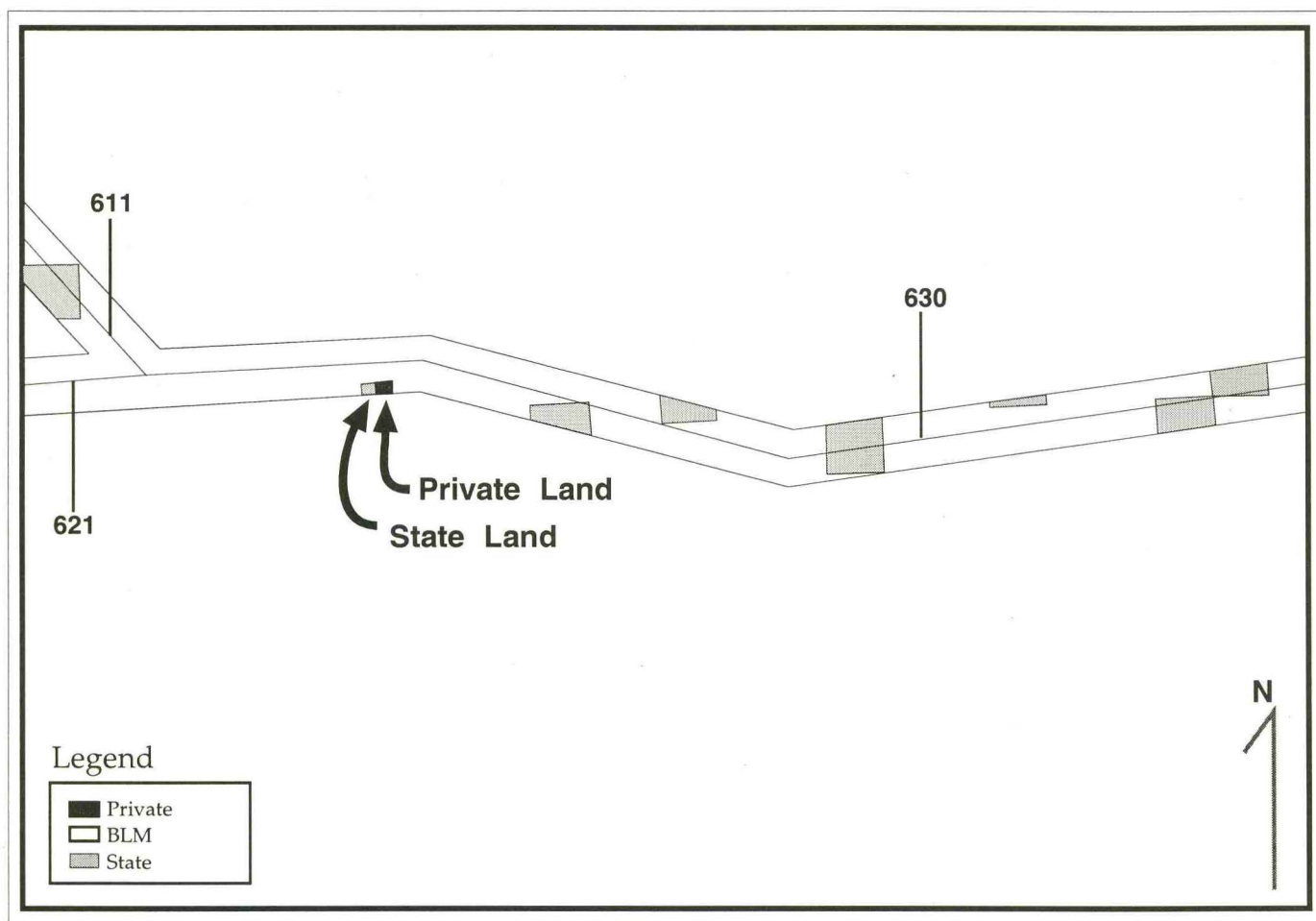
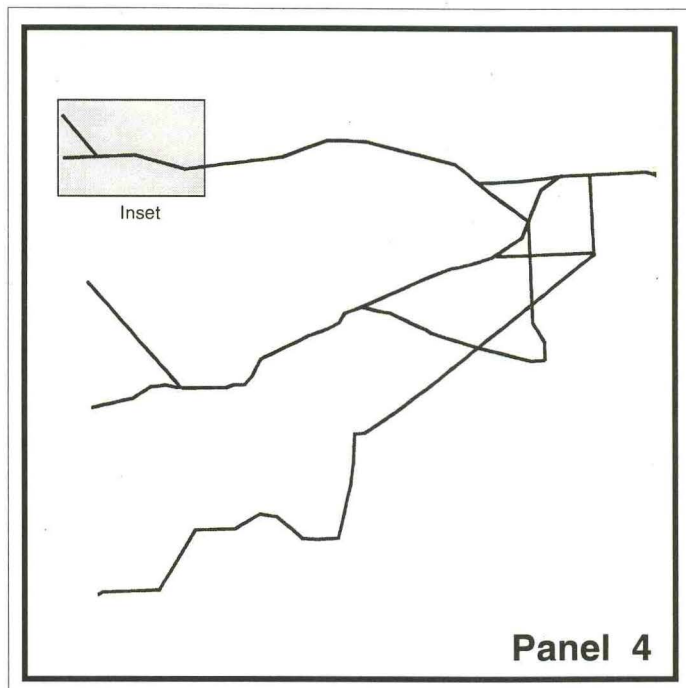
Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

Figure 4-9

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 4 - Jurisdiction

A small area of State Land at T14S, R18W, Section 28, NW1/4 SW1/4 and a small area of private land at T14S, R18W, Section 28, NE1/4 SW1/4, S1/2 SW1/4 were missing on this map. These lands are illustrated in the map below.

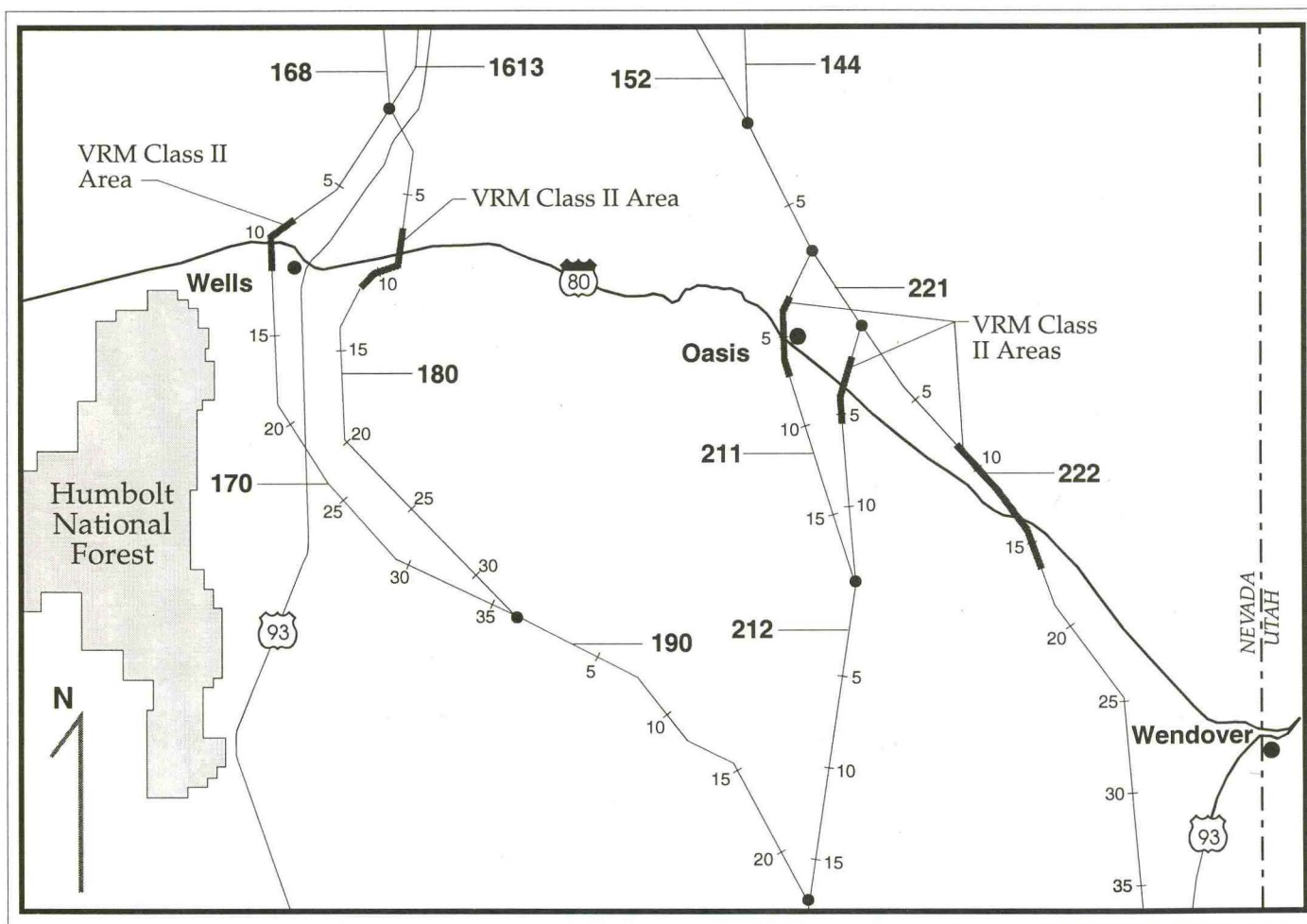
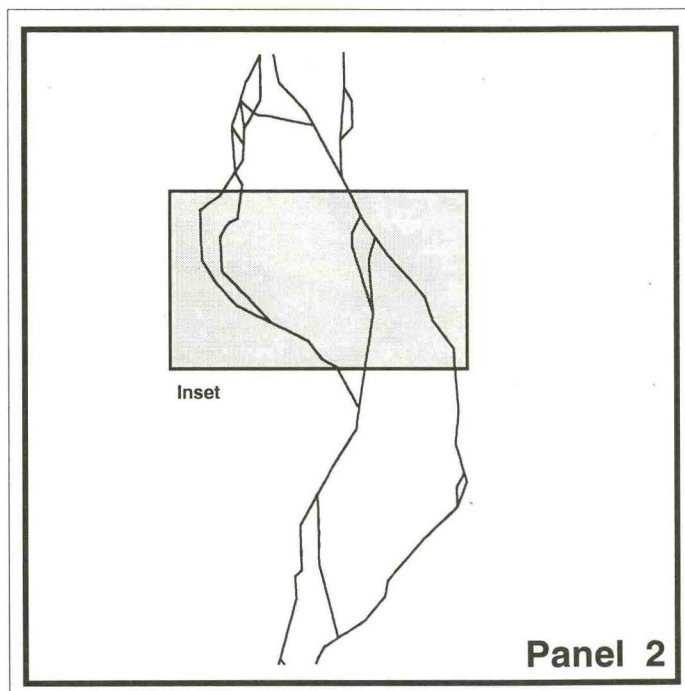


Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 2 - Visual Resources

This map shows the portion of the alternatives that would cross VRM Class II in the Wells District (Interstate 80 low-visibility corridor).

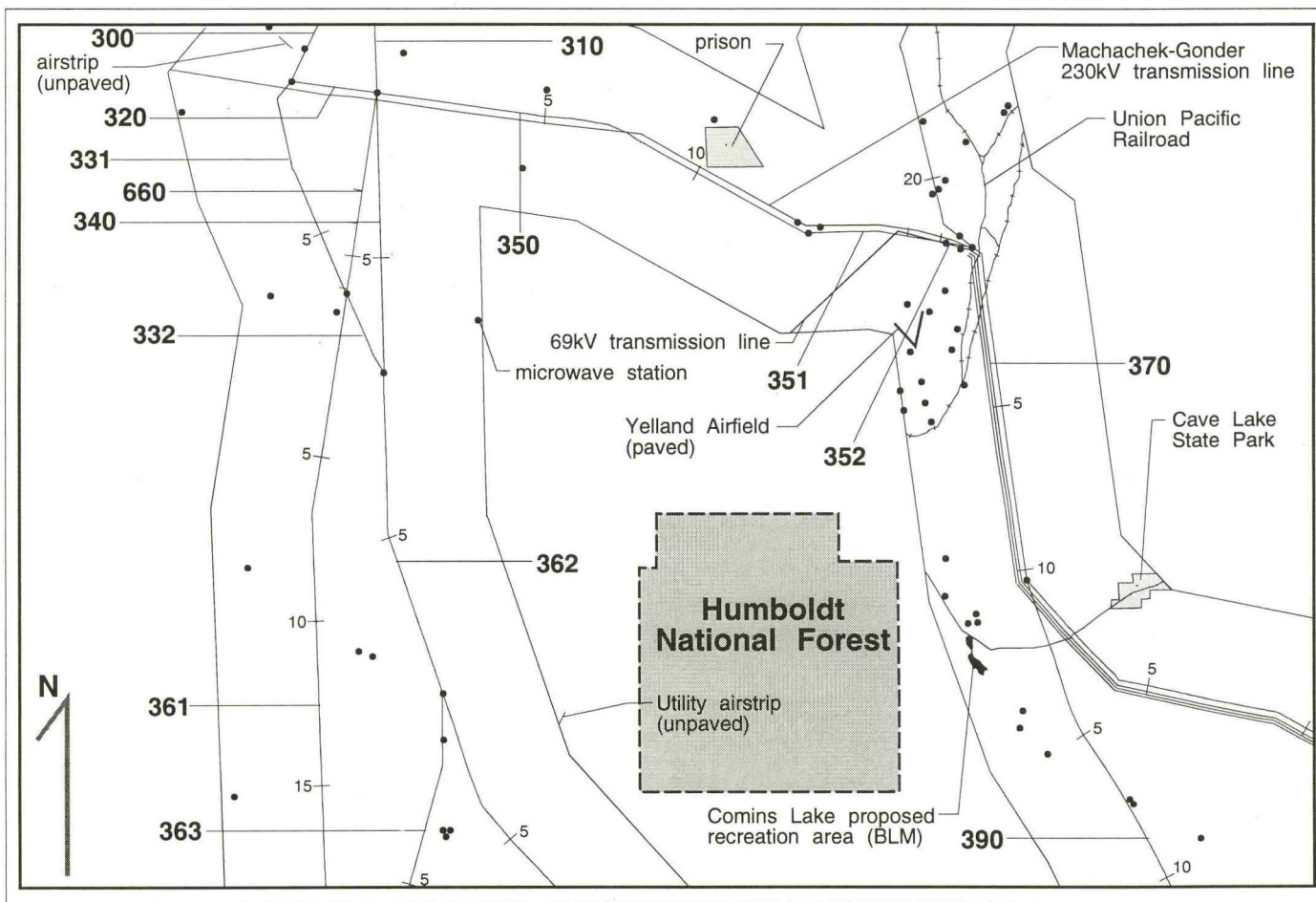
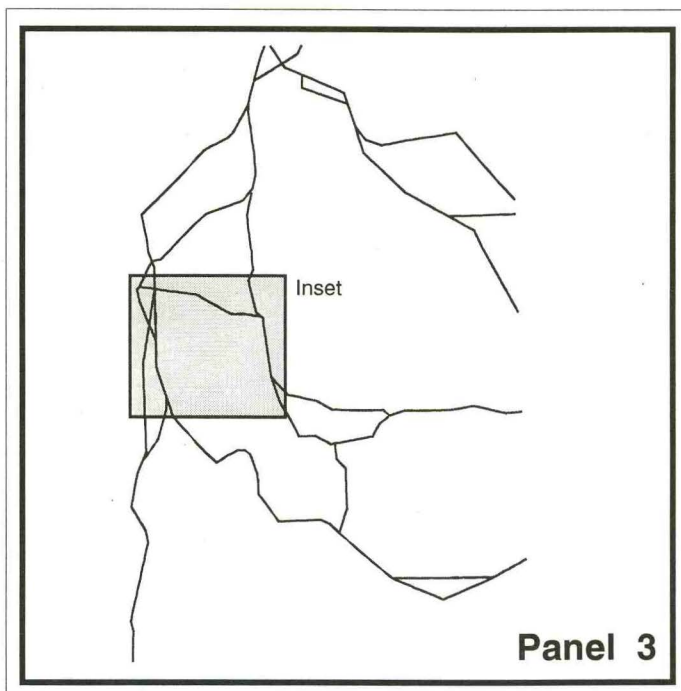


Errata for Map Volume

CORRECTIONS TO: Panel 3 - All Resource Maps

All Panel 3 maps are missing the Humboldt National Forest Boundary for the area south of Ely. The boundary is illustrated below.

Note: The black dots on the map indicate corrals, wells, gravel pits, and various other land uses. Please refer to the map volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA for specific color identification of these land uses.



Note: Not to Scale

Errata for Map Volume

corridors might encounter a cultural resource every 2 to 3, miles on the average. This indicates that some 200 to 400 cultural sites could be present along the selected alternative. Many of these could probably be avoided by minor adjustments in the project, but the project would undoubtedly diminish the regional resource base".

Page 4-89, 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence: revise to "The pipeline planned to transport the water from north of Clark County would utilize existing corridors designated by the BLM or Congress, or prepare a plan amendment".

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Table 4-3a, page 1 of 2, under Allotment Name: add

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		Total Acres	Viable Acres	Total Acres	Viable Acres
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					38.60""

Table 4-3a, page 2 of 2, in the "Smith Creek" row: change

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		Total Acres	Viable Acres	Total Acres	Viable Acres
"Smith Creek		17,820	14.3	6.0	0.0
					0.0""

Table 4-4, page 1 of 1, table is revised to include Tax Revenues for Agency Preferred and Utility Routes.

TABLE 4-4

Estimated County Tax Revenues¹ by Alternative Route

<u>State/ County</u>	<u>Midpoint to Dry Lake Alternative Routes</u>							<u>Agency Preferred</u>	<u>Utility Preferred</u>
	<u>Route A</u>	<u>Route B</u>	<u>Route C</u>	<u>Route D</u>	<u>Route E</u>	<u>Route F</u>	<u>Route G</u>		
IDAHO									
Cassia	20,800	20,800	20,800	20,800	20,800	----	20,800	20,800	20,800
Gooding	----	----	----	----	----	211,500	----	----	----
Jerome	455,700	455,700	455,700	455,700	455,700	144,100	455,700	455,700	455,700
Twin Falls	570,700	570,700	570,700	570,700	570,700	916,600	570,700	570,700	570,700
NEVADA									
Elko	759,200	769,100	727,100	767,600	801,200	727,100	729,200	729,200	729,200
White Pine	582,000	588,300	582,000	576,200	596,100	582,000	568,400	560,000	552,200
Lincoln	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400	539,400
Nye	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800	261,800
Clark	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,800	150,300	150,300	150,300

<u>State/ County</u>	<u>Ely to Delta Alternative Routes</u>			
	<u>Direct</u>	<u>Cutoff</u>	<u>230kV Corridor*</u>	<u>Southern</u>
UTAH				
Millard	355,200	846,000	853,700	998,700
Juab	296,100	----	----	----
NEVADA				
White Pine	255,700	289,200	320,500	494,900

¹ Estimates are based on average 1990 property tax rates in each county and an average cost for the transmission lines and associated microwave communication and substation facilities. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Estimates represent revenues during the first year of operation without depreciation.

* Agency Preferred Route

CHAPTER 5 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Page 5-10, 3rd paragraph, last sentence: change to "The only route preference identified was an alternative that would traverse Dry Lake Valley from west to east (Link 671 to Link 673).".

CHAPTER 6 - PREPARERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Page 6-4, under "Philip Zeig": add the title "Soil Conservationist".

Page 6-5, under "Mark A Pierce": add the title "Wildlife Conservationist".

Page 6-5, under "Melanie Mendenhall": add the title "Range Conservationist".

Page 6-5, under "F. Rex Rowley": add the title "Area Manager - House Range".

Page 6-5, under "Lynn T. Fergus": add the title "Outdoor Recreation Specialist".

Page 6-9, under "William J. Lindsey": change to "Supervisory Range Conservationist".

Page 6-9, under "Mark Henderson": change "13 years with BLM" to "seven years with the BIA and seven years with the BLM".

Page 6-13, first item under Name/Title: change "Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Page 6-13, first item under Involvement, change "Hagerman Fossil Beds" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument"

REFERENCES

Add to list: Chadwick, D.H. 1989. Mission for the 90's: The Biodiversity Challenge. Defenders Magazine Special Report.

APPENDICES FOR THE SWIP DEIS/DPA

Appendix C

Page C-7, under "National Park Service", under "Idaho": delete "Fossil Beds National Monument - Twin Falls".

Appendix D

Page D-5, under "Subroute Set 22", last sentence: add "Link 680 would traverse 5.6 miles of Category I, 7.4 miles of Category II, and 5.6 miles of Unclassified desert tortoise habitat while Link 690 would traverse approximately 15.5 miles of Category I and 4.3 miles of Category III desert tortoise habitat".

Appendix F

Page F-5: the lists of microwave communication facility sites under the headings at the top of this page are transposed, they should read as follows. Also, Beaver Dam Mountain and Glendale should have been added.

Robinson Summit

Path 1

Hansen Butte
Cottonwood
Ellen D (L&D)
Six-Mile
Rocky Peak
Spruce Mountain
Long Valley
Copper
Cave Mountain
Mount Wilson
Highland Peak
Beaver Dam Mountain
Glendale

North Steptoe

Path 2

Hansen Butte
Cottonwood
Ellen D (L&D)
Rocky Point
Proctor
Bald Peak
Raiff
Squaw Peak
Cave Mountain
Mount Wilson
Highland Peak
Beaver Dam Mountain
Glendale

Table F-1, page 2 of 3, under "Location for the Six Mile site": change "E. of Oasis" to "W. of Oasis".

Table F-1, page 2 of 3, under "Jurisdiction for the Six Mile site": change "BLM" to "private".

Table F-4, page 2 of 2, under "SOILS, for Cave Mountain Site": change "Calcic" to "carbonatic" and delete "carbonic".

Appendix G

Page G-2, under "National Park Service": change "Fossil Bed National Monument" to "Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument".

Appendix H

Page H-3, Additional Technical reports available for review at the following locations:

University of Nevada Las Vegas
James Dickenson Library
4505 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89154

Rainbow Library
6010 W. Cheyenne
Las Vegas, NV 89108

Charleston Heights Library
800 Brush Street
Las Vegas, NV 89108

Clark County Library
1401 E. Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89109

Henderson Library
55 Water Street
Henderson, NV 89105

Sunrise Public Library
100 N. Nellis Boulevard
Las Vegas, NV 89110

Lincoln County Library
Pioche, NV 89043

MAP VOLUME

Panel 2 - Alternative Routes Map: Route D was incorrectly labeled on this map. The map shows Route D following Links 250, 259, and 260. Route D should actually follow Links 241, 243, and 245. Figure 4-1 indicates the corrected labeling of the alternative routes.

Panel 3 - Alternative Routes Map: Route D was incorrectly labeled on this map. The map shows Route D following Links 250, 259, and 260. Route D should actually follow Links 241, 243, and 245. Figure 4-2 indicates the corrected labeling of the alternative routes.

Panel 4 - Alternative Routes Map: The labels for the "230kV Corridor Route" and "Cutoff Route" are transposed on this map. Figure 4-3 indicates the corrected labeling of these alternative routes.

Panel 2 - Land Use Resources: The Big Springs Ranch private grass airstrip is missing from this map. Figure 4-4 indicates the location of the airstrip.

Panel 3 - Land Use Resources: Marble Canyon WSA is not shown on this map. It is located on Link 267 and illustrated in Figure 4-5.

Panel 3 - Land Cover: Between miles 15 and 20 on Link 267, portions identified as playa are labeled incorrectly. The correct identification is sage scrub.

Panel 4 - Land Use Resources: - The label indicates this map to be "Panel 3 - Land Resources", it should read "Panel 4 - Land Resources".

Panel 4 - Map Index: correct the name "Wah Wah Mountains" to "Wah Wah Mountains North"

Panel 4 - Land Use Resources: The R-6405 Restricted Area is mapped incorrectly. Figure 4-6 shows the corrected boundary and labeling. The proposed Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds was not mapped. The location of the Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds is illustrated in Figure 4-7.

Panel 5 - Land Use Resources: Labels identifying MOAs operated by Nellis AFB are missing. Figures 4-8 and 4-9 illustrate the labels for these MOAs.

Panel 4 - Jurisdiction Map: This map is missing a small area of State land at T14S, R18W, Section 28, NW1/4, SW1/4 and a small area of private land of T14S, R18W, Section 28, NE1/4, SW1/4, S1/2SW1/4. Figure 4-10 indicates the locations of these parcels.

Panel 2 - Visual Resources: The BLM low visibility corridor around Interstate 80 did not appear on the map. The VRM Class II area is shown in Figure 4-11.

Panel 3 - All Maps: The boundary of the Humboldt National Forest South of Ely was left off of all the Panel 3 Maps. Figure 4-12 shows the approximate location of the boundary.

TECHNICAL REPORTS

Volume II - Natural Environment

Earth Resources

Table ER-4, under the heading "Site", the name "Ellen D" should be followed by "(L & D)"

Biological Resources

Figure BIO-1, Bureau of Land Management District Contacts for Biological Resources: add "Mark Barber" to Ely District.

Page 4-29, Wildlife Species of Concern in NV, Baking Powder Flat Blue Butterfly: change, "souls" to "soils".

Page 4-34, Birds, Long-Billed Curlew. The categorization has been changed from 2C to 3C. The status of this specie was changed on FWS Federal Register listing of 11/21/91.

Page 4-42: Add the desert dace to discussions of wildlife species of concern in Utah. The dace as well as the other three species, least chub, western spotted frog, and Great Basin silver-spot butterfly, are all federal candidate, Category 2, species for listing among the threatened or endangered wildlife of the United States.

Page 4-46, Sensitive Features: Floodplains, Riparian, and Wetlands: The reference is incorrect. Wetlands are defined by the Corps of Engineers (1987) as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." This definition will apply to areas that are included as riparian, and in some cases, shallow ground water.

Page 4-62, paragraph 3, replace the first sentence with: "Committed mitigation for sage grouse leks includes numbers 6 and 11 and for sage grouse wintering areas, 2, 4, 6, and 11".

Page 4-83, last line: add, "It is also found along the centerline of Links 451 and 462."

Page 4-84, "Cumulative Effects to Botanical Resources": insert:

"Cumulative effects to special status plant species would result from additional ground disturbance resulting in habitat destruction and, in the case of some species, increased public access. The effects of multiple adjacent transmission lines could result in additional habitat loss where the corridors occur, however this may leave areas where known populations occur undisturbed. Access roads would serve more than one line, reducing the need for additional road construction and increased public access. Where construction activities occur, these effects are

generally short-term and can be mitigated by saving top soil and seed bases to utilize in revegetating the area".

Table BIO-13: delete the Amargosa toad.

Table BIO-14: *Astragalus atratus* var. *inseptus* was included in the appendix of the Technical Report and should be added to Table BIO-14 and page 14.

Table BIO-17: Under Federal Codes: add "S = BLM Sensitive".

Under Authority Codes: add, "BLM-Las Vegas District Office".

"*Arctomecon californica*" should be "*Arctomecon californium*"

ADD:

"SPECIES	FED	STATE	AUTH
<i>Astragalus gilmanii</i> -Gilman Milk-vetch	S		BLM
<i>Cymopterus ripleyi</i> var. <i>saniculoides</i> - Sanicle biscuitroot	C2	W	NNHP, BLM
<i>Epilobium nevadense</i> - Nevada willowherb	C2	W	NNHP, BLM
<i>Gymnosteris nudicaulis</i> -large-flowered gymnosteris		S	BLM
<i>Gymnosteris parvula</i> -small-flowered gymnosteris		S	BLM
<i>Jamesia tetrapetala</i> -waxflower	C2		BLM
<i>Petalonyx parryi</i> -Parry's sandpaper plant	S		BLM
<i>Phacelia palmeri</i> -Palmer beardtongue	S		BLM
<i>Tiquilia latior</i> - no common name	C2		BLM"

DELETE:

"*Mentzelia mollis*"

Table BIO-18, paragraph one: change the state of "Nevada" to "Utah". Also add "*Swertia gypsicola* and *Eriogonum natum*". Delete footnote.

Table BIO-20: add the following candidates for federal listing (Category 2) in the project area in Nevada. Four butterflies, the Baking Powder Flat blue butterfly (*Euphilotes battoides* spp.), Mattoni's blue butterfly (*E. pallescens mattoni*), White River wood nymph butterfly (*Cercyionis pegala* spp.), and the Steptoe Valley crescent spot butterfly (*Phyciodes pascoensis*).

Table BIO-20: Change status to long-billed curlew from "C2" to "3C".

Volume IV - Cultural Environment

Page 9-37, 5th paragraph: replace last two sentences with, "A portion of southern Nevada was originally part of the Territory of New Mexico, and when the Arizona Territory was split off in 1863, the southern part of what is now Nevada became part of Pah-Ute County of the Arizona

Territory. In 1866 Congress passed an act transferring this land to the new State of Nevada, and it became part of Lincoln County".

Page 9-38, 1st paragraph, 3rd sentence: replace with, "Following the Virgin River, the party entered what is now Nevada near modern Bunkerville. Approximately five miles south of the confluence of the Virgin and Colorado rivers, they crossed to the east side of the Colorado River, which Smith called the Seedskeeder, and traveled south until reaching the vicinity of present day Needles. Here the party turned west and crossed the Colorado again. They traveled on to the Spanish missions in what is now southern California".

Page 9-73, 2nd through 5th paragraphs: replace with the following: "The 150-mile Nevada Northern Nevada Railroad was completed in 1906. It ceased regular commercial operations in 1983, and is no longer in use except for an historic train operated by the White Pine Historical Foundation as a tourist attraction along 17 miles of the railroad at the southern end of the line in the vicinity of Ely, from McGill Junction to Keystone Junction. The East Ely Depot, an historic property directly associated with the railroad, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although trains currently do not operate along the railroad north of McGill Junction, the railroad has not been formally abandoned and, in fact, proposals to restore commercial operation have been made. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) obtained control of the right-of-way in conjunction with their proposed White Pine Power Plant. The Magma Copper Company also has approached the BLM and the City of Ely with a proposal to restore commercial operation of the line for transporting crude oil and copper concentrate.

In 1989 the Interstate Commerce Commission consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer when rights to operate the railroad were transferred from Kennecott Copper to the LADWP. These consultations resulted in the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement, which indicated that the SHPO and ICC agreed the entire 150-mile line was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C (Alice Baldrice, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, Personal communication, 1993). No survey was undertaken at that time to document the integrity of the entire line, but it is generally acknowledged that most of the alignment retains integrity although some sections may be compromised. Records donated by Kennecott to the railroad museum in Ely may contain information related to integrity issues, such as maintenance and repair records. Specific assessment of effects of the SWIP will require detailed engineering data regarding the distance to the line, and the types and visibility of towers, as well as information on integrity of the railroad.

For the purposes of the planning studies undertaken for this environmental impact analysis, the southern 17 miles of the Nevada Northern Railroad were assigned a high sensitivity rating. The remaining 133 miles were rated as having moderate-high sensitivity, one level lower. The site of the historic railroad town of Shafter, located adjacent to the railroad, was assigned a high sensitivity rating as well.

Several links parallel, within approximately one mile or closer, the segment of the Nevada Northern Railroad ranked as having moderate-high sensitivity. These include Links 212, 223, 230, 241, 242, 244, 270, and 291, which in the aggregate extend from approximately 4 miles south of Cobre, at the northern end, to approximately 20 miles north of McGill, for a total distance of approximately 102 miles (Table CR-11a). In addition, the 230kV alternative for the crosstie route crosses the highly ranked segment of the Nevada Northern Railroad approximately 2 miles south of McGill Junction (near the juncture of Links 352 and 270), and parallels this segment within a mile or less for approximately 5 miles".

Page 9-81, 2nd paragraph, to end of paragraph: add, "In addition, Route A closely parallels 51 miles (about 34 percent) of the Nevada Northern Railroad, which has been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places".

Page 9-82, 4th paragraph, after 1st sentence: add, "In this area, Route B closely parallels 4 miles (about 3 percent) of the Nevada Northern Railroad, which has been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places".

Page 9-82, 7th paragraph, to end of paragraph: add, "Route C would parallel about 51 miles (about 34 percent) of the Nevada Northern Railroad, which has been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places".

Page 9-83, 1st paragraph, to end of paragraph: add, "Route D closely parallels approximately 35 miles (about 23 percent) of the Nevada Northern Railroad, which has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places".

Page 9-83, 4th paragraph, to end of paragraph: add, "Route E closely parallels 19 miles (about 12 percent) of the Nevada Northern Railroad, which has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places".

Page 9-83, 5th paragraph, to end of paragraph: add, "Route F closely parallels 51 miles (about 34 percent) of the Nevada Northern Railroad, which has been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places".

Page 9-84, 2nd paragraph, to end of paragraph: add, "Route G closely parallels 66 miles (about 44 percent) of the Nevada Northern Railroad, which has been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places".

Appendix CR-11

Add the following table:

Table CR-11a
Summary of Potential Visual Impacts to the Nevada Northern Railroad

		Alternative Routes							
Link	Length (miles)	Environmentally Preferred A	B	C	D	E	F	Utility Preferred G	Agency Preferred (mix of A & G)
Midpoint-Dry Lake									
212 *	16.2	16.2		16.2			16.2	16.2	16.2
223 *	13.2								
230 *	16.4	16.4		16.4	16.4		16.4	16.4	16.4
241 **	29.6								
242 *	1.0								
244 *	6.1								
270 *	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
291 *	14.4	14.4		14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4		14.4
Totals	101.1	51.2	4.2	51.2	35.0	18.6	51.2	65.5	79.9
% of NNRR		34%	3%	34%	23%	12%	34%	44%	53%
Crosstie		(Cutoff Route)						(230kV Route)	(230kV Route)
		no crossing***						crosses****	crosses****

* Nevada Northern Railroad parallels link within approximately one mile or less

** Nevada Northern Railroad parallels link within approximately one mile or less for all but about 8 miles of the link

*** assumes Northern Steptoe substation is selected; if Robinson Summit is selected, 230kV Route would cross historic tourist train as well

**** 230kV Route crosses section of Nevada Northern Railroad used as tourist historic train, and runs parallel within a mile for about 5 miles

Note: The total length of the Nevada Northern Railroad is approximately 150 miles. A historic train is operated as a tourism attraction for 17 miles at the southern end of the line from Ruth, through Ely, to McGill Junction. A commercial lease is held for the remaining trackage, but has not been used since 1983. The Nevada SHPO has indicated that the entire right-of-way is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

DATA TABLES FOR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Biological Resources

Ground Disturbance Impacts to Sensitive Animal Species, page 74 of 79, Link 690, replace "Desert Tortoise Unclassified" to "Desert Tortoise Category III"

Ground Disturbance Impacts to Sensitive Animal Species, page 75 of 79, Link 720, replace "Desert Tortoise Category II" to "Desert Tortoise Category III"

DATA TABLES FOR HUMAN ENVIRONMENT - LAND USE RESOURCES

Impacts to Military Operating Areas

All references to "RESTRICTED AIR SPACE (R-6045)" should be changed to "RESTRICTED AIR SPACE (R-6405)".

Page 7 of 9, second "Link 620" should be "Link 630".

Change Link 630 Data to the following:

0.0 - 44.5	44.5	RESTRICTED AIR SPACE (R-6405)	4.	5.	3.
44.5 - 52.5	8.0	MOA - SEVIER A	2.	0.	2.
Link 640, change:		"RESTRICTED AIR SPACE (R-6045)"	4.	5.	3."
to:		"MOA - SEVIER A"	2.	0.	2."
Link 650, change:		"RESTRICTED AIR SPACE (R-6045)"	4.	5.	3."
to:		"MOA - SEVIER A"	2.	0.	2."

DATA TABLES FOR HUMAN ENVIRONMENT - VISUAL RESOURCES - VOLUME 2

Compliance with Agency Visual Management

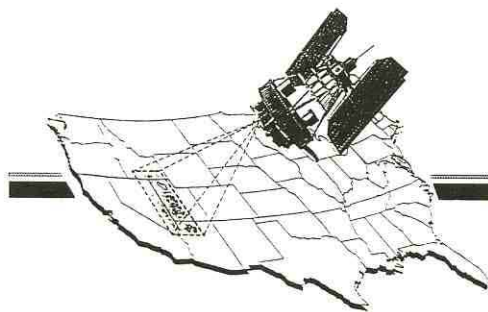
Page 24 of 150 and 25 of 150, Link 170, miles 7.0 to 10.7, replace "CLASS IV" to "CLASS II".

Page 28 of 150, Link 180, miles 6.5 to 11.0, replace "CLASS IV" to "CLASS II".

Page 34 of 150, Link 211, miles 2.5 to 7.3, replace "CLASS IV" to "CLASS II".

Page 41 of 150, Link 223, miles 1.1 to 5.3, replace "CLASS IV" to "CLASS II".

Page 38 of 150, Link 222, miles 8.6 to 9.7, 9.8 to 9.9, 10.1 to 10.2 and 13.8 to 16.0, replace "CLASS IV" to "CLASS II".



CHAPTER 5

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO THE DEIS/DPA

INDEX OF INDIVIDUALS RESPONDING TO THE DEIS/DPA BY LETTER

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Letter #</u>
Alexander, Myron E.	Lone Pine, California	A-1
Ax, Ruth	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-2
Baker, Sheridan	Baker, Nevada	A-3
Banks, Alterio	Malibu, California	A-4
Barton, Bob	Oasis, Nevada	A-5
Beddall, Fred	Oakland, California	A-6
Blocher, Grant J.	Oakland, California	A-7
Brackett, Nancy	Oasis, Nevada	A-8
Brooke, T. Scott	Minden, Nevada	A-9
Buckner, Millie	Oakland, California	A-10
Bullas, Roslyn	Berkeley, California	A-11
Burch, David	San Francisco, California	A-12
Caldwell, Kate	Oakland, California	A-13
Carfagno, Michelle		A-14
Constance, Brenda S.	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-15
Constance, Joseph E., Jr.	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-16
Crickmore, Ingrid	Berkeley, California	A-17
Criss, Kurt E.	Elko, Nevada	A-18
Fine, Brandon	San Francisco, California	A-19
Ford, Peter	Baker, Nevada	A-20
Fricke, Ruth M.	Mountain View, California	A-21

Garrett, Jo Anne	Baker, Nevada	A-22
Gracenin, Damun	San Francisco, California	A-23
Graf, Susan F.	Orinda, California	A-24
Guerin, Jeanette	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-25
Halligan, David W.	Berkeley, California	A-26
Heckethorn, Mrs. Gene D.	Ely, Nevada	A-27
Hendricks, Donald W.	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-28
Hewitt, Alex	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-29
Hewitt, Diana	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-30
Hewitt, Joseph B. IV	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-31
Hug, Mark	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-32
Huxtable, George	Santa Clara, California	A-33
Kamul, Jeremy	Los Angeles, California	A-34
King, Alfred	Oasis, Nevada	A-35
King, Alfred W. II Northern Holdings, Inc.	Wells, Nevada	A-36
Lamb, Dawn K.	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-37
Leslie, Cheryl	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-38
Lytner, James E.	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-39
Maichle, Robert W.	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-40
Miller, Ken	Berkeley, California	A-41
Moore, David E.	Baker, Nevada	A-42
Palmeri, Gia Mia	Henderson, Nevada	A-43
Quinto, Stella R.	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-44
Raich, David G.	Oakland, California	A-45

Savarese, John	Staten Island, New York	A-46
Schilling, Terri	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-47
Simmons, James E.	Martinez, California	A-48
Spencer, Virginia	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-49
Steurer, Bruce	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-50
Steurer, Jane	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-51
Valkass, Maris	Redondo Beach, California	A-52
Watson, Clara	Las Vegas, Nevada	A-53
Weller, Norman Weller Enfield, Grace	Bishop, California	A-54
Wheeler, Darwin C.	Garrison, Utah	A-55
Whitaker, Howard James	Gold River, California	A-56
Wilcox, Connie	Henderson, Nevada	A-57
Yorks, Dr. Terence Preston	Logan, Utah	A-58
	Oakland, California	A-59

INDEX OF ORGANIZATIONS RESPONDING TO THE DEIS/DPA BY LETTER

<u>Organization Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Letter #</u>
American Rock Art Research Assoc. Stephan A. Stoney	Las Vegas, Nevada	B-1
Citizen Alert Central Mountain Region Bob Fulkerson	Reno, Nevada	B-2
Citizen Alert Southern Nevada Office Louis Benezet	Las Vegas, Nevada	B-3
Committee For Idaho's High Desert Randy Morris	Boise, Idaho	B-4
Connecting Point For Public Lands Janet OCrowley	Picabo, Idaho	B-5
Desert Survivors Steve Tabor Bob Ellis	Oakland, California	B-6
Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn Derril W. Wenzel	Las Vegas, Nevada	B-7
Intermountain Water Alliance Peter Hovingh	Salt Lake City, Utah	B-8
National Parks and Conservation Association Russell D. Butcher	Cottonwood, Arizona	B-9
Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association, Inc. Paul C. Clifford Jr. Charles S. Watson Jr.	Cleveland Heights, Ohio Carson City, Nevada	B-10
Oregon-California Trails Association Thomas Hunt	Palo Alto, California	B-11
Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter Dennis Ghiglieri	Reno, Nevada	B-12

The Wilderness Society
California/Nevada Regional Office
Norbert Riedy

San Francisco, California

B-13

INDEX OF AGENCIES RESPONDING TO THE DEIS/DPA BY LETTER

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Letter #</u>
Bureau of Mines Western Field Operations Center Burton B. Gosling	Spokane, Washington	C-1
Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning Richard B. Holmes	Las Vegas, Nevada	C-2
Elko County Board of County Commissioners George R.E. Boucher, Manager	Elko, Nevada	C-3
National Park Service Planning and Development Denis P. Galvin, Associate Director	Washington, D.C.	C-4
Nevada Dept. Conservation and Nevada Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology Eugene M. Hattori	Carson City, Nevada	C-5
State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection	Carson City, Nevada	C-6
State of Nevada Department of Wildlife Ron Sparks II	Carson City, Nevada	C-7
State of Utah Department of Community & Economic Development James L. Dykman	Salt Lake City, Utah	C-8
State of Utah Office of Planning & Budget Brad T. Barber	Salt Lake City, Utah	C-9

**U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency
Region IX**

Deanna M. Wieman

San Francisco, California

C-10

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Habitat Conservation
Branch of Federal Activities**

Richard M. Smith

Washington D.C.

C-11

**White Pine County
Board of Commissioners**

John S. Lampros

Ely, Nevada

C-12

INDEX OF COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED AFTER THE SWIP DEIS/DPA COMMENT PERIOD

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Letter #</u>
Deseret Generation & Transmission Co-op	Sandy, Utah	D-1
Guros, Frank B.	El Cerrito, California	D-2
Lindberg, Mark	Larkspur, California	D-3
Martinez, Kimberly	Simi Valley, California	D-4
National Park Service Planning and Development Denis P. Galvin, Associate Director	Washington, D.C.	D-5
Savarese, John	Staten Island, New York	D-6
Sierra Pacific	Reno, Nevada	D-7
Dean G. Hayward	Eskdale, Utah	D-8

INDEX OF COMMENTORS AT THE FORMAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Chrisholm, Bill	Twin Falls
Herrmann, Brenda	Twin Falls
Herrmann, John	Twin Falls
Molyneux, Bob	Twin Falls
OCrowley, Janet	Twin Falls
Johnson, William	Wells
King, Dawn	Wells
Fisher, William	Wells
Wirtz, Hiko	Wells
Ekker, Jack	Wells
Brooke, Scott	Wells
King, Alfred	Wells
Thiel, George	Wells
Barton, Bob	Wells
Dunham, Fredd	Wells
Dunham, Patricia	Wells
Garrett, Joanne	Ely
McKenzie, Rod	Ely
Reilly, Joseph	Delta
Stanworth, Rex	Delta
Van Ee, Jeff	Las Vegas
Maichle, Bob	Las Vegas
Breekey, David	Las Vegas

**COMMENT LETTERS AND
RESPONSES FROM INDIVIDUALS**

A cartoon illustration of a stone castle with a 'FOR SALE' sign. A knight on a horse is approaching the castle, while two birds fly above it.

3BUKEXXXXXXX XXXXXX CAMPBELL, CAXX8800X REALTOR
X FLEDCX X408X X79X722EX

Karl Simonson
BLM
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho, 83318

In response to the EIS issued for public comment regarding the construction of a high voltage power line to be constructed between Idaho and Las Vegas, Nevada, I would appreciate having the following points considered and addressed in the public response:

(2) The project could be completed by using existing and already built-upon right-of-ways.

B

LETTER A-1

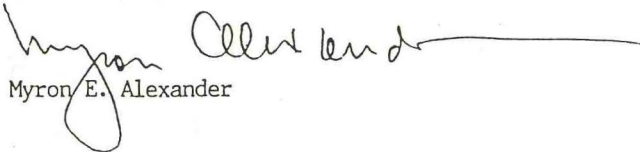
1 of 2

LETTER #A-1
COMMENTS

B (5) As many as 50 to 125 archaeological and/or historical resource sites (No inventory has been made!) are in the direct path of the powerlines and will be destroyed or at best disturbed.

C I wish to state that in my opinion the Environmental Impact Statement is weak and does not deal with specifics regarding the economic justification for the powerline ~~at~~ or demonstrate and substantiate any real need for this extra power carrying capacity.

SINCERELY.


Myron E. Alexander

RESPONSES

C Please refer to Chapter 3 of this document for an expanded discussion of the purpose and need.

LETTER #A-2
COMMENTS

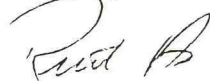
8/21/92

Dear Mr Simonson

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment, I am in favor of the preferred Alternate power line route. I have volunteered many hours with the BLM in the past few years.

Thank you for your attention in this matter,

Sincerely,



Ruth Ax
3606 Villa Knolls
Las Vegas, Nv 89120

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER A-2

LETTER #A-3
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Box 163
Silver Creek Ranch
Baker, Wv. 89311
September 4, 1992

Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process. Also refer to Electric and Magnetic Fields on page 3-72 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and Recent EMF Research Results in Chapter 3 of this document on page 3-19.

Dear Mrs. Simonson,

We recieved your draft EIS
on the Southwest Antitici Project
Thanks for designing it, so one
found it readable.

My concern is having a 500 KV
line through our property when we
already have two 230KV lines in
place.

One can hear a noise from these
lines at any given time not know-
ing what amount of leakage is let
down or the type or kinds of damage

LETTER #A-3
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

This may cause people, animals
plants or soil, there is a concern
for our families health and the
health of those in the years to
come.

With a wilderness to one
side, a National Park on the other
side of our home and where
we make our living why
should we have to live and
work with two 250KV lines
and one 500KV.

This would not be done
in a residential area.

Sincerely,

Sheridan Barker

2 of 2

RECEIVED
DEC 8 3 34 PM '71
FBI - BUREAU

LETTER #A-4
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

9 September 1992
2903 Valmere Drive
Malibu, Ca. 90265

Karl Simonson
BLM, Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

I'd like to request that you oppose the Southwest Intertie Project.

It seems to me that if the powerline is really needed, it should be built along the existing right-of-way in lines already strung between Utah and Las Vegas.

I visit the area around Pahranaghat Valley and the Great Basin National Park area at least four times yearly and enjoy the scenic, uncluttered skyline. One can really feel away from the clutter of L.A. and civilization out there when I and my family visit this area on our vacations.

LETTER A-4

LETTER #A-4
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

It seems so unnecessary, that there's already so many reminders of the city, industry, etc. all over our open expanses already without impacting our wildlife (desert tortoises & raptors) and human visitors to these beautiful lands.

Thank You, Mr. Alterio Burke & Family

LETTER #A-5
COMMENTS

NEVADA LAND & CATTLE CO.
BIG SPRINGS RANCH
OASIS, NEVADA 89835

SEPTEMBER 18, 1992

MR. KARL SIMONSON
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BURLEY DISTRICT OFFICE
ROUTE 3 BOX 1
BURLEY, IDAHO 83318

DEAR MR. SIMONSON:

I AM WRITING TO ADDRESS OUR CONCERNS RELATIVE THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/DRAFT PLAN AMENDMENT ON THE PROPOSED IDAHO POWER COMPANY 500 KV TRANSMISSION LINE, THE SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT.

WE ARE PRESENTLY THE LEASEHOLDER ON THE BIG SPRINGS RANCH WHICH IS OWNED BY CSY INC. THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE RANCH IS SITUATED JUST SOUTH OF OASIS, NEVADA IN THE IMMEDIATE PROXIMITY OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE ROUTE OF THE TRANSMISSION LINE. THE SEGMENTS OF ROUTE A THAT IMPACT OUR OPERATION ARE NUMBERED 200 AND 211 ON THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES MAP.

THE DRAFT EIS DOES NOT ADDRESS THE NEGATIVE IMPACT IT WOULD HAVE TO THE DEVELOPMENTS AND RESIDENTS OF THE WEST SIDE OF GOSHUTE VALLEY. IN FACT IT FAILS TO EVEN RECOGNIZE OUR EXISTENCE ACCORDING TO PAGE 8 AND 3-34 OF THE DRAFT. THE COMMUNITY OF OASIS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS MUCH AS, OR MORE OF, A POPULATION CENTER/RESIDENTIAL AREA AS CONTACT AND CURRIE.

RESPONSES

A The community of Oasis was inadvertently not listed on pages 8 and 3-34 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. This error is corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document. Oasis was, however, considered in the impact assessment and is documented in the Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report and the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume.

The development plans for Northern Holdings would have been included in the impact assessment had they been made public or been on file with the county. There was also no mention of these developments during the public scoping meetings held in March 1989, during the public planning workshop held on January 8, 1991 (attended by representatives of Big Springs Ranch), or in response to the numerous newsletters mailed to Big Springs Ranch throughout the over three-year EIS process. Future planned developments by Northern Holdings have been considered in the SWIP FEIS/PPA (refer to Impacts to the Oasis Area in Chapter 3 of this document).

LETTER #A-5
COMMENTS

B [ALSO WE HAVE A PRIVATE AIRSTRIP JUST EAST OF THE RANCH HEADQUARTERS WHICH WAS NOT IDENTIFIED IN THE DRAFT AND IS SITUATED CLOSE TO THE PROPOSED ROUTE.

C [THE CULTURAL VALUE OF THE IMMIGRANT TRAIL ROUTE THROUGH GOSHUTE VALLEY WAS NOT ADDRESSED IN THE PLAN. WHAT IS NOW THE BIG SPRINGS RANCH HEADQUARTERS WAS AN IMPORTANT STOPPING POINT FOR THE DONNER PARTY AS WELL AS MANY OTHER IMMIGRANT PARTIES, AND PUBLIC INTEREST IN THESE ROUTES IS CONSIDERABLE. WE HAVE HOSTED A NUMBER OF GROUPS THAT WERE FOLLOWING THESE VARIOUS IMMIGRANT TRAILS.

WE ARE OPPOSED TO SEGMENTS 200 AND 211 OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE-ROUTE A, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

D [1. THE NEGATIVE VISUAL IMPACT TO THE RANCH HEADQUARTERS WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL. THE JUSTIFICATION YOU HAVE GIVEN US FOR PREFERRING THE ROUTE ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE VALLEY IS ONE OF VISUAL IMPACT TO I-80. THE LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO LIVE AND WORK IN THIS AREA SHOULD BE CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE FREEWAY TRAFFIC.

E [2. THE FUTURE PLANS OF CSY INC. FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR PRIVATE LAND IN GOSHUTE VALLEY WOULD BE HEAVILY IMPACTED. THE PROPOSED ROUTE CUTS RIGHT THROUGH THE CENTER OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE PART OF THE VALLEY.

F [3. ALTHOUGH THERE SEEMS TO BE CONFLICTING RESEARCH RELATIVE THE HAZARDS OF THE ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELD EFFECTS OF TRANSMISSION LINES, WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO BE EXPOSED TO THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS THAT EXIST.

RESPONSES

B Please refer to Chapter 4, Figure 4-4 of this document for a map of this airstrip in relation to the alternative routes and a discussion of the potential impacts.

C Historic data the BLM reviewed revealed that major historic immigrant wagon trails were networks of tracks with many minor variations and alternate routes--not simple two-track roads. Many of the details regarding the routes of the trails and their variations, as well as distinguishing subsequent uses of these transportation corridors, have yet to be documented. It is possible that what is now the Big Springs Ranch Headquarters may have been a stopping point on one of the variations of the Hastings Cutoff Trail; the historic data we reviewed indicate that this cutoff, which was followed by the Donner party, was located in the Shafter vicinity some five miles south of the Big Springs Ranch Headquarters.

D Visual impacts were assessed from Big Springs Ranch and all other residences along the alternative routes. It is true that residences are more visually sensitive than travelers on Interstate 80, and this was part of the criteria used in assessing visual impacts. Table VR-7 of Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report documents that all residences were considered to have high visual sensitivity while travelers on Interstate 80 received a moderate visual sensitivity rating (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

E CSY Development's intent to develop within the valley was not disclosed to the BLM until the public meeting in Wells on August 4, 1992. Conceptual development plans have now been received from CSY Development and are incorporated into analysis (refer to Impacts in the Oasis Area on page 3-36 of this document).

F EMFs are an especially difficult issue and conclusive results may not be known for years. Refer to the EMF sections in Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and Recent EMF Research section on page 3-19 of this document for more information.

LETTER #A-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

WE UNDERSTAND AND CONCUR WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SWIP PROJECT.
THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PREFERRED ROUTE IS NOT VALID HOWEVER
AND WE ARE ANIMATELY OPPOSED TO SEGMENTS 200 AND 211 OF ROUTE A.
THERE IS A ROUTE THE LINE COULD FOLLOW THAT WOULD HAVE MUCH LESS
IMPACT TO THE VALLEY AND WE HAVE SHOWN IT ON THE ENCLOSED MAP.

YOUR CONSIDERATION FOR OUR CONCERNS IN THIS MATTER ARE
APPRECIATED.

SINCERELY YOURS,



BOB BARTON
NEVADA LAND & CATTLE CO.

LETTER A-5

LETTER #A-6
COMMENTS

September 8, 1992
236 B Frisbie St
Oakland, CA 94611

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson,

This letter concerns the proposed 500 Volt powerline from Idaho to Las Vegas.

I am appalled at this proposal. Please select the "NO ACTION" alternative to safeguard the PUBLIC lands.

A [No powerline should be built through the unspoiled desert valleys as proposed without dire need. The justification for this project is very weak. "Marketplace" power brokering does not create any new power. Moreover, in this market, existing power transfer capacity is already adequate.

If any new power transfer capacity is needed, it should be added to existing right of ways. Such an incremental change would have far less visual impact than the proposal in question. As a lover of the open spaces of Nevada, I can tell you that these undeveloped valleys are a national treasure. There's just no need to destroy them for higher profits for power companies.

Please protect the nearly pristine viewsheds of the region.

Sincerely,

Fred Beddall
Fred Beddall

RESPONSES

A As stated in the revised Purpose and Need (refer to Chapter 3 of this document), there is a need for greater power transfer capacity because the SWIP would provide the ability to better utilize power resources that are currently available and push into the future the need to construct new generation resources. Open access to the power market means that many utilities would be able to compete for energy supplies. This competition would create market forces that tend to hold down price increases. It would also make it difficult for any utility to "broker" power since all utilities would have more open access to the market.

LETTER A-6

LETTER #A-7
COMMENTS

KARL SIMONSON
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BURLEY DISTRICT OFFICE

SEPTEMBER 15, '92
GRANT J. BLOCHER
6603 WHITNEY ST.
OAKLAND, CA 94609

Dear Mr. Simonson,

A I support the "NO ACTION" alternative to the proposed Southwest Intertie Project. The Environmental Impact Statement on the project does not justify the need for the line. In fact the existing line does not ~~not~~ operate at anything approaching capacity.

Needless to say we don't need any more power lines and towers marching across our dwindling open spaces. Besides this potential blight on the landscape there is a significant risk to the creatures that inhabit the area

RESPONSES

A Please refer to Purpose and Need in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in Chapter 3 of this document. Also refer to page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of how in early 1990 the IPCo discovered that the UNTP would be fully subscribed and would not have the capacity to fulfill the purpose and need of the SWIP. It was in July 1990 that the IPCo decided to expand the project south from the Ely area to Dry Lake.

Your other comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER A-7

LETTER #A-7
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

of the proposed route — the Desert Tortoise, Hawks, eagles and other raptors, to name just a few. ~~Enough~~ is enough!!

The proposed route for the proposed power-line will pass within spitting distance of our new Great Basin National Park, and will have a potentially devastating impact on an estimated 200 to 400 archeological and historical sites! Please say NO to D.A. WATER & POWER! Thanks

Sincerely,
Frank J. Becker

LETTER #A-8
COMMENTS

September 18, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

I am presently leasing pasture from Nevada Land & Cattle Co. in Goshute Valley and live on the Big Springs Ranch. I would like to make the following comments on the SWIP line that is proposed to run right through the ranch.

The proposed transmission line goes right through the pasture that I lease for breeding my heifers. From the information I have read concerning the effects of electric and magnetic fields on livestock, I am very much opposed to the line in this area.

A [The negative visual impacts to not only Big Springs Ranch, but to the whole western side of Goshute Valley would be devastating. In reading your draft EIS on the project it appears to me that you have not even considered the impacts to Big Springs or the people living in the Oasis area.

B [The only live water in this whole valley lies right in proximity to the proposed line. Therefore there is always a concentration of livestock in this area. This would be a problem not only from the possible effects on the livestock, but also in the construction of the line.

RESPONSES

A As stated in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, there will be visual impacts as a result of constructing the SWIP. Visual impacts were assessed from Big Springs Ranch, Oasis, and all other residences along the alternative routes. The Visual Resources section in the Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report documents in more detail the potential visual impacts to this area (refer to Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for the locations where these reports can be reviewed).

B Adverse effects to water resources in the area of the Big Springs Ranch are not expected. The IPCo would work with the Big Springs Ranch to mitigate any effects to the cattle in the area during construction. The transmission line will span about 1/4 mile between towers and would be designed to avoid impacts to water resources (e.g., wetlands, streams, and springs). Overland access to construction sites would be done in this area to avoid adverse impacts.

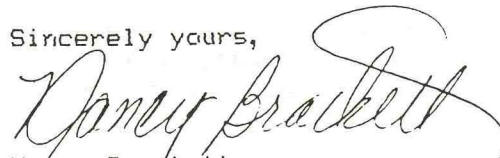
The effects of EMF are inconclusive. Refer to Electric and Magnetic Fields on page 3-72 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and Recent EMF Research in Chapter 3 of this document.

LETTER #A-8
COMMENTS

C The historical value of the West side of Goshute Valley has not been addressed in the draft EIS. The statement on page 3-91 referring to a single ethnohistoric area near Oasis is incorrect inasmuch as the area has many ethnohistoric areas.

In conclusion I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. I am very apposed to the preferred route however and would like to see it on the other side of the valley.

Sincerely yours,


Nancy Brackett

RESPONSES

C The referenced paragraph identifies only one ethnohistoric locality in the vicinity of Oasis, but it is quite large encompassing some 4,000 to 5,000 acres. The paragraph also mentions other archaeological and historic sites recorded in the vicinity. However, the existing site files indicate that relatively few cultural resources have been recorded in this area. As along many segments of the evaluated alternative routes, this may very well reflect the lack of prior survey rather than absence of cultural resources. The sensitivity model developed to deal with these data gaps did not project high sensitivity zones on the west side of Goshute Valley. There will be complete surveys for cultural resources along the selected alternative route prior to construction. All sites discovered during these surveys will be mitigated.

LETTER #A-9
COMMENTS

WILLIAM JAC SHAW
T. SCOTT BROOKE
KENNETH N. CALDWELL

BROOKE & SHAW
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
POST OFFICE BOX 2860
1590 FOURTH STREET
MINDEN, NEVADA 89423

RESPONSES

TELEPHONE
(702) 782-7171
FAX
(702) 782-3081

18 September 1992

CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED



Mr. Carl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley ID 83318

RE: Southwest Inter-tie Project

Dear Mr. Simonson:

This firm represents Nevada Big Springs, Inc. which is the owner of the real property in the vicinity of the Goshute Valley, Nevada, comprising what is commonly known as the Big Springs Ranch. This letter will constitute additional comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Statements and Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS/DPA) issued under cover of June 12, 1992 regarding the Southwest Inter-tie Project (SWIP). Verbal comments were presented at the meeting in Wells, Nevada on 4 August 1992, and such comments are incorporated herein by reference. The property involved is located within the area depicted on Panel 2 of the maps, generally to the north and south of Oasis, which is between Wendover and Wells, Nevada, on Interstate Highway 80.

As you will note, the Big Springs Ranch consists of in excess of one hundred thousand (100,000) acres of alternating sections in the Goshute Range and Goshute Valley, both north and south of Interstate Highway 80, together with allotment rights to various of the interspersed and adjacent sections. The ranch has been historically and consistently used for agricultural purposes, which continue to date and are expected to continue. Additionally,

LETTER #A-9 COMMENTS

since its acquisition in 1989, the current landowner has expended significant resources in a land planning program which is designed to expand the variety of uses and add significant residential and recreational uses to the property.

As you will also note, various of the studied alternate routes and all preferred routes pass directly through and significantly affect the Big Springs Ranch. Accordingly, the landowner has commented, and will comment herein, on the appropriateness of the designation of the alternative routes for study and construction. The landowner's main concerns relate to the process for identifying and selecting alternate study routes, and selecting the preferred route.

1. No reasonable notice was provided.

As stated at the BLM Hearing in Wells on 4 August 1992, the landowner first received actual notice of this entire project only within two (2) weeks of that date from its new ranch tenant. No prior written, verbal or telephonic notice of this process, or the presumed intended condemnation of its land, and subsequent construction of this significant powerline across its land, was ever given. Accordingly, the opportunity for and actual input by this landowner was effectively denied, resulting in the premature and improper rejection of any participation by this landowner.

A The public notice which has been provided to date has clearly been inadequate in light of the lack of receipt of actual notice. Accordingly, it may be concluded that public notice provided was clearly not designed to and did not, give reasonable notice to this landowner of the activities undertaken and proposed.

It appears that the Big Springs Ranch constitutes the majority of the private land affected by this entire project. In light of the certain fact that the project manager or those involved with the project knew of the existence of this large landholding, and knew how actual notice could be given, and knew that no actual notice was given because of the lack of participation, one questions both the intent of effect of the notice procedures. As a result, this landowner has been denied the opportunity to participate and comment regarding selection of alternative study routes, and is relegated to commenting to previously dictated and adopted study routes and alternates.

RESPONSES

A We believe that the notification of the SWIP EIS process was adequate. A public scoping meeting was held in Wells in March 1989, a public planning workshop was held on January 8, 1991 (attended by representatives of Big Springs Ranch), and numerous newsletters were mailed to Big Springs Ranch throughout the over three-year EIS process. All the public meetings were announced in local newspapers and on posters (refer to Chapter 5 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). There were also over 3,000 newsletters sent out announcing these meetings.

The SWIP DEIS/DPA states the preferred alternatives but does not presume to make a decision about condemnation of private lands at this point in the decision process. The landowners have clearly had an opportunity to attend the public meetings and to comment on the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

The public participation process was not designed to exclude participation by private landowners. In addition to the private land owners on the SWIP mailing list, the BLM also notified affected public land users. Private land owners in the area are generally also livestock permittees. By contacting the grazing permittees, many of the private land owners in the area are also contacted. Also, private land ownerships change with no notification to the BLM. The public planning workshop held in Wells on January 8, 1991 were attended by Mr. Bob Barton and Ms. Nancy Brackett of Big Springs Ranch. Numerous newsletters were mailed to Big Springs Ranch throughout the over three-year EIS process. Refer to Chapter 5 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of the public involvement process.

Your comment suggests that notification came from a new ranch tenant two weeks prior to the meeting in Wells on August 4, 1992. Mr. Bob Barton has leased the public lands since June 1, 1990. There is no information in the BLM's grazing case file to cause notification of anyone other than Mr. Barton of actions affecting the public lands within the allotment.

Refer to Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion about the planning process to identify alternative routes. This planning process occurred over a several year period and numerous newsletters were sent to a mailing list of over 3,000 individuals, agencies, and organizations in order to gain public input, including input from the Big Springs Ranch. Alternative routes were discussed with the public during a series of public workshops in early 1991, as indicated above, and representatives of Big Springs Ranch did express concern for Link 211 at the Wells workshop on January 8, 1992.

LETTER #A-9
COMMENTS

A1 Due process requires more.

2. The selection of alternative routes was flawed.

In addition to the lack of notice which prevented participation in the selection of the study and alternate routes, it is clear that inadequate routing was studied regarding the Goshute Valley. Routes A, C, F and G all follow the same path, and will unnecessarily and improperly affect private property within the area, including the residents and landowners of Oasis, including this landowner, along its entire length. No satisfactory criteria or facts demonstrate the reasonableness of the selection of this route as the only study route through the Goshute Valley.

B As noted above, the Big Springs Ranch and the nearby community of Oasis comprise the overwhelming majority of the private land affected by the entire project. Common sense would dictate that private lands and populated areas and lands planned for future residential use would be avoided, and further, that a disruption of this magnitude would be limited to one side of the valley or the other. Instead, all studied routes seem specifically designed to impact as much private property and existing and future residential development as possible, while at the same time adversely impacting the scenic, visual and aesthetic resources of the valley, and all property within the valley by essentially bisecting the valley. The only apparent justification for this is that regarding a visual effect on motorists, but there is no distinction or justification made for creating this effect in the study routes, as opposed to any other potential areas.

Attached hereto as Exhibit 1 is a map showing the Big Springs Ranch holdings, and with an overlay indicating the preferred alternative route. As you will note by a review of the panel 2-jurisdiction map, in comparison with the map denoted panel 2-alternative routes, and by review of Exhibit 1 hereto, the preferred routes affect over fifteen (15) sections of land owned by this landowner. This route would require the condemnation in excess of fifteen (15) miles of private land owned by this landowner, and would also adversely affect the thousands of acres adjacent to this route owned by this landowner.

C These facts, opinions and effects are highlighted by the almost unanimous public comment received at the meeting in Wells on

RESPONSES

During the preparation of the SWIP DEIS/DPA there was no indication from Big Springs Ranch or Elko County that there were any development plans for this area. Link 211 was concluded to be the environmentally preferred route through this area. Conceptual development plans were received from CSY Development on October 7, 1992. The letter accompanying the concept plans stated a preference for Link 223 along the rail corridor and centered on the BLM's planning corridor. Links 221 and 223 now replace Link 211 in the Agency Preferred Alternative in this document (refer to Chapter 1 of this document).

B An extensive regional study was completed for this entire area and was coupled with the BLM's corridor studies completed during their Resource Management Plan process to plan a set of "reasonable and feasible" alternative routes. The regional study and alternative routes developed during this study were presented to the public during the scoping meetings in March 1989. Refer to Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a further discussion of the scoping process.

Private lands were not intentionally impacted by the routing alternatives. In fact, during the scoping process the public stated a preference for use of public lands over private lands for routing of alternatives. Private lands and environmental issues were both considered during development and refinement of the alternatives.

Visual impacts were adequately addressed and they do not overemphasize visual impacts of motorists using Interstate 80. Residences were considered the highest sensitivity viewpoints because of the long duration of views, while travelers on Interstate 80 received a moderate visual sensitivity rating. This was part of the criteria used in assessing visual impacts (refer to Table VR-7 of Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report). Refer to Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for locations where the technical reports can be reviewed.

C Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER #A-9
COMMENTS

C 7 August 1992, as well as the position taken by the Elko County Board of Supervisors at its meeting of 2 September, 1992. We trust that their written comments regarding this action have been duly received.

The map attached hereto as Exhibit "1" designates two (2) additional alternative routes which the area landowners and the county seek to have reviewed and studied. Both would generally relocate the proposed preferred route to the easterly side of the Goshute Valley, and along the existing transportation corridor within which the Northern Nevada Railroad is located. Alternative 2 would head easterly at a more northerly point, and result in less impact to Big Springs Ranch land in the Squaw Creek area.

This landowner, as well as all landowners in the area and Elko County, urges that these alternative routes be studied, and if found to be equal or superior in minimizing adverse impact, that one be adopted as the preferred route in this area.

3. The preferred route does not adequately address future impacts.

D Review of the DEIS/DPA clearly shows that the alternative routes were established based upon only existing land use, and that all design, study and review essentially ignored likely potential or future land uses. This is improper, since the overall use and value of the property owned by the landowner which will be affected by this project will be significantly reduced because of future impacts and the restriction on future use.

While we recognize that the diminution in value is a part of the compensation which must be paid in the event of condemnation, this is a separate issue from the impropriety of ignoring future use and effects in evaluating alternative routes for study and alternative routes for preference.

4. Summary.

The landowner of the Big Springs Ranch, the landowners in the adjoining community of Oasis, and Elko County have all commented and requested that an additional alternate route study be undertaken in the area of the Big Springs Ranch and Oasis. This consists of virtually all parties in the area who have an interest.

RESPONSES

D Future land uses were considered in the planning process. The BLM was not aware of the planned development until the public meeting in Wells on August 7, 1992. The BLM would have included the development plans in the impact assessment had they been made public or been on file with Elko County. The BLM's data collection at Elko County and the BLM Elko District never turned up any evidence of this development.

The future planned developments by Northern Holdings and CSY Development have now been considered (refer to Impacts to the Oasis Area in Chapter 3 of this document).

LETTER #A-9
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

It is requested that the BLM authorize proper and thorough review of one or both of the alternate routes depicted on Exhibit 1. In the event of the adoption of one of such routes as the preferred route in the area, Nevada Big Springs, Inc. would not oppose the construction of the project.

We hope that you will take these comments into account in reviewing the DEIS/DPA. In particular, we hope that you will see fit to include additional studies along one or both of the routes suggested in Exhibit A, as a substitute for the preferred routes through the Goshute Valley.

Sincerely,

BROOKE & SHAW

By

T. Scott Brooke
T. Scott Brooke *mod.*

TSB:aj
Enclosure

LETTER A-9

LETTER #A-10
COMMENTS

Aug. 28, 1992

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Please act to prevent the "Southwest Isotermic Project." No powerlines should be routed down our fast disappearing natural valleys & there is no need justification shown for such a line.

A Rather, already built-upon right-of-ways should be utilized to meet any future or demonstrated need for additional power lines. The BLM should be defending our open public lands against new encroachment.

B The flora & fauna of the area in question, are in need of the protection for which BLM exists. In addition to the flora & fauna in the area, Great Basin National Park & the invaluable archaeological & historical sites in the direct path of the proposed powerlines would be negatively impacted.

RESPONSES

A The SWIP will require a new right-of-way specific to a 500kV transmission line. It is not possible to utilize existing rights-of-way that were granted for other uses. These existing or designated corridors have other utilities in them and may be considered "already built upon rights-of way". The SWIP routing alternatives utilized designated or planning corridors whenever feasible in meeting the project needs.

The SWIP would require a 200-foot wide right-of-way which may or may not overlay other rights-of-way that may be within a designated corridor (also refer to Right-of-Way on page 3-19 of this document).

B Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER #A-10
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Again, I implore you to prevent this tragic
loss of a valuable public trust in your
hands.

Sincerely yours
Millie Buckner

Millie Buckner
2818 Truman Ave
Oakland, Calif. 94605

LETTER A-11

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Dear Mr. Simanson,

I support the "No Action" alternative. - Roslyn Bullas

1885 Alcatraz Ave - Berkeley CA

2064 ORGAN PIPE CACTUS—ORGAN PIPE NATIONAL MONUMENT WAS ESTABLISHED
IN 1937 ITS LARGE AREA IN SOUTHERN ARIZONA PROTECTS SOME OF
THE MOST SPECTACULAR SONORAN DESERT SCENERY IN NORTH AMERICA
PHOTOGRAPHER—DAVID MUENCH

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LAPACE



Karl Simonson
BLM
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

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PHOTO U S A

LETTER #A-12
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

959-B Nol St.
San Francisco, CA.
94114

Karl Simonson
BLM Burley Dist. Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Southwest Intertie powerline project. This project would create massive impacts on open valleys in eastern Nevada. The visual impact would be tremendous. There is also potential for significant impact on desert tortoise populations, especially in the Pahrump Valley area, and on hawks, eagles and other raptors that would be killed by the power lines. Additional concerns are the proximity of the proposed route to the Great Basin National Park, as well as potential impacts on the many archeological and historic sites in the path of the powerlines.

A All of your concerns are addressed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process. One of the criteria used in the selection of the environmentally preferred route and the Agency Preferred Alternative was paralleling existing rights-of-way.

LETTER #A-12
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

The No action alternative is the best. If the project must be built (I am not convinced that it is necessary), it would be better to follow existing right-of-way which have already been built upon, rather than to spoil pristine open valleys.

Thank you for your attention. I would appreciate a response.

Sincerely,

David Bunch

LETTER #A-13
COMMENTS

September 12, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson,

I am writing to support the "No Action" alternative to the proposed construction of a 500 Volt powerline from Idaho to Las Vegas. No powerline should be routed down our fast disappearing natural valleys, nor has any justification been presented in the EIS showing a compelling need for the line. In fact this is a redundant line competing with another Utah to Las Vegas powerline such that, with two, neither could run anywhere near capacity. When more capacity is really needed, it can readily be added to the existing routes in Utah, thus preserving our public open-valleys for our own and future generations' enjoyment. The impact on a new area is far greater than expanding an already built-upon right-of-way. The BLM should be defending open public lands rather than assisting in their destruction.

- A [The negative environmental, historical, and social consequences of this proposal are immense. To mention a few, the visual impact to now-open valleys would be disastrous. Ravens are attracted to perch on power lines and feed on young desert tortoise, thus adding to the precarious struggle of this already threatened species. The powerline runs the same north-south route taken by one of the largest hawk migrations in North America. Every year numbers of hawks and eagles are killed by high voltage power. The route runs over Sacramento Pass through Great Basin National Park, creating a huge visual disaster in this popular scenic area. Directly in the path of the powerlines are an estimated 200 to 400 archaeological and historical resource sites which will be destroyed.
- B [
- C [
- D [

RESPONSES

- A Please refer to the expanded Purpose and Need on page 3-1 of this document.
- B There would be impacts to desert tortoise, although mitigation measures applied during construction should be very effective in reducing or eliminating these adverse effects. The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is a subject of ongoing study. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. The BLM believes it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

Given the structural configuration of 500kV transmission lines, the BLM feels that the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission towers proposed for the SWIP will utilize V-guyed steel lattice towers, self-supporting steel lattice towers, and tubular steel H-frames. The spacing between conductors on these structures is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. Conductors are hung on the towers at approximately 23 to 32 feet apart. Further, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (refer to pages 2-12 through 2-14 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Because of the distance between conductors and the towers, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower.

The BLM acknowledges that numbers of raptors are killed each year in the United States as a result of electrocution. Most such incidents occur, however, on lower voltage distribution lines.

Refer to Avian Collision Hazards on page 3-89 in this document.

- C The SWIP would not pass through Great Basin National Park. It would pass approximately two miles north of Great Basin National Park. To further minimize visual impacts to travel routes leading into the park, several minor

LETTER #A-13
COMMENTS

E [Clearly, there is no compelling need nor moral justification for the proposed powerline; and there are many very compelling reasons to take no action.

Sincerely,



Kate Caldwell
408 North Street
Oakland, CA 94609

RESPONSES

reroutes through Sacramento Pass have been evaluated (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document).

No significant visual impacts to viewpoints in the Great Basin National Park would occur because of the distance of the alternative routes from these viewpoints. Non-specular conductors and steel H-frame towers across the highway would minimize other adverse visual effects of the SWIP.

D The SWIP DEIS/DPA indicates on page 4-86 that 200 to 400 archaeological and historical sites may be present along the selected route; it does not mean they will be destroyed. There is substantial flexibility in the design of transmission lines and associated access roads. If the project is approved, detailed surveys will be conducted to locate sites and assist project engineers to avoid and preserve most cultural resources in place. Measures to mitigate impacts on other sites will be developed in consultation with appropriate regulatory agencies.

E Please refer to the expanded Purpose and Need on page 3-1 of this document.

LETTER #A-14
COMMENTS

Dear Karl Simonson,

This letter is regarding the powerlines that are to be put across untouched land in Nevada.

I don't think this has any purpose, since the only thing that can happen from it, is destruction. You can use the already built-upon right-of-ways rather than any designation of new right-of-ways. The impact on a new area is FAR greater than expanding an already built-upon right-of-way. When more capacity is really needed, let it be added to the existing routes in Utah.

A [The impact on wildlife would be outstanding. Powerlines are a favorite spot for ravens to perch while seeking out young desert tortoise as prey. They are an endangered species. Please don't make them become extinct. Also the impact on hawks and raptors. The powerline will run the same north-south route taken by one of the largest hawk migrations in North America. Every year numbers of hawks and eagles are killed by high voltage power.

RESPONSES

A There would be impacts to desert tortoise, although mitigation measures taken during construction should be very effective in reducing or eliminating these adverse effects. The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is a subject of ongoing study. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations can not be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. The BLM believes it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

Given the structural configuration of 500kV transmission lines, the BLM feels that the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission towers proposed for the SWIP will utilize V-guyed steel lattice, self-supporting steel lattice, and tubular steel H-frame towers. The spacing between conductors and towers is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. Conductors are hung on the towers at approximately 23 to 32 feet apart. Further, conductors are hung on insulating systems that would be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (refer to pages 2-12 through 2-14 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Because of the distance between conductors and towers, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower.

The BLM acknowledges that numbers of raptors are killed each year in the United States as a result of electrocution. However, most of these incidents occur on lower voltage distribution lines.

Refer to Avian Collision Hazards on page 3-89 of this document.

LETTER #A-14
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

There is estimated 200 to 400 archaeological and historical resource sites in the direct path of the powerlines. An estimated 50 to 125 of these are expected to have "significant value". Please do not destroy our precious resources. Without them we cannot live. I think we need to preserve natural habitat, don't you?

I would love to go somewhere and not have to look at a huge, ugly metal thing, when I could be looking at beautiful mountains.

B [I support the "NO ACTION" alternative. No powerlines should be routed down our fast disappearing natural valleys. No justification is presented in the report which shows a compelling need for the line. In fact it is a redundant line to compete with another Utah to Las Vegas powerline.

Please understand what is going to happen if this powerline does. I love this land, and I hate to see man being so selfish with it. After all, we couldn't survive without it.

Sincerely,

Michelle Carfagno

B Please refer to the expanded Purpose and Need section on page 3-1 of this document.

LETTER #A-15
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Brenda S. Constance
5817 Rae Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89108

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Brenda S. Constance

LETTER A-15

LETTER #A-16
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Joseph E. Constance, Jr.
5817 Rae Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89108

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Constance, Jr.

LETTER A-16

LETTER #A-17
COMMENTS

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Borley District Office

To Whom It May Concern:

A I am writing in regard to the Southwest Intertie Project. I urge you to support the "No Action" alternative to this project. No compelling economic justification was presented in the EIS to warrant such a huge powerline across such a vast expanse of wild lands. Nevada is one of the few states in the union that still has any wild, untouched valleys. It is crazy ~~to~~ to route big (probably unnecessary) powerlines across our few remaining pristine valleys rather than having them parallel existing roads and powerlines. "Visual impact" guidelines should be applied at least as strictly to unspoiled areas as they are to truck routes! And it is a visual insult to run a huge power corridor in the immediate viewshed of Great Basin National Park.

B

RESPONSES

A Refer to the expanded Purpose and Need on page 3-1 of this document.

B Routing alternatives favored designated utility corridors where there were already utilities rather than favoring pristine valleys. In fact the impact models favor areas that have been previously disturbed (e.g., existing roads, transmission facilities).

Travel routes with a large percentage of truck traffic and origin-destination travel were considered moderate sensitivity viewpoints, while viewpoints such as residences, trails, and scenic routes were considered high sensitivity. The Great Basin National Park is considered nationally and regionally significant. The potential impacts to viewpoints within the park and the highway approaches to the park have been considered in the impact assessment and comparison of alternative routes. Several mitigation reroute alternatives were analyzed in the Sacramento Pass area (refer to page 3-39 of this document).

LETTER #A-17
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

The adverse environmental effects of these proposed powerlines is undisputable, particularly on the desert tortoise habitat in ~~the~~ Pahranaagat Wash and on the major raptor migration corridor in the Goshutes.

Sincerely,
Ingrid Crickmore (friend and frequent
1290 Hopkins #37 visitor of the Nevada
Berkeley, CA 94702 wilderness)

P.S. I find the involvement of the LADWP in this project highly suspicious!

LETTER #A-18
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Kurt E. Criss
1722 Crestwood Dr. A
Elko, Nevada 89801

September 18, 1992

Bureau of Land Management
US Department of the Interior
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Re: Comments on Draft EIS of the Southwest Intertie Project

Dear Gentlemen and Ladies:

After review of the Draft EIS on the proposed Southwest Intertie Project, I offer a few comments regarding its accuracy. My particular concern is the crosstie project's routing and potential impact to the Great Basin National Park (GBNP) and surrounding area.

A [The agency and utility preferred crosstie routing, the 230kV Corridor Route, will undoubtedly visually impact sensitive existing and proposed viewpoints as it passes immediately north of the GBNP. Quantifying such an impact is difficult. In furnishing readers with information to make such a judgement, an EIS should provide accurate and thorough data for review. It does not appear that this draft EIS provides either.

LETTER A-18 B [Photo simulations providing a basis for quantifying the project's visual impact to the GBNP when viewed from Highway 50 are taken from a vantage point which conveniently hides a very significant visual resource, Wheeler Peak. Had this photo been taken from a slightly different perspective, Bald Mountain and Buck Mountain would not have obstructed Wheeler Peak. This particular camera angle does not give a reader the true picture by which to judge the visual sensitivity of this resource.

The SWIP DEIS/DPA adequately addresses the visual impacts to Great Basin National Park. The visual studies showed that from the viewpoints identified by the NPS (located outside the study corridors), impacts would be low and at extended viewing distances from the park viewpoints. The SWIP DEIS/DPA needs only to summarize the significant issues and impacts. A complete description of the visual analysis can be found in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for locations where this technical report can be reviewed).

B The photo simulations provided in the SWIP DEIS/DPA depict the alternative SWIP routes quite accurately. Simulation viewpoints were selected to show typical views. The Highway 6/50 simulation you refer to was selected because it is the approximate location for a proposed interpretive facility in Great Basin National Park's Draft General Management Plan. Additional simulations were prepared to analyze the Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute (refer to Figures 3-13 to 3-19 in Chapter 3 of this document).

LETTER #A-18
COMMENTS

C [Further, no photos are included to simulate visual impacts to viewers within the GBNP looking north and northeast to gain an understanding of the basin and range terrain. It is my understanding that officials of the GBNP plan to develop northerly viewpoints and a new tourist center to educate visitors about this distinctive geology. Certainly a simulation or assessment should be included which depicts the impact of a power line that would span a viewers entire peripheral vision.

I must close by pointing out that I am not opposed to projects of this type which benefit both the public and industry; however, I believe routing of the transmission line should not unduly impact a resource as significant as the Great Basin National Park. Selection of the proposed Cutoff Route would mitigate these visual impacts - it is the environmentally preferred routing.

Sincerely,



Kurt E. Criss

RESPONSES

C A simulation looking north or northeast from Great Basin National Park viewpoints was not completed because the towers generated by computer-generated perspectives were too small to be accurately painted into a simulation. Based on the modeling done for the simulation, the 230kV Corridor Route would have been barely perceptible, if seen at all. Concern for visual impacts to views from the park were primarily under specific lighting conditions where towers or conductors may cause sunlight to reflect. This could create visibility conditions greatly exaggerated over that of normal lighting conditions. To mitigate these special lighting effects the use of non-specular conductors has been specified.

LETTER #A-19
COMMENTS

SEP 5, 1992

RESPONSES

A The SWIP would require a new right-of-way specific for a 500kV transmission line. It is not possible to utilize existing rights-of-way that were granted for other uses. These existing or designated corridors have other utilities in them and may be considered "already built upon rights-of way". The SWIP routing alternatives utilized designated or planning corridors whenever feasible in meeting the project needs (refer to Chapter 1 of this document).

There would be visual impacts to the open valleys that the SWIP may cross. These impacts are disclosed and documented in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 4-35 through 4-45.

B The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is evolving. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers or raven predation. We believe it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

C The potential deleterious effect of electrical transmission lines on raptor migration, suspected or otherwise, has never been documented in the scientific literature to the BLM's knowledge. There is no question that raptors occasionally collide with transmission lines. The reasoned opinions, however, suggest that raptors, as a group, are possessed of such keen eyesight and finely-tuned flying skills, that such collisions usually occur during the pursuit of aerial prey or in defense of territory. Collisions with man-made structures are a very minor aspect of raptor population mortality. Refer to Avian Collision Hazards on page 3-89 of this document.

Raptors do not migrate at night (as do most songbirds), nor do they migrate in flocks (as do most shorebirds and waterfowl). Consequently, the BLM has difficulty envisioning a situation in which a large, highly visible electrical transmission system, occupying a very, very, small percentage of the total landscape could interfere with migration patterns of raptors.

Dear Mr. Simonson,
I'm writing with great concern regarding the Southwest Intertie Project. I want you to know that I support "NO ACTION" Alternative to the power line. Already existing right-of-ways are sufficient, I believe, to make unnecessary the designation of new right-of-ways. Considering the large visual impact of (right-of-way) power lines through the valleys indicates the great loss to the beauty of the proposed "Non Built up valley right-of-ways. Wildlife experts have also suggested the detrimental impact of these lines upon young tortoises (see Pahrumpat wash area, for an example). Further the lines are suspected of having a deleterious effect upon raptor migrations. As a camper/hiker, I shudder at the thought of encroachments upon the natural well-being of Great Basin Nat'l. park. As an archaeologist, I know that

LETTER A-19

LETTER #A-19
COMMENTS

D Construction of the lines could permanently destroy a significant number of archaeological sites. These are losses which could never be reversed!

It is my belief that the role of the BLM should be that of conservator of our nation's natural heritage. As such, I

urge you to do all that is in your power to halt (support "no action") on the proposed line. I would appreciate

receiving information as to the position which your office is advocating on this matter.

Thank you. Sincerely,

Brandon Fine

Brandon Fine
1050 2800 Carolina Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

RESPONSES

D The SWIP DEIS/DPA acknowledges that a number of cultural resources are likely to be adversely affected by construction of the SWIP, but also documents that planning studies have considered and avoided the most significant known cultural resources in the region. A programmatic agreement (refer to Appendix CR-12 in the Volume IV - Cultural Environment Technical Report) has been executed to ensure that continued data collection and regulatory review result in appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures if the project is approved and detailed design work is undertaken. For example, after the centerline is surveyed, a cultural resource inventory along the right-of-way would be made and appropriate mitigation made prior to any ground disturbing activities. These procedures will minimize impacts and ensure that important archaeological data are retrieved prior to construction.

LETTER #A-20
COMMENTS

P.O. Bx 140
Baker, NV 89311
September 17, 1992

Karl Simonson, District Mgr.
Burley District Office, BLM
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

Re: Crosstie Route, SW Intertie Project

Dear Mr. Simonson,

I'm from Baker, Nevada. You don't have to be a prophet to know I'm going to object to your choice of the 230kV Corridor Route.

But I won't waste your time recapping the arguments against your route choice. You've probably heard them all. I'd just like to ask you a couple of questions.

Have you ever had to make decisions regarding the welfare of your kids or grandkids? Did you make a different decision than you might for yourself or another adult?

I suggest that's what we have here, and it's the only important reason for the Cutoff Route being a better choice than the Corridor Route. Expedient decisions work fine when you're thinking a year or two, not so fine when you're thinking a generation or two.

Hundreds of thousands of visitors over the next half dozen decades will see our Great Basin valley dissected by something that from the Snake Range will look like surgery staples, marching across the belly of the valley. Unlike surgery staples, these staples won't be coming out.

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER A-20

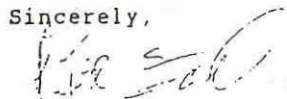
LETTER #A-20
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Then there will be the kids that will live under this 500 kV line. There will be several hundred of them over the life of this line. Will these kids suffer biological ramifications? The jury's out, I know. I also know there would be no "jury" unless some fine professional scientists believed that the initial evidence indicates cause for alarm. Yet you are apparently willing to mortgage these kids future to save yourself some hassle.

My point is made, Mr. Simonson: you're choosing today at the expense of tomorrow. Detroit did that, as did the S & L's. Maybe you'll be luckier.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter Ford', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Peter Ford

LETTER #A-21
COMMENTS

Ruth M. Fricker
905 West Middlefield #944
Mountain View, CA 94043

September 7, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson,

As a member of Desert Survivors I have been informed of the proposed construction of a 500 Volt powerline from Idaho to Las Vegas. Our group has reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement and was astounded at the HUGE impact. It appears to be unclear whether there is any real economic justification for this powerline. Issues that concern me are listed below:

- A [-Please support the NO ACTION Alternative. I understand there is already a Utah to Las Vegas powerline that would be redundant to this proposed line.
- B [-Support the use of existing already built-upon right-of-ways rather than any new right-of-ways. The impact is upon a new area is far greater than the impact created by expanding upon an already existing right-of-way.
- B [-There would be an incredible visual impact to now open valleys. The BLM should be defending the open public lands against new encroachments, not assisting their destruction.
- C [-There would be a significant desert tortoise impact where power lines and highways compete for space with wildlife. Powerlines allow predators to perch and find young tortoises as prey.
- D [-There would be a significant hawk and raptor impact where power lines run along the migration route. Every year many raptors are killed by high voltage power.

RESPONSES

A Page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA discusses the reason that the SWIP was expanded south of the Ely area to the Las Vegas area. It states that in early 1990, it was determined that the UNTP was fully subscribed and would not have the capacity to allow access to marketplace (the Las Vegas area) for the SWIP. In June 1990 the SWIP was expanded from the Ely area to Dry Lake.

The SWIP is not redundant to any other project. The existing line between Utah and Las Vegas, Sigurd to Harry Allen 345kV line, is limited to a maximum of 300 MW, significantly below the 1200 MW capability of SWIP.

B The SWIP will require a new right-of-way specific for a 500kV transmission line. It is not possible to utilize existing rights-of-way that were granted for other uses. These existing or designated corridors have other utilities in them and may be considered "already built upon rights-of way". The SWIP routing alternatives used designated or planning corridors whenever feasible in meeting the project needs.

The BLM agrees there would be significant visual impacts to some of the scenic areas of public lands.

C The BLM agrees that there would be impacts to desert tortoise, although mitigation measures taken during construction should be very effective in reducing or eliminating these adverse effects. The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is a subject of ongoing study. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. The BLM believes it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

D Given the structural configuration of 500kV electrical transmission lines, the BLM feels that the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission systems proposed for the SWIP will utilize tubular steel H-frame and/or steel lattice towers. Spacing of conductors on such structures is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground

LETTER A-21

LETTER #A-21
COMMENTS

- EC -There would be an impact on the Great Basin National Park.
F -There are an estimated 200 to 400 archaeological and historical resource sites in the direct route of the powerlines.

As we humans over-populate the earth, let's try to leave some room for the other creatures.

Sincerely,



RESPONSES

contact. In order to achieve this safety measure, conductors are hung on the supporting structure in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart. Moreover, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (See SWIP DEIS/DPA pp. 2-12 through 2-14). Because of the distance of conductors from the support structure, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower.

The BLM acknowledges that numbers of raptors are killed each year in the United States as a result of electrocution. Most of these incidents occur, however, on lower voltage distribution lines.

Refer to Avian Collision Hazard in the Biological Resources section of Chapter 3 of this document.

- E The BLM agrees that there would be visual impacts to the routes leading to Great Basin National Park and to a lesser degree from some of the park's viewpoints. However, because of the distance of all of the alternative routes from the park and the commitment to utilize non-specular materials in the construction, visual impacts would not be significant.
- F If one of the routes is approved by the BLM, there will be a cultural survey completed for any potentially disturbed areas (e.g., rights-of-way, access routes, assembly yards). Cultural resource impacts will be mitigated.

LETTER #A-22
COMMENTS

Karl Simonson
BLM, Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

September 3, 1992

Re: Comments on DEIS for SWIP

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Congratulations on a well-designed, readable and thorough Draft EIS on the Southwest Intertie Project.

In the matter of the Crosstie route, unfortunately, the document is seriously flawed. The choice by your agency and by LADWP of the 230kV Corridor Route, rather than the environmentally preferred Cutoff Route, is hard to understand and certainly unconscionable.

The overriding rationale cited for this choice is the FLPMA policy of consolidating corridors where possible. That is of course a correct policy, but the "where possible" provision surely is included for precisely the situation at hand. Surely any general policy must be applied only when it makes sense.

In this case consolidation of corridors does not compute. The environmental havoc created by a 500kV line is of an entirely different order of magnitude than the damage associated with the present 230kV installation.

The 230kV lines were subject to a far less careful environmental scrutiny, and were built before the establishment of Great Basin National Park. The wooden poles are relatively inconspicuous, and from a great distance blend with the terrain in a way that would be totally impossible for the proposed steel towers.

In 1986, largely because of the relatively pristine nature of the Snake Range and its adjacent valleys, the decades-long effort to establish a national park in the Great Basin culminated in the choice of this site. The federal legislation establishing the Park specifies that both basin and range be embraced by the Park's interpretive and educational efforts.

The viewshed from the Park is oriented to Snake Valley, and an integral part of the unique beauty of this place is just that prospect: a fifty-mile view to the east across the unspoiled basin to the mountain ranges beyond, and to the north from the valley depths to the 12,000' heights of Mt. Moriah.

RESPONSES

A The BLM believes that it does make sense to construct the SWIP within the existing corridor. The surface disturbance and potential environmental impacts of constructing and operating a 500kV transmission line are not significantly different from a 230kV system, with the exception of greater visual impacts.

The 230kV lines likely did undergo less public and agency scrutiny when they were permitted and constructed than they would if they were proposed today. However, given the connection points and purpose and need for the 230kV lines, their siting was proper. The 230kV system would likely have been permitted where it is even if the Great Basin National Park had existed at that time because the visual impacts to viewpoints within Great Basin National Park from these lines are almost imperceptible.

Generally, wood-pole structures tend to be more acceptable visually in the landscape, especially in near (foreground) views. However, steel lattice towers tend to blend in better at a distance, whereas, wood towers tend to be more visible from a greater distance.

B Because of the distance of the proposed transmission lines from the viewpoints in Great Basin National Park, the Ely to Delta segment built on the 230kV Corridor Route would not have significant visual impacts on views. There would, however, be visual impacts to traveler's views from the U.S. Highway 6/50 approaching the park. Several alternative crossings of U.S. Highway 6/50 have been evaluated to minimize visual impacts to highway travelers and to avoid private lands (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document).

There would also be visual impacts to views from dispersed areas within the Marble Canyon WSA and Mt. Moriah Wilderness area if the Cutoff Route is selected.

LETTER A-22

LETTER #A-22
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

B The steel towers of the proposed 500kV line would be clearly visible to every one of the 70,000 annual visitors, both from the Park and from their approach on highway 50 through the exquisite Sacramento Pass. The quality of the present experience would be fundamentally changed.

This concern would seem to be legitimated by the agency's own admission on page 2-48 relating to Marble Canyon and Mt. Moriah Wilderness areas: "BLM is concerned about the visual effects (of the Cutoff Route) from dispersed areas within both of these areas."

C Furthermore, in Snake Valley the 230kV lines cross very near to several ranch homes where small children live, and each of these families wishes daily that the power lines were not so close. This is because of the physical discomfort experienced at close range, together with the unsettling scientific reports of biological damage possibly caused by high voltage installations (as well as the considerable inconvenience of farming around the poles).

As you undoubtedly know, people in Nevada and Utah are not readily mollified by government and industry assurances that possible health risks from technology are "unproven". As your Draft EIS itself suggests, the jury is still out on this one.

Needless to say, the families already severely impacted by the present 230kV installation are unalterably opposed to the imposition of the proposed 500kV project. They take no comfort in an unintelligent adherence to FLPMA policy, which would disregard their rights on the basis that their homes are already somewhat spoiled.

Fortunately, in response to some of these considerations which were voiced during the scoping process, an alternative route for the Crosstie was worked out, and designated as the environmentally preferred Crosstie route. Not only does the Cutoff Route avoid major visual damage to the National Park; it is preferable for most other human and environmental reasons, too.

C EMF is an especially difficult issue for which there may be no conclusive results for many years. Please refer to the EMF discussions in Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and to Recent EMF Research in Chapter 3 of this document for more information.

It is true that the Ely to Delta segment would cause visual and land use impacts from its construction and operation. However, impacts to the agricultural lands along the existing 230kV lines in this area would be avoided by the 230kV Corridor Route (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute in Chapter 3 of this document).

LETTER #A-22
COMMENTS

In this regard specifically, the Draft EIS is self-contradictory:

- D [1) The statement on page 2-56 that the LADWP preference for the 230kV Corridor Route "reflects LADWP's commitment to minimize environmental impacts whenever possible even at reasonable increased project costs" is pure doublespeak.
- E [2) So also is the agency assertion on page 2-58 that the "230kV Corridor Route and the Cutoff Route have similar environmental impacts." The latter route affects neither the private landholders referred to above, nor the 70,000 National Park visitors.

Thanks again for a mostly admirable Draft EIS. I trust that the Final EIS will be amended to favor either the Cutoff Route or better yet, since no need for the Crosstie is demonstrated, no action at all. Obviously, any environmental degradation around Great Basin National Park can have real economic consequences for this whole geographic area.

Yours truly,

To Anne Garrett
Jo Anne Garrett

Post Office Box 130
Baker, Nevada 89311

RESPONSES

- D The LADWP's preference for the 230kV Corridor Route is largely because of their preference to interconnect at the Robinson Summit substation site and in response to FLPMA's mandate to consolidate utilities "In order to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way..." Although, other routes (e.g., the Direct Route) are shorter and would be less costly, the LADWP would use the longer 230kV Corridor Route to avoid public environmental concerns (e.g., not impacting undisturbed valleys). Further, the 230kV Corridor Route would result in the least cumulative effects for connecting to the Robinson Summit substation site (refer to Scenario 3 on page 3-13 of Chapter 3 of this document).
- E Although the specific impacts between the Cutoff Route and the 230kV Corridor Route are different, the impact comparisons and tradeoffs make these two alternative routes difficult to distinguish. In any environmental comparison it is necessary to compare impacts that are dissimilar. The BLM has provided an additional discussion of environmental preference under Cumulative Effects in Chapter 3 of this document. The future foreseeable utility "buildout" (i.e., cumulative effects) in the Ely area has helped distinguish an environmental preference between these two alternative routes.

LETTER #A-23
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Damun Gracenin, Ph.D.

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process. Refer to the expanded Purpose and Need section in Chapter 3 of this document.

508 Clayton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

September 14, 1992

re: Southwest Intertie Project EIS

Dear Sir:

Just say no to the powerline they want to route across some of my favorite parts of this earth. Please expand existing right-of-ways to carry power from Idaho to Las Vegas.

The new proposed corridor would uglify some very pretty country. You folks should be defending unspoiled land rather than assisting in its destruction.

Maybe you don't care about setting the young Desert Tortoise up for Ravens who like to perch on power lines, or about impeding the migration of large birds of prey. Perhaps it means little to you that the proposed power-line corridor will have a bad impact on 200 to 400 archeological and historical resource sites, or that it will disfigure Great Basin National Park. Maybe all you care about is money. There is no

LETTER #A-23
COMMENTS

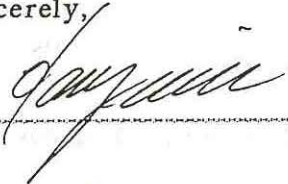
RESPONSES

economic justification for the powerline. Las Vegas does not, and will not, need that kind of extra power capacity in spite of rapid growth out towards its radio-active boundaries to the north and into the urban decay at its center.

I support the "No Action" alternative.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. J. Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Educational Consultant
415-431-2109

LETTER #A-24
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

253 Marjanita Dr. A
Orinda Ca. 94563

Sept 8, 1992

B L M

Burley District Office

Burley Idaho 83318.

Dear Mr. Simonson;

I am writing to comment on the proposed powerline across eastern Nevada. I realize I am considered an interfering Californian, but open BLM lands belong to us all, and this area across the mountain ranges and open valleys of Nevada that I love and consider as a precious last open unspoiled area of this vast country belongs to me as well as Nevada.

I have not heard any reasoned arguments why this powerline is justified. Why is it needed? Are we really running out of power, or or we

The primary need for the SWIP is to postpone construction of additional generation facilities within the WSCC region by providing the capability to take advantage of seasonal diversity between regions and regional economy power sales. Please refer to the Purpose and Need for the SWIP in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and an expanded Purpose and Need section in Chapter 3 of this document.

LETTER A-24

LETTER #A-24
COMMENTS

A planning for some future population
explosions in these areas (Las Vegas?)?

If there is a need, then I strongly
support the routing of the lines over
existing right of ways or built-already
areas. Let it be added to existing routes. Do
not damage a pristine valley. These
areas are homes and migration routes
for many birds and tortoises and
any disturbance to these fragile habitats
can endanger their survival, as we
are recently learning throughout the
world.

B No lines should purposely be
placed within the scenic outer regions
of Great Basin National Park. Just
because it's outside the Park boundary
doesn't make it okay. Visually it
is an "eyesore" inside the park as
well.

RESPONSES

B The visual impacts to Great Basin National Park viewpoints, to the highway
approaches to the park, and to proposed interpretive facilities outside the park
boundaries are documented on page 4-45 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in the
Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of
the DEIS/DPA for the locations where these technical reports can be
reviewed).

LETTER #A-24
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Please justify the need, firstly, especially
by such a suspicious and notorious
agency as the Los Angeles Dept. of Water
and Power, for this huge and damaging
project.

Sincerely,

Susan F. Graf

LETTER A-24

LETTER #A-25
COMMENTS

Jeanette Guerin
953 Celebration Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89123

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 5, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Guerin

LETTER A-25

LETTER #A-26
COMMENTS

2043 Berrymann Street
Berkeley, CA 94709
September 12, 1992

RESPONSES

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

I have reviewed the draft EIS for the proposed Southwest Intertie Project, and while I generally support the project, I am strongly opposed to the proposed route..

No powerlines should be routed down our fast-disappearing natural valleys. Instead, existing built-upon power and road right-of-ways should be used. The visual and environmental impact on a new area is FAR greater in a new area than in an area that is

LETTER A-26

LETTER #A-26
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A [already built-upon. The existing criteria for judging visual impact is skewed against preserving non-built upon areas. It is my opinion that the BLM should be defending public land against new encroachments, not assisting in their visual and environmental degradation.

Thank you for considering my views —

Sincerely,
David W. Halligan

A Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys in Nevada and Utah possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to much of the project study area.

The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in its decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model, refer to the Methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where these technical reports can be reviewed).

LETTER #A-27
COMMENTS

Harl Simonson
BHEI, Burley District Office
P.O. Box 3
Burley, Idaho 83318

Elly Sept 15 1992

RESPONSES

- A In response to your and other comments about impacts to private lands in the area, several minor reroute alternatives were evaluated (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute in Chapter 3 of this document).

"Comments on DEIS for SWIP"

Dear Mr. Simonson:

After reading the draft EIS on the Southwest
Interstate Project, I would like to make a few comments.
First, the choice by your agency and by LADWP of
the 230KV Corridor Route rather than the environ-
mentally preferred Cutoff Route is hard to understand
and certainly without much concern for the people
living near this line.

I have stated to you before, that if you would bring
this line across my property it would be total ruin
for something that we have tried to build up for the past

LETTER #A-27
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

20 years. There are now 2 major 230 KV lines already on this 160 acre property and certainly a 500 KV with Steel Towers is unthinkable going through also. Since my son is raising his children on this farm and already has to work directly under the powerlines a another line crossing over the field, will make it that much more hazardous and undesirable.

Do you love your Children and Grandchildren?
We had hoped to put a "Pivot" Irrigation system in to be more efficient and save manpower, but the already in place 230 lines are making that task almost impossible, and a 500 KV line with Steel towers would make it totally impossible.

Also the cutoff Rock would have minimal effects on private landowners and would minimize possible environmental impacts.

LETTER #A-27
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

In case it is not clear where this property is located it is on the Nevada, Utah Border located in Millard County. Thank you for letting me make these comments and I trust you'll make the right choice.

Sincerely,

Heclothorne
HC33 30133 405
ELY, NV 89501

Mrs. Linda J. Heclothorne

LETTER #A-28
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Don Hendricks
609 N. Crestline Dr
Las Vegas, NV 89107

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Donald W Hendricks

LETTER #A-29
COMMENTS

1730 So Labrador
Las Vegas
Nevada
702-431-0052

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Alex Hewitt
Alex Hewitt

LETTER #A-30
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Diana Hewitt
530 Delfern Lane
Las Vegas
Nevada 89109
702-731-4191

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



LETTER #A-31
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

1730 LABRADOR
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
89122

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Enviromental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



JOSEPH B HEWITT IV

LETTER A-31

LETTER #A-32
COMMENTS

MARK HUG
2120 GREENHOUSE CT
LV NEV 89134
ph 256-3151

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Enviromental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



LETTER A-32

LETTER #A-33
COMMENTS

September 7, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318


Dear Mr. Simonson,

A [I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed Southwest Intertie Project. This project appears to be only marginally (if at all) necessary and would greatly disrupt the character of the landscape in its path and surrounding areas. In fact, there is already a powerline running from Utah to Las Vegas making the proposed project at least somewhat redundant.

B [Of primary concern is the disruption and negative visual impact to now remote and natural valleys which are PUBLIC LAND. These areas can be seen and experienced by individuals as they were a century ago but if disrupted can never be replaced. There are numerous archaeological and historical sites in the path of this powerline which would be greatly and permanently impacted. Further, bird migration and tortoise habitats would be disrupted by the construction of this proposed powerline.

D [I am opposed to the construction of this powerline particularly over new right-of-ways. Even over existing right-of-ways, the economic justification for this project seems marginal at best given the lack of real need for the transfer of power and the significant cost associated with the construction.

Sincerely,


George Huxtable
158 Kellogg Way
Santa Clara, Ca. 95051

RESPONSES

A Please refer to the Purpose and Need section in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in the expanded section in Chapter 3 of this document. Also refer to page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of how in early 1990 the IPCo discovered that the UNTP would be fully subscribed and would not have the capacity to fulfill the purpose and need for the SWIP. It was in July 1990 that the IPCo decided to expand the project south from the Ely area to Dry Lake. The two major existing transmission lines between Utah and the Las Vegas area are the Sigurd-Allen 345kV and the IPP-McCulloch 500kV DC transmission lines. There is no available capacity on either of these lines.

B It is true that there could be visual impacts to valleys that are remote and largely undisturbed. Impacts in undisturbed landscapes that are not seen from sensitive viewpoints are documented as impacts to scenic quality in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report.

Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although the undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to the project study area. The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in its decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model refer to the methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where these technical reports can be reviewed).

C For most species of birds, migration occurs at night at altitudes well above the maximum height of the SWIP transmission line. For species that migrate during the daylight hours, most are characterized by keen eyesight, (e.g., swallows, swifts, and raptors) and are very unlikely to be deterred by the presence of an electrical transmission line. It is unlikely that the SWIP would have any effect on local or regional bird migration patterns.

LETTER #A-33
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Construction of the SWIP north of Las Vegas, Nevada will have some impact on desert tortoise habitat. However, judicious planning and careful monitoring during the pre-construction and construction phases of this project are expected to reduce potential impacts to desert tortoise to indiscernible levels. Soil disturbances resulting from activities at tower sites and other construction areas may enhance growth of spring annuals and actually increase the forage base for desert tortoise in the area of construction.

D The SWIP will require a new right-of-way specific for a 500kV transmission line. It is not possible to utilize existing rights-of-way that were granted for other uses. These existing or designated corridors have other utilities in them and may be considered "already built upon rights-of way". The SWIP routing alternatives utilized designated or planning corridors whenever feasible in meeting the project needs (also refer to Chapter 1 of this document).

LETTER #A-34
COMMENTS

KARL SIMMONSON
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1 83318
Burley, Idaho

RESPONSES

Jeremy Karni
2810 Furterer Dr
LA, CA 90064

Memo - No
Sew. Interfero
Please,
- Ugly, UNNECESSARY
intrusive & ecologically
threatening

Dear Mr. Simonson,
I know that it is your job at the Bureau to oversee the use of public lands & make sure that they are being used wisely. The Southwest Intertribe Project should look as bad to you as it does to me & many of my close friends & colleagues. It is shameful we to know that the Bureau is even considering such a project that would squander the beauty of untouched mountain ranges in ~~the~~ eastern Nevada between 2500-4000 archaeological sites, ~~the~~ the integrity of the Great Basin National Park, the lives of poor hawks & eagles that land innocently on the powerlines. Only to have their lives extinguished by

LETTER #A-34
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- A Please refer to the Purpose and Need section in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in the expanded section in Chapter 3 of this document. Also refer to page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of how in early 1990 the IPCo discovered that the UNTP would be fully subscribed and would not have the capacity to fulfill the purpose and need for the SWIP. It was in July 1990 that the IPCo decided to expand the project south from the Ely area to Dry Lake. The two major existing transmission lines between Utah and the Las Vegas area are the Sigurd-Allen 345kV and the IPP-McCulloch 500kV DC transmission lines. There is no available capacity on either of these lines.

500 volts of unnecessary power, & this project doesn't need to be there. This is a redundant line, there is already one from Utah to Las Vegas & it is nowhere near capacity. When more capacity is needed let it run upon right-of-ways where such ecological threats aren't present by its construction. The Utah alternative would work since the Thousand Springs was discontinued. This would look ugly in the open valley. new
Please use the land wisely, don't let powerlines come in
no just

LETTER #A-35
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

— Accuracy

Agency

Endangered Species.
Resources at Risk

Alfred King

Oasis is the only commercial development along I-80 between Wells and Wendover. It is also the only residential development in this area directly adjacent to the interstate. The proposed power line route is within one half mile of the Oasis commercial area and residence at Oasis. It is within a mile of the residences at the Oasis Mobile Home Park.

Oasis is a natural place for further development. It is at an intersection of a state highway (233) with Interstate 80. A commercial development already exists with services for the highway travelers: fuel, mechanical services, motel, convenience store, and cafe. There is a 48 unit mobile home park that serves as a residential area for the Oasis employees and people who work in Wendover. An electrical substation is located at Oasis and a substantial water system with fire fighting capabilities is in place.

Northern Holdings Incorporated acquired the two sections of property at Oasis in 1988 with the intention of pursuing both commercial and residential development there. The previous owner, Flying 'S' Land & Cattle Company, had demonstrated an intention of development by its activities from 1983 to 1988. These activities included a number of meetings with the Elko County Planning Commission, the Elko County Commissioners, and the BLM.

Northern Holding's plan of development for sections 2 & 3 includes both residential and commercial use under and near the proposed location of the power lines. The power line path runs directly through the middle of section 3, virtually destroying the possibility of development.

Section 3 is the most visually appealing part of the Oasis property. The property lies at the base of the Pequoop Mountains, across the mouth of Payne Basis, a beautiful area with many recreational possibilities. Much of this visual beauty will be spoiled by the proposed 150 foot towers and power lines.

LETTER #A-35
COMMENTS

A [There are several ways that the power line will adversely affect the ability of Northern Holdings to develop its property. The first is the direct loss of property. If the easement is 1,000 wide for a mile that amounts to a direct loss of 121 acres. Since the line goes down the center of the section it severely restricts the ability to utilize the remaining portions of the section. The visual impact would further reduce the ability to utilize section 3 and would also make section 2 less desirable residentially. The concern about Electromagnetic Fields, real or imagined, would certainly reduce the number of potential residents of the Oasis area. Even if it turns out that there are no long term detrimental effects of living or working near powerful Electromagnetic Fields, many, if not most, people are not convinced of that today, and would not knowingly purchase or rent land near a large power line.

The visual impact and concern over EMF's would adversely affect the desirability of Oasis as a stop for the traveling public as well as the potential property owner or tenant.

Interest in Oasis as a residential community is increasing. The population at Oasis rose 24% in the past year: primarily from people who work in Wendover, but would rather live in a more rural setting. The growth has been in tenants at the mobile home park, but there have been inquiries about property in the area available for purchase. Currently, of course, there is none.

Pressure on Wendover housing is high, and with all the possible developments in the gaming and recreation industries, this pressure will likely increase, creating more interest in Oasis as a bedroom community. It is our clear intent to pursue development to satisfy the demand.

Northern Holdings would encourage the BLM to reconsider the placement of the SWIP power lines to a location east of Oasis, at least to the Nevada Northern railroad. Further east would be preferable.

RESPONSES

A The right-of-way requested for the SWIP is 200 feet wide or about 24.5 acres per mile.

B The BLM is unable to assess the specific visual impacts to future residential areas of Section 3 because there are no specific development plans for this land. Potential visual impacts to future land uses of mixed residential and commercial within Section 3 are addressed under "Impacts to the Oasis Area" in Chapter 3 of this document.

C The numerous studies that have been conducted on EMF demonstrate that we are all affected in everyday life. EMFs are generated by microwaves, fluorescent lights, waterbed heaters, hair dryers, and any other device powered by electricity. The right-of-way width of 200 feet is intended to minimize these effects. Outside of the right-of-way, EMFs are expected to be no higher than those that normally occur in household appliances. Please refer to pages 3-72 through 3-82 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the Recent EMF Research section on page 3-19 of this document for additional information on EMFs.

While various studies of property value impacts have been conducted in the U.S., there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that transmission lines reduce the value or interest of adjacent properties. Some studies have shown no substantial decrease in value, while others have indicated property values and interest to be depressed.

LETTER #A-36
COMMENTS



September 16, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
BLM Project Manager
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

Regarding: Comments on the EIS for the SWIP in Elko County, Nevada.

Dear Mr. Simonson:

This letter is a follow up to the presentation made by Northern Holdings, Inc. (NHI) at the August public hearing on the Southwest Intertie Project in Wells, Nevada. At that time we were asked to comment on the adequacy of the EIS. We have also been requested to add any specific suggestions as to route alternatives.

A [It is the contention of Northern Holdings that the EIS did not adequately address the adverse impact of the power line route on the private land owners whose properties are to be affected by the construction and continual presence of the power lines. In looking through the EIS it was difficult to find reference to Oasis and even more difficult to see that it had been considered any more than a reference point.

B [Northern Holdings received a copy of the SWIP EIS in June 1992. We were surprised to see the projected path of the power lines running through the middle of NHI property at the Oasis interchange on I-80. This was quite a change from the utility corridor published in the 1985 Wells Record of Decision by the BLM.

C [Northern Holdings acquired two sections of property at Oasis in October 1988 with the intention of pursuing both commercial and residential development on the property. The previous owner, Flying 'S' Land and Cattle company, had demonstrated an intention of development as documented by its activities from 1982 to 1988. These activities included a number of meetings with the Elko County Planning Commission, the Elko County Commissioners, and the BLM. (Please see Exhibit 'A': Chronicle of Planning Activities.) This chronicle also includes the fact that Northern Holdings has been before the Elko County Planning Commission requesting change to commercial zoning of a portion of the impacted property.

RESPONSES

A The development plans for Northern Holdings would have been included in the impact assessment had they been made public or been on file with Elko County. Further, there was no mention of these developments during the public scoping meetings held in March 1989, during the public planning workshop held January 8, 1991 (attended only by representatives of Big Springs Ranch), or in response to the numerous newsletters mailed out throughout the over three-year EIS process.

Future planned developments by Northern Holdings and CSY Development have been considered in the SWIP FEIS/PPA (refer to Impacts to the Oasis Area on page 3-36 of this document).

B The alternative routes evaluated in the SWIP DEIS/DPA in the Oasis area were identified during the regional environmental study (refer to Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA), were presented to the public during the scoping meetings in January 1989, and discussed in several of the newsletters. Some of the alternative routes do deviate from the BLM-designated or planning corridors established by the Wells Resource Management Plan (1985). Some of these deviations are due to environmental issues (e.g., cultural sites and the BLM low-visibility corridor along Interstate 80) along the established corridors and some are a result of project requirements. The SWIP DEIS/DPA contains a draft plan amendment that proposes to change the utility corridors to include these deviations along the selected alternative route. If an alternative route outside of the designated corridors within the Wells Resource Area is selected in the Record of Decision for the SWIP, this decision will serve as a plan amendment to the 1985 Wells RMP Record of Decision. Refer to Plan Amendment on page 1-32 of this document for more information.

C Research with BLM realty specialists and the Elko County planning department did not reveal any proposed developments in the Goshute Valley. Refer to response "A" above.

LETTER #A-36 COMMENTS

Oasis is the only commercial development along I-80 between Wells and Wendover. It is also the only residential development in this area directly adjacent to the interstate. The proposed power line route is within one half mile of the Oasis commercial area and residence at Oasis. It is within a mile of the residences at the Oasis Mobile Home Park.

Oasis is a natural place for further development. It is at the intersection of State Highway 233 and Interstate 80. A commercial development already exists with services for the highway travelers: fuel, mechanical services, motel, convenience store, and cafe. There is a 48 unit mobile home park that serves as a residential area for the Oasis employees and people who work in Wendover. An electrical substation is located at Oasis and a substantial water system with fire fighting capabilities is in place.

D [In our discussions with representatives from the BLM, Dames & Moore, and Idaho Power, we were told that in the urban areas where the engineers live, power lines a mile away are not considered a problem. In rural areas, though, power lines of this size a mile away from people create a tremendous visual impact. This is the reason the BLM suggested moving the lines out of the utility corridor as mapped in the Wells Record of Decision (1985). If the power lines create a negative visual impact on the I-80 traveler, the impact must surely be greater on the residents of an area who have that visual impact every time they look out the window of their homes.

This became evident to Northern Holdings after the impressive turn out of Oasis residents at the public hearing. Their comments made it clear that the lines would have an even greater negative impact on the economic and development potential of the Oasis property than was previously anticipated. It was quite clear that the Oasis residents would like to see the power line as far away from Oasis as possible.

The development plan put together by Northern Holdings is phased. The early phases deal with development of the commercial area. Recently 38,000 gallons of underground fuel storage was installed. The next step is to build new fuel islands and extend a water line to connect the mobile home park water system with the water system at the commercial area. Residential subdivision is to follow the commercial area development or possibly proceed at the same time. The first area of subdivision will be in section 2 near the existing residential development at the mobile home park, within a mile of the proposed power line. Planing work has begun on this subdivision. Subdivision of section 3, the section currently proposed as the location of the power lines, would be farther down the road. There is no detailed subdivision plan of section three at the moment, but we are submitting a copy of the Oasis Master Plan that was submitted to the BLM in 1986 by Flying 'S' for the EIS on the Thousand Springs Power Project.

E [The record clearly shows the prior intent of Flying 'S', and more recently Northern Holdings, to develop the two sections at Oasis. This development would be made impossible by the presence of the SWIP power lines on or directly adjacent to Northern Holdings property.

RESPONSES

D Visual impacts were assessed from all residences along the alternative routes. Residences were considered more visually sensitive than travelers on Interstate 80. This was part of the criteria used in assessing visual impacts. Table VR-7 of Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report documents that all residences were considered to have high visual sensitivity while travelers on Interstate 80 received a moderate visual sensitivity rating (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

E Future planned developments by Northern Holdings and CSY Development have been considered in the SWIP FEIS/PPA (refer to Impacts to the Oasis Area on page 3-36 of this document).

LETTER #A-36 COMMENTS

Northern Holdings would like to offer an alternative route to the one proposed in the EIS. Since the public hearing, it has become evident that the residents at Oasis feel their lives would be adversely impacted by the relative close proximity of these lines and they would like to see the lines located as far from Oasis as possible.

F [The reason given by the BLM representatives for moving the lines out of the utility corridor and running them through the only developments in the valley was that they would be less visible to the highway travelers. With this in mind we would like to suggest that the lines be run along the foot of the hills on the east side of the valley instead of the west side. There they would be less visible than if they were in the center of the valley for both the valley residents and the highway travelers. This would place them much further away from the existing developments than if they were on the west side. There currently are no developments on the east side of the valley to affect.

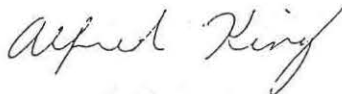
I understand that this proposal will most likely require additional study. It is unfortunate that it was not considered before, but it wasn't and we need to proceed from where we are today. This version of the EIS is a draft, and it would be best if all the options were taken into consideration before the final proposal is made in the final version of the EIS.

If it is impossible to perform another study, and the lines must be placed within existing study areas, NHI would suggest that the utility corridor in the center of the valley be considered above siting the lines on NHI property. If this alternative is selected NHI would like to see the lines located as far east in the corridor as possible. This would put the lines further away from the developed and developable areas at Oasis.

G [To be complete, the EIS must adequately address the adverse impact of the power lines on private property. In many areas the power lines may be entirely on public land. In the vicinity of Oasis, however, there is a great deal of private land and the criteria for evaluating private land should be quite different than that of evaluating public land.

In Summary: Northern Holdings Inc and the populace in and around Oasis strongly recommend that the SWIP lines be routed on the east side of the Goshute Valley, as shown on the enclosed map labeled Exhibit 'B.'

Sincerely



Alfred W. King II
for Northern Holdings Inc.

Enc. - 2
AK/dl

RESPONSES

F According to a map of the conceptual development received from CSY Development on October 7, 1992, hunting club areas and recreational use areas are proposed on the east side of the valley and south of Interstate-80. The letter accompanying the concept plan stated a preference for the rail corridor which is also the BLM's planning corridor. This corridor appears to impact the least amount of CSY's property and the conceptual development area. Another reason an alternative was not routed along the east side of the valley is because of the proximity to Bluebell WSA and impacts to low-level military flight operations in the Lucin C Military Operating Area (MOA).

G An extensive regional study was completed for this entire area and was coupled with the BLM's corridor studies completed during their Resource Management Plan process to plan a set of "reasonable and feasible" alternative routes. The regional study and alternative routes developed during this study were presented to the public during the scoping meetings in March 1989. Refer to Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a further discussion of the scoping process.

Private lands were not intentionally impacted by the routing alternatives. In fact, during the scoping process the public stated a preference for use of public lands over private lands for routing of alternatives. Private lands and environmental issues were both considered during development and refinement of the alternatives.

Visual impacts were adequately addressed and they do not overemphasize visual impacts of motorists using Interstate 80. Residences were considered the highest sensitivity viewpoints because of the long duration of views, while travelers on Interstate 80 received a moderate visual sensitivity rating. This was part of the criteria used in assessing visual impacts (refer to Table VR-7 of Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report). Refer to Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for locations where the technical reports can be reviewed.

LETTER #A-36
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

EXHIBIT A: CHRONICLE OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Prior to 1981 Robert J. Beaumont, at that time the owner of Big Springs Ranch, had a preliminary plan drawn for a rest area on section 3.

On January 25, 1983, Flying 'S' Land and Cattle Company filed for "municipal" water rights for the Oasis area. These rights were granted on August 7, 1984. The rights have been maintained annually and are currently still in effect. The permit numbers are #46579, #46580 and #46581, for a combined duty of 1600 acre/feet per year.

An Oasis Master Plan was presented to the Elko County Planning Commission on October 23, 1985 by Flying 'S' as part of a request for a change in zoning and a conditional use permit for the Oasis Commercial Area. This and all other presentations to the planning commission can be verified in the planning commission meeting minutes. The Oasis master plan included additional sections other than sections 2 and 3 that are currently under consideration. The portions of section 3 under the proposed power lines are designated for Agricultural-Residential and Ag-Recreational zoning for housing.

In July of 1986 Flying 'S' and Oasis Energy Corporation presented a land use master plan to the Bureau of Land Management for use in preparing the Environmental Impact Study for the Thousand Springs Energy Project. The master plan included a proposal for residential development on section 3 on the present proposed SWIP route.

On October 22, 1986 Flying 'S' presented the master plan to the Elko planning commission requesting that the commission give an indication that they approved of the concept, that this might create a tool for attracting money for development. The planning commission seemed in favor of the idea and voiced no objections.

LETTER #A-36
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

On January 28, 1987 the planning commission unanimously approved the master plan as stated in the minutes of the meeting. A transparency of the map was left with the county engineer.

On February 18, 1987, the master plan was presented to the county commissioners. The commissioners directed the planning commission not to approve the master plan because it would be a promise of zoning.

On February 25, 1987 the planning commission under the direction of the county commissioners voted that the map was not a master plan, but only a proposal of development.

In the fall of 1987 Flying 'S' lost the title to Big Springs Ranch, retaining, however, sections 2 and 3. Alfred King was hired at that time as Oasis General Manager.

Northern Holdings acquired sections 2 and 3 from Flying 'S' on October 21, 1988. Alfred King was retained as General Manager, due partially to his experience in development planning for the Oasis properties.

On January 25, 1989 Northern Holdings, Inc. requested a change of zoning on sections 2 and 3, from Open Space to Commercial for 238 acres at a preliminary hearing before the planning commission. Steven Crane, an architect with Niels E. Valentinez and Assoc., represented Northern Holdings. The concept presented at that time included a large motel, casino and recreation complex.

The public hearing for change of zoning before the planning commission was held on March 22, 1989. The change of zoning was denied because the project was too ambitious.

LETTER #A-37
COMMENTS

Dawn K. Lamb
5419 W. Tropicana #3112
Las Vegas, NV 89103

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Dawn K. Lamb

LETTER A-37

LETTER #A-38
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

CHERYL LESUE
6920 ATRIUM
LAS VEGAS, NV 89168

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



LETTER #A-39
COMMENTS

JAMES E. LYTNER
359 E. Desert Inn
Las Vegas, NV 89109

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

James E. Lytner

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

4221 West Arby Avenue A
Las Vegas, Nevada
89118-5107

September 17, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burly, Idaho 83318

Dear Sir:

A [I have reviewed the draft of the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) DEIS/DPA. I would offer some comments in addition to my oral testimony. I found the document to be a good piece of work. I am concerned with the generality of the alternatives. I would like to know which Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) rather than the statement *that 57 miles of viewshed from WSA's will be affected*. I suspect that much of that detail was included in the technical reports. The only real complaint I have concerns the availability of the Technical Reports. The Technical Report appears to be the basis for all the substance of the SWIP DEIS/DPA document.

This report was only accessible at one location in southern Nevada. There was only one copy in southern Nevada. The report was at the

A The technical reports were prepared to document the detailed studies for the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Typically the studies are only documented in the project files and available for public review upon request. However, for a project the size of the SWIP it was considered important to publish a limited number of copies of these studies and make them reasonably accessible to the public.

Additional sets of technical reports have been sent to public libraries in several towns to make them more available for review. Refer to Appendix H in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document for the locations where these technical reports can be reviewed.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Las Vegas District Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and, while the person¹ in charge of these reports was most gracious and helpful, access was limited to normal working hours. I recognize that these *Technical Reports* are expensive to produce, however additional

B This is corrected in the Errata in Chapter 3 of this document.

¹Her name is Jackie and I compliment her. Her name is not listed in Chapter 6 of the document

copies should have been available. I am sure that had there been more than one copy a person could arrange to borrow a copy for a weekend or such. I quickly skimmed the Volume IV of the Technical Reports and found some things I questioned. I was really surprised when I was told that copies were not available. I only had one additional opportunity to review these documents. I did return to the District Office and with limited time (about a half an hour) did again review parts of Volume IV of the Technical Report. The incomplete comments on the technical report reflect my lack of access to these documents.

I have attempted to comment on specific passages. Each passage is referenced by page and paragraph. This reference will be the page number of the initial sentence of the paragraph even though that paragraph may continue onto an additional page.

Comments on Technical Report

B [Page 9-37 Southern Nevada was part of the New Mexico Territory in the 1850's. The Post Office name in 1857 for mailing to present

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

B day Las Vegas, Nevada was Bringhurst because of the confusion with the *other* Las Vegas, New Mexico. The southern portion of Nevada was never part of Nevada Territory. It was added to the State of Nevada in 1867 after the Territory of Arizona (1863) was created. The next to last sentence on this page needs to be modified to reflect that southern Nevada was part of New Mexico Territory until two years after Nevada Territory was created and then was *Pahute County, Arizona Territory* until January 1867 when it was added to Lincoln County, Nevada. A small point, but one caught quickly skimming the document and one that makes me suspect of the rest of the Technical Reports.

C Page 9-38 Paragraph 1 is erroneous. Jedediah Strong Smith did follow the Virgin River² and he did enter present day Nevada, then Mexican Territory at about the present day town of Bunkerville and did continue down the Virgin river until it merges with the Colorado River. This is where the error begins. Smith did not travel through Nevada to the Needles area. He did cross the Colorado into Arizona and traveled around the rugged Black Canyon area one valley west of the river. Again a small point but this was the second page I read³ of the only Chapter is glanced at within the technical reports. Since there were at least four books of technical reports that concerned me, (*and additional books of data tables I found uninteresting*) and I had only read a page and a half, I was getting concerned.

D Page 9-38 Paragraph 4 could be improved. Antonio Armijo did follow the Nevada side of the Colorado from the Virgin River into present day Nevada. Unlike Jedediah Strong Smith, who crossed

C This is corrected in the Errata in Chapter 3 of this document.

D The BLM report by Keith Myhrer and others (1990), which is cited in the technical report, reviews the ambiguities regarding Armijo's route. Any proposed connection between the Dry Lake and McCullough Substations (e.g. the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project) will have to consider impacts on cultural resources, including any remnants of historic trails.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

the Colorado there both times, Armijo and his caravan continued down the Nevada side of the Colorado until reaching the Las Vegas Wash. Armijo's group then headed westward into the Las Vegas Valley and on to California. There is some dispute on the route taken out of the Las Vegas Valley but the route into the Las Vegas Valley crosses the proposed route for the connection from Dry Lake Valley to the McCullough Substation. I suspect that connection is an essential link in this project even if not included in the DEIS/DPA. Armijo was here in January, while Yount and

D ²The proper name for this river should actually be the *Rio Sulfureo de Las Piramides* as named by the Dominguez-Escalante Expedition in 1776. Jedediah Strong Smith did name the Virgin river. I've been told it was named for one of his fellow trappers, and so the story goes, after the trapper was slain by the Mojaves near Needles, California. I've heard the story but cannot cite a source. If that story is true then the river was named in his honor sometime in 1828 or 1829.

³Southern Nevada history is an avocation of mine. I selected this because I am familiar with this subject and frankly was spot checking the accuracy of the technical reports.

crew did not show up until fall. Yount traveled the same route as Jedediah Strong Smith's previous two trapping expeditions. Since Yount was later and traveled mostly through Arizona, I suggest more emphasis on the Armijo Route.

I did not peruse paragraphs 2 and 3 because I am less familiar with Northern Nevada. I was really getting suspect about the Technical Report at this time. This elusive document which was sequestered in a limited amount of places, appears to need more public review.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

E [The thing that prompted me to return to the District Office to further review the Technical Document was was an apparent error I found on August 20, 1992 at the hearing. I thought I remembered reading about the native southern Nevada Nuwuvi⁴ that implied that bear was an important food source and that there was a reliance on winter communal rabbit drives. I thought that the reference cited was Robert Lowie. There is no such reference in Appendix A of the DEIS/DPA. I glanced at this at the public hearing and could not relocate it that night, nor on my subsequent visit because I ran out of time before rereading that portion. I mention this because I would have liked to pursue this further.

I hope to have some, even if limited, future access to the Technical Reports. It goes without saying if an extra set of these Reports was available I would gladly accept them. I request a bibliography of citations in the technical reports on the assumption that those citations are different from the references cited in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Appendix A.

⁴The Nuwuvi are called Southern Paiute in the DEIS. Nuwuvi is to my mind the proper name for these indigenous peoples.

E Isabel T. Kelly and Catherine S. Fowler report that the Southern Paiute hunted rabbits individually and in drives, and bear was not a significant game animal. ("Southern Paiute" in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 11: Great Basin*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1986, page 370).

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

DEIS/DPA

F Page 1-11 An *open marketplace* requires a connection with the McCullough Substation. Since that connection must run through an Instant Study Area (ISA) that awaits Wilderness Legislation that may not occur this century and this Wilderness Study Area (WSA) blocks the connection. I suggest that the SWIP may be premature. G

Page 2-5 Energy conservation has a direct impact on local requirements. Local requirements have a direct impact on regional requirements. I fail to see how energy conservation can be eliminated from further discussion simply because energy conservation cannot *alone* be the answer. Why isn't energy conservation and a scaled-down interconnect a viable alternative? I believe that energy conservation should be an integral part of every alternative.

G Page 2-5 Alternative methods to generate electricity, especially those that do not consume fossil fuels, are important. Again, alternative methods of power generation may not *alone* be a solution but why isn't alternative power generation and a scaled-down interconnect a viable alternative?

Page 2-5 If energy conservation and alternative generation methods were incorporated then perhaps "*the need to transfer power across these paths*" would not exceed "*their capacities*".

Page 2-7 If taken as a package unit which includes energy conservation, alternative methods of power generation, and an improvement of existing transmission systems, I question if this document can assert that interconnect access from the northwest would still be needed?

RESPONSES

F It is correct that a connection to the proposed marketplace substation near the McCullough Substation would require a transmission connection through the ISA. Other marketplace substations are planned along the path of the SWIP as outlined in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on page 2-14. In fact, the planned Dry Lake substation at the southern end of the SWIP will be part of the open marketplace concept. Because planning, permitting, and engineering for projects the size of the SWIP take many years to complete, it is necessary to consider foreseeable future actions that may be related to the project.

Conservation and demand-side management are an integral part of the resource strategy of every utility considering partnership in the SWIP. Federal and state regulatory requirements dictate that supply-side and demand-side resource options be considered on an equal basis in a utility's plan to acquire lowest cost resources. Conservation and other demand side management programs are expected to reduce, but not to eliminate, the region's need for new generating resources.

Transmission facilities would contribute in several important ways to the task of the region's utilities to meeting future load growth in the most efficient manner possible and with the smallest amount of new generating capacity. First, it is important to recognize the available seasonal load diversity in the West (refer to Figure 3-1 in Chapter 3 of this document). Transmission facilities can allow existing resources to be used to serve seasonal load requirements in one part of the region while also meeting new load growth requirements in another part of the region. Therefore, total regional resource requirements (e.g., generation) can be reduced by using transmission. Then, when new regional generating resources are needed, transmission, such as the SWIP, would make more resource options available, and should help minimize costs and environmental impacts.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

G Page 2-7 If taken as a package unit which includes energy conservation, alternative methods of power generation, and an improvement of existing transmission systems, I question if this document can assert that interconnect access from the northwest *could not* be scaled-down. I beleive that this package along with a scaled-down interconnect would be a viable alternative?

H Page 2-7 This *significant additional transmission reinforcement* for voltages higher than 500kV suggests to me that as a member of the public I can have bigger, uglier, sturdier, transmission lines or accept the increased energy loss. Do higher voltage lines have less loss? If one 500kV line will handle the anticipated load then the 765kV voltage option does not need to be considered *unless* there would be less energy loss with the transmission of higher voltages. The squandering of non-renewable resources should always be considered. Again, does higher voltage mean less loss, or just less amperage for the same wattage.

This project does not exist in a vacuum. The White Pine Power Project (WPPP) threatens to run three more of these lines to Dry Lake Valley. If we could reduce that number of transmission lines by running 765kV or higher voltages then "*the western system*" should consider using these higher voltages.

Could not a package which includes energy conservation, alternative methods of power generation, and an improvement of existing transmission systems reduce the 1200 megawatt objective.

I Page 2-7,8 Does DC travel greater distances with less loss? If that is the case then the added expense must be weighed against the value by reducing the loss of energy. Since the increase in carbon dioxide

H A single 765kV transmission line, by itself, would not have greater system capacity than the proposed 500kV transmission line. While the 765kV transmission line capability theoretically would be about two to three times greater than a 500kV transmission line, the system to which it is interconnected must be able to withstand its outage. For a transmission line of the length of the SWIP, it is this *system* capability that determines the line capacity. For the foreseeable future, the WSCC system would not be able to withstand the outage of a 765kV transmission line because it would be the WSCC's largest single hazard.

Perhaps in 50 to 100 years, the WSCC system may have developed a sufficient 765kV system to support a 765kV transmission line of the length and location of the SWIP.

I A DC transmission alternative for transmitting 1200 MW of power from the Midpoint Substation to the Dry Lake Area would cost about \$488 million (\$200M for line and \$144M for each line DC substation terminal) compared to \$356 million for the proposed AC transmission line. As pointed out in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, the ability to tap is considerably more difficult with a DC transmission alternative. The cost of each tap is an order of magnitude greater (\$100+ million vs. \$10 million) and is not included in the \$488 million estimate for the basic transmission line.

The actual efficiency of a comparable DC alternative would depend upon the design of that system (i.e., voltage rating and conductor selection). For example, the Pacific DC Intertie transmission line has been uprated twice in its history, once to increase its voltage rating and the other to increase its capacity rating. The line was originally designed to operate at 1600 MW and +/- 400kV. A 1200 MW flow at +/- 400kV would have generated 8.6 percent loss. In the 1980s, the Pacific DC Intertie was uprated to +/- 500kV and is now capable of transferring 3100 MW. For a 1200 MW flow on the current DC system, the losses would be about 5.7 percent compared to 6 percent for the SWIP.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

I [(CO₂) by the rapid consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels may have climatic, environmental and political repercussions, I would hope that the use of Direct Current Transmission⁵ would not be dismissed so quickly. J

Page 2-9 I concur that the adverse effects do not outweigh the cost and adverse effects of digging up the desert to run power through it.

Page 2-9 Could not the potential of new transmission methods be viable answers if we use energy conservation, alternative meth- J K

⁵If indeed Direct Current Transmission has lower loss.

ods of power generation, and improve existing transmission systems. This would allow the postponement of this action until such technology⁶ is commercially available.

K [Page 3-3 Why does Jarbidge rate above Great Basin National Park? Why does Jarbidge rate above the Ruby Mountain Wilderness Area? What specifically is a Prevention of Serious Deterioration (PSD) Class II area? How does a PSD Class II area differ from a PSD Class I area? Who ranks these areas? Why does our National Park get shorted? This paragraph raised many more questions than it answered as far as I am concerned. L

L [Page 3-5 Soils in "true desert" may erode easily and they may not. The composition of the soil determines that far more than the lack of moisture attributed to being a "true desert". Muck about with the surface of chaparral, sagebrush or pinion-juniper and if the base is silt it will erode once the protective vegetation is disturbed.

The feasibility of superconducting transmission lines has not been demonstrated. For superconducting overhead transmission to be feasible in the future, the operative temperature would need to be ambient air temperature instead of the supercooled condition which is required under the current technology. Sub-ambient air temperature superconducting transmission would generally be installed underground with its associated costs and technical difficulties.

At the present time there is no scientific evidence supporting the hope that this transmission technology will be developed in the next 20 years. As a result, superconductivity is not believed to provide a basis for the delay of the SWIP.

During preparation of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, an error was made with regard to the identification of Class I and Class II PSD areas near the study area. Jarbidge WSA is not the only Class I area. It is one of three. The other two Class I areas are the Great Basin National Park and the Mt. Moriah Wilderness Area.

The PSD classes and the regulations governing the classification of areas are described and corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.

True, all desert is not the same. The statement about desert soils in Lincoln, Nye, and Clark counties is general. The erosion hazard potentials vary as is indicated in the SWIP DEIS/DPA; Table ER-5 (Descriptive Summary of Soils by Corridor Link), Table ER-6 (General Soil Units in Project Area), and Table ER-7 (Summary of Soil Resource Inventory) in the *Volume II - Natural Environment Technical Report*; and the Ground Disturbance Impacts to Soils table in the *Data Tables for Natural Environment*. The construction methods, including rehabilitation of all disturbed areas, will be planned in detail during the development of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan (refer to page 1-34 of this document).

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

L

Muck around in desert with rocks in the soil and the first frost after a rain will repair the surface and erosion will not necessarily be a problem. If the desert is silt, fine sand, or whatever you have a problem. If it's coarse sand like decomposed granite you don't. All desert is not the same! Take that from a motorcycle racer who has twenty-five years experience in locating race courses where the longterm effects are negligible, and avoiding areas where the soil types invite erosion. There are portions of your proposed route that traverse sections⁷ any responsible race promoter would avoid because they are so sensitive to surface disturbance. The dryness of the region does influence erosion. Flash flooding does

⁶Transmission line loss over long distances has got to be a major waste of energy resources. Superconductors or some other future technology may well be the answer to such losses. If we can postpone construction until such technology is developed we may not need to further degrade our public lands

⁷Link Number 671 goes through such an area while the soil six miles west is much more stable. This is link number 671. I would have liked to see the route west of the dry lake north of US 93 followed but continuing north to intersect link 673.

cause erosion and disturbed soils do erode faster than undisturbed soils, however the soil type is the primary factor in determining the erosion potential.⁸ All soils erode but some erode a lot more than others.

Page 3-34 This is where you discuss dispersed recreation activities. Power lines provide roads which allow access and on an individual basis allow access without significant further environmental impact. These roads might be welcome if they did increase the numbers of those seeking access. The cumulative effects of in-

M The Midpoint to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP would be operated and maintained by the IPCo. The IPCo proposes to request that the BLM assign the Ely to Delta segment right-of-way grant to the LADWP which would construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line on this segment of the SWIP. Both utilities are concerned about vandalism (e.g., shooting insulators, etc.) as well as the potential liability of sanctioning use of their rights-of-way for other uses (e.g., motorcycle races). However, the LADWP, the IPCo, and affected land management agencies will work with any organized group that has a legitimate reason to utilize their rights-of-way, if their liability concerns can be satisfied.

M

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

M

creased access may outweigh the positive effects that low impact access provide. The first goal of the Sierra Club was to "*explore, enjoy, and render accessible...*"⁹ the wildness of the region. The enjoyment of these features, so long as that enjoyment does not significantly degrade the land, should be encouraged. Powerline access roads fill a valid role in the management of the public lands for the public.

This is one of those places that the SWIP DEIS/DPA fails. There may be no way to include these benefits to the public because these benefits do not depend on what is decided in this action but the *attitude* of the power company that maintains them. As a user of these lands openly question what kind of a neighbor we will get. Will it be Idaho Power or will they turn their line over to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power? What kind of public responsibility can we expect? It has been my observation that those power companies that service the area where the transmission lines are located make good neighbors. The Lincoln County Power company (?) and Nevada Power Company have always been good neighbors. The California Power companies bring their 'Califphobias' across the border and often don't make good neighbors. What kind of a neighbor are we getting? Will this

⁸I ain't a geologist but I'll stake my poke that's true.

⁹The Sierra Club's first stated purpose was "to explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast."

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

M [neighbor make a concerted effort to discourage others from using his right-of-way? Can amicable relations be established? Can responsible individuals hunt without being accused of "*only shooting insulators*"? Can a motorcycle race be routed along an access road without unnecessary protestations from the power company? The point is one of attitude. The vast majority of land users are responsible. These users sympathize with utilities over such irresponsible actions. The attitude of the power company is much more important than requirements written into an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

N [Page 3-65 The Pahrocs and parts of the Delmar Range also offer viewpoints that if known better would make your list. There is no reason to believe additional *special places* don't exist along the proposed corridor. These hidden treasures are important to those who do currently enjoy them. A transmission line is not a welcome addition to a pristine area. The routes selected show planning, an attempt to reduce or mitigate effects where possible, and they may indeed offer the less offending routes **BUT** they will still offend and they will still intrude on the wildness, wonder, and solitude of the land.

O [Page 3-72,82 High voltage, the megawattage and extent of the effects of this megawattage are of concern to me. While I am pleased to see the extent of consideration developed in the DEIS/DPA, I still urge mitigation. Ground potential differences trouble me. I am not versed enough in such hazards to adequately comment. I urge those responsible to follow through on this assessment. The pile of evidence is mounting and it does not appear to be very good.

RESPONSES

N There may be special places along the alternative routes that may not have been considered as sensitive viewpoints. However, the BLM has considered all important viewpoints that we are aware of or were disclosed to us by other agencies, interested organizations, and the public during the several years of studies for the SWIP DEIS/DPA process.

O The known effects of EMF are disclosed in Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. EMF is an especially difficult issue and conclusive results may not be known for years. Refer to the EMF sections in Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the Recent EMF Research section on Page 3-19 of this document for more information. Also, refer to the grounding standards that would be utilized for the SWIP on page 3-19 and the mitigation measures #11 and #16 in Table 1-6 in Chapter 1 of this document.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

Page 4-69,75 Your document, my knowledge of existing regulations, and responsible public interest are sufficient to assure me that cultural resources will be adequately addressed.

Page 4-78 Utility corridors scare me. That damnable Kern River Pipeline is a utility. The wholesale destruction to habitat, the devastation of the land surface, and the longterm visual scar produced is appalling. Every action needs environmental review! Another pipeline fiasco cannot be allowed to happen. The concept of utility corridors scares me because they reduce the future responsibility of agencies to properly manage our public lands.

P [Page 4-78 The WPPP and the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP) cannot be divorced from the SWIP. There is a degree of co-dependency even if each project could stand alone. Together these projects exceed the sum of their separate analyses. The cumulative effects of these projects must be considered. The role of each project must be considered from the broader perspective of the overall development of a western regional grid.
The connection between Dry Lake Substation and the McCulloch Substation is critical. This issue is not decided and the results of that decision are critical to any analysis of the SWIP.

Q [Page 4-88 The Thousand Springs Debacle has been abandoned. This was a misconceived plan much better solved with energy conservation. The fact that this is listed makes me suspicious. So does the Thousand Spring Facility Siting Area. Can I expect to see an attempt to resurrect this threat¹⁰ to the best air in the our nation?

R [Page 4-89 That 'or' at the end of the fourth line is mighty scary. Does that imply that if the SWIP corridor is utilized that Clark County

RESPONSES

P The cumulative effects of the WPPP and the UNTP have been evaluated in the SWIP DEIS/DPA (refer to Chapter 4). The SWIP DEIS/DPA process does not attempt to be a programmatic EIS, as you suggest it should. It is instead a proposed project with a specific purpose and need that is in no way dependent on the success or failure of the WPPP or the UNTP. Refer to response G above, Chapters 2 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, and the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project section on page 3-14 of this document.

Q The SWIP is in no way tied to the Thousand Springs Power Project. However, NEPA requires that "foreseeable" future projects be addressed under cumulative effects. The Thousand Springs Power Project was a current proposal during the SWIP EIS process. It appears now that it has been withdrawn from further consideration.

R There is no intent to imply anything about the Clark County water project. However, it was necessary to address it under cumulative effects as a reasonably foreseeable future action.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

R [can construct a 36-inch pipeline without environmental review? After the Kern River Pipeline fiasco, such a possibility is not acceptable. I have seen what irresponsible pipeline construction can do to our public lands and it will not happen again!

Page 4-89 The Kern River Project was way too destructive. Federal and State biologists are not the only ones concerned about the effects of such an action on the land. Tortoise migration, habitat, and my visual sensibilities were offended by that project.

¹⁰The Thousand Springs Site was in the middle of the location of the least polluted air in the continental United States.

Page 4-90 I return to the world of energy conservation. I reject any alternative that does not include energy conservation as an integral part of the proposal.

Page 5-4 Distribute the technical report to those who express an interest.

S [Page 5-10 I attended the workshop in Las Vegas. I objected to the east side route because of the silty soil on the east side of that valley. I championed a corridor route that ran due south from about mile 3 of link 673 to mile 33 of link 671 and then down the west side of that valley to Link 690. I am saddened to see that my objections and preferences were not recorded. I am discouraged to see that they were not even considered. I resent the statement that *"no route preferences were recorded at this meeting"* because I indeed raised them at that workshop.

S The suggested routing alternative would not respond to concerns of Nellis Air Force Base for potential conflicts with low-level flight operations. Further, impacts to the silty soils on the east side of Dry Lake Valley are more easily mitigated than are other potential impacts. The statement that there no routing preferences were recorded at the Las Vegas public workshop was an error that has been corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.

Conclusion

I expressed my concerns at the public meeting. I found the document to be done professionally and for the most part accurately. I do have general concerns about the following:

- Corridors should not automatically allow the construction of other utilities. This especially means pipelines and other surface threatening actions.
- Future utility use of these corridors should be subjected to the same judicious, environmental, cultural, and economic review.
- Whatever can be done should be done to assure that the utility that has the final control over the transmission line acts like and is a good neighbor.
- Energy conservation should be included in all alternatives.
- The SWIP is a piece in a much larger puzzle. Environmental review of the total package should be included.
- Any option that would reduce or lessen the consumption of fossil fuels should be considered. The time to worry has past and the time to act is now. Global warming is a threat that must be taken seriously.
- The loss of energy through transmission line loss should be minimized. Any option that would accomplish that should be considered.

LETTER #A-40
COMMENTS

T [The scoping process suggested benefits that I could not find in this document. Is there a potential to lose the benefits of renewable energy such as when water goes over a spillway during spring thaws? This concern was important to me. Could we bank additional energy in Lake Mead if this project was completed? Allowing this lake to rise in the spring protects the fry. What precautions will be utilized to protect birds from high tension lines? Will anything be done to promote birds like eagles that could use these transmission towers for nesting sites? U [Did I miss this?

I thank you for your effort in this draft. I would like a copy of the first four volumes of the technical report. I do want a copy of the references cited in the technical report. I do wish to review the final EIS.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Maichle

RESPONSES

T Traditionally, the Northwest has not foregone energy production by spilling water past unloaded turbines because of a lack of regional transmission capacity. During the spring runoff period, thermal generation in the Northwest is either off-line for annual maintenance or at minimum operating levels allowing utilities to absorb most of the region's hydro generation. If hydro generation exceeds the Northwest's needs, additional energy may be delivered to the Southwest using the SWIP transmission line. This low cost hydro energy could displace higher cost resources in the Southwest.

U There are no plans to encourage species such as golden eagles to use the transmission line towers for nest sites. It is likely that eagles will utilize towers for nesting without nest-site enhancing structures being placed on the towers. Interestingly, the use of towers for nest or perch sites along some portions of the route, especially in northeastern Nevada, is considered to be a negative impact to sage grouse, which may be preyed upon by golden eagles.

Refer to Avian Collision Hazard on page 3-89 of this document.

LETTER #A-41
COMMENTS

KEN MILLER

50 ALAMO
BERKELEY, CA 94708

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Dear BLM

9/15/92

I am writing to condemn the proposed powerlines from Idaho to Las Vegas. There is no REAL need to violate the beauty of the landscape or endanger wildlife when existing right of ways would suffice - even if the energy were appropriate & necessary which is very controversial.

Please put your efforts into preserving the hawk migration route, archaeological & historical sites, and scenic open valleys all of which would be detrimentally affected by these ugly, noisy, hazardous powerlines - and the work to build & maintain them.

LETTER #A-41
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Thank you for your consideration of my comments
Sincerely,
Ken Miller

LETTER #A-42
COMMENTS

September 10, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

RE: COMMENTS ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE
SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT

Dear Sir:

A [I am very concerned about the Crosstie route, and the choice by BLM and by LADWP of the 230KV Corridor Route. I feel it is the responsibility of land managing agencies to select the best alternative for the environment. It is hard for me to understand why BLM did not choose the environmentally preferred Cutoff Route.

Great Basin National Park and the Mount Moriah Wilderness Unit of the Forest Service are national treasures located in a rural area of Nevada. They should be held in trust for future generations without additional development that would degrade their values.

The environmental damage that would be created by a 500KV line is of a much greater magnitude than the damage associated with the present 230KV installation. New groundbreaking and associated clearing would remain in this area for probably centuries, and the 500KV line would be much better located away from our National Park. The old 230KV lines were not subject to as much environmental scrutiny as projects of today, so I would not think that consolidating corridors reasoning should be the reasoning that is considered for this project. Great Basin National Park had not been established, and the Mount Moriah Wilderness had not been designated at the time the 230KV line was installed. Those wooden poles are relatively inconspicuous, and from a distance they blend in with the terrain, BUT they are also not pleasing to see in this pristine setting. I would hope that the Bureau of Land Management would not select this route today for the 230KV lines, so the 500KV line, with its proposed steel towers should not be considered to add to this environmental damage.

RESPONSES

A The BLM used nine selection criteria as described on pages 2-56 and 2-57 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The selection of the 230kV Corridor Route as the Agency Preferred Route is explained on pages 2-57 and 2-58 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Also refer to the Cumulative Effects section on page 3-12 of this document.

B It is true that visual impacts will occur if this project is constructed. The visual impacts are disclosed and documented in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 4-35 through 4-45. Wood pole H-frame towers do tend to be perceived as more acceptable, visually, in foreground views. However, it is also true that in most landscapes, steel lattice towers tend to be less visible at a distance than the wood pole H-frame towers, or in this case, corten tubular steel H-frame towers. Note that the corten tubular steel H-frames (visually similar to wood towers) have been used as visual mitigation in foreground views at the crossings of U.S. Highway 6/50 and may also be used in other areas.

LETTER A-42

LETTER #A-42
COMMENTS

The people of Nevada now have a National Park in the Snake Range after many years of work to create this through legislation. This site was chosen over seven other areas in Nevada and Utah, because the Snake Range showed both the basin and range in a relatively pristine condition. This provides interpretive and educational possibilities for all people, and powerlines would detract from that experience...OR the powerlines would provide the view that would show the land management to be insensitive, uncaring, or not responsive to the environment. I feel BLM should be above just taking the easy way, and consider the environment first in all selections. The view and quality of the present experience would be fundamentally changed and have a negative impact.

I feel the alternative route for the Crosstie that was worked out during the scoping process, and designated as the environmentally preferred Crosstie route is the best for all concerned, including the Bureau of Land Management. The Cutoff Route avoids major visual damage to Great Basin National Park and the Mount Moriah Wilderness, and is preferable for most other human and environmental reasons also. Your document reports to be committed to minimize environmental impacts whenever possible even at reasonable increased project costs. This commitment would be verified by placing the lines on the Cutoff Route. I feel the Cutoff Route has a much less environmental impact to the National Park and Wilderness and also to the people who live in this area.

C [I would first recommend NO ACTION, since no need for the Crosstie was demonstrated. If any action is necessary, then I would strongly recommend the Cutoff Route to protect Nevada's only National Park and surrounding wilderness areas from this significant environmental impact.

I appreciate you considering my comments when you make your decision. I hope your decision is based on what is best for the land on this earth, and especially ours here in Snake Valley.

Sincerely,



David E. Moore
P. O. Box 91
Baker, Nevada 89311

RESPONSES

C The purpose and need for the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP has been expanded in this document (refer to Chapter 3). Your comments will be considered during the BLM's decision process.

LETTER #A-43
COMMENTS

Mia Mia Palmeri
2235 Winckler Drive
Henderson NV 89014

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Mia Mia Palmeri

LETTER #A-44
COMMENTS

Stella R. Quinto
8085 Canto Ave
LAS Vegas, NV 89117

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely, *Stella R. Quinto*

LETTER A-44

LETTER #A-45
COMMENTS

Comments on draft EIS — Southwest Intertie Project

To: Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office

A This EIS goes into considerable detail describing the impacts the SWIP would have on the areas it might run through. The differences in various impacts along the different proposed routes are also laid out in detail. However little attention is given to mitigation of these impacts, except in a few specific cases such as through Pashranagat Wash. General mitigation measures, especially applying to construction activities, are described briefly in one table; but the benefits from these mitigation efforts are not evaluated with any care.

B The impact of the powerline, as described in the EIS, will clearly be quite significant; and evidently it will not or cannot be mitigated. Although the EIS makes a quick reference to the economic justification for this powerline, there is no credible attempt to balance the environmental impact against the alleged economic benefits. In fact, it appears that in one case where costs might be higher (the option of a route along existing corridors through Salt Lake City), that is the basic reason to exclude the route from further EIS consideration. Since arranging access rights along the route from other utilities and working out a suitable passage through Salt Lake City are hardly unsolvable problems, and since the

RESPONSES

- A The impacts described in Chapter 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA are those remaining after applying the mitigation measures found in Tables 1-5 and 1-6 of this document. The process of considering mitigation for each specific impact location is described on page 4-2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Additional information on the impact assessment/mitigation planning process is found in each of the technical reports (refer to Appendix H in the SWIP DEIS/DPA).
- B Dropping the routing options through Salt Lake City from further consideration does not make the SWIP DEIS/DPA incomplete or flawed. On page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA there is a discussion of the SWIP's need to be expanded from the Ely area to Dry Lake (northeast of Las Vegas). The first two paragraphs of page 2-10 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA discuss the elimination of the Salt Lake City alternate route. The additional length required by this route from Midpoint to Dry Lake has two effects: 1) the capacity drops significantly (to 600-800 MW) and 2) the cost increases proportionally. The result of these two effects makes the route uneconomical and unreasonable. There are also obvious impacts associated with routes through the Salt Lake City area (very significant land use and visual effects). Please refer to Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and Chapter 3 of this document for more information on the Purpose and Need for the SWIP.

LETTER #A-45
COMMENTS

B [excluded route would have better met various environmental goals stated at the beginning of the report, I feel its exclusion is symptomatic of ways in which this EIS is incomplete and flawed.

C [The EIS claims that public policy should favor this project because it increases the opportunities for economic competition between utilities. Yet I should think the goal of an open marketplace in the grid system could be well achieved just by legally preventing other utilities from maintaining monopoly-like control over alternate routes. As it is, this project looks like a large contribution of public resources for the specific benefit of Idaho Power.

D [Maintaining them as public lands has been one of the few forces preserving what few remaining open spaces remain in the US. Every effort should be made to leave our few remaining pristine desert valleys in their current state. Yet the EIS seems to presume that public policy is to do just the opposite. In many cases the powerline could be run through already impacted lands such as those used for ranching, mining, by the military, or that are privately owned. Yet the EIS explicitly prefers to bypass such impacted routes and instead to consume more of the pristine public lands that are a rapidly disappearing national resource. The EIS never attempts to justify this bias, not as a rational public planning decision, nor on environmental grounds.

RESPONSES

C The SWIP would not create a monopoly-like control in the utility industry. In fact, the converse is true. On page 1-11 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA it is stated that the SWIP is a "new concept where buyers, sellers, and wheeling utilities are part of a coordinated group that allows them to transact business with each other without burdensome wheeling charges, access policies or other barriers to trade."

D On page 5-7 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA it is stated that during project scoping, the public voiced preference for alternative routes to cross public lands rather than private lands. Nevada is largely public lands managed by the BLM. The BLM attempted to avoid private lands where possible. However, for the most part, there was little choice but to cross either some public or private land on the various alternative routes. The impacted lands were not avoidable. In southern Idaho the alternative routes cross large parcels of private lands that are irrigated agricultural areas. In these areas the routes impact farming operations. Most of the alternative routes were routed along existing roads to minimize both ground disturbance and increased public access into remote areas. Many of the alternative routes also utilize designated utility corridors parallel to existing transmission lines (refer to the Land Use Map in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume).

LETTER #A-45
COMMENTS

E More pernicious yet, however, are the cases where a route is justified based on misplaced "environmental" criteria. This is most particularly the case where so-called "visual impact" is considered. The "visual impact" criteria show no respect whatsoever for preservation of intact open spaces. Instead, the impact is said to be greater when the powerline is visible from areas already impacted by human activities, and less when the powerline is routed through previously pristine remote desert valleys where it would totally devastate existing visual qualities. This turns the concept of environmental impact on its head! There are precious few places one can travel nowadays, whether by vehicle or foot, where human impacts are not terribly evident.

F Finally, note that all proposed routes threaten desert tortoise habitat north of Las Vegas. This is an area that was devoted to providing safe desert tortoise habitat, having been traded for other areas in the immediate Las Vegas vicinity to allow continued development there. Consequently it now deserves more stringent protection. While the EIS notes how the proposed powerline would further threaten tortoises, it offers no effective mitigation measures at all, and no route alternatives are proposed to avoid this impact.



David G. Raich
2463 Scenic Avenue
Oakland, CA 94602
3 September 1992

RESPONSES

E Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to the project study area. The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in its decision process. The BLM uses the VRM system to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model refer to the methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

F Construction of the SWIP north of Las Vegas, Nevada will have some impact on desert tortoise habitat. However, judicious planning and careful monitoring during the pre-construction and construction phases of this project are expected to reduce impacts to desert tortoise to indiscernible levels. Soil disturbances resulting from activities at tower sites and other construction areas may actually enhance growth of spring annuals and increase the forage base for tortoises in the area of construction.

LETTER #A-46
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

August 7, 1992
Mr. J. M. Jensen
Dames & Moore Project Manager
for Environmental Studies
PO Box 1601
Boise ID 83701

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Dear Mr. Jensen:

Please limit the SWIP Transmission
to areas whose natural beauty &
scenic value will not be compromised
by it.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
John Savarese
74 Mobile Ave.
Statens Island
NY - 10306

LETTER #A-47
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Terri Schilling
3412 Miramar Dr
LV. NV 89108

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Terri Schilling

LETTER #A-48
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1992

KARL SIMONSON
BLM, BURLEY DISTRICT
RT. 3, BOX 1
BURLEY, ID 83318

SIR:

THERE ARE TOO MANY ADVERSE AND
UNNECESSARY IMPACTS TO VIEWS,
TORTOISES, RAPTORS AND THE GREAT
BASIN NATIONAL PARK TO PERMIT
ANOTHER UTILITY CORRIDOR OR POWERLINE
FROM IDAHO TO LAS VEGAS VIA
EASTERN NEVADA.

LETTER #A-48
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

"NO ACTION" IS THE RIGHT
ALTERNATIVE REGARDING THIS PROJECT.

SINCERELY YOURS,

James E. Simmons

JAMES E. SIMMONS
5036 THATCHER DRIVE
MARTINEZ, CA 94553

LETTER #A-49
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992


Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,


Virginia Spencer
2235 Natalie Ave
Las Vegas NV 89109
(702) 735-9217

LETTER #A-50
COMMENTS

850 E. Desert Inn #712
Las Vegas, NV 89109
September 17, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Re: Southwest Intertie Project.

With regard to the Southwest Interie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely;


Bruce Steurer

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER A-50

LETTER #A-51
COMMENTS

850 E. Desert Inn #712
Las Vegas, NV 89109
September 17, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Re: Southwest Intertie Project.

With regard to the Southwest Interie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely;



Jane Steurer

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER A-51

LETTER #A-52
COMMENTS

TO: MR. KARL SIMONSON
FROM: MARIS VALKASS
SUBJECT: POWER LINES ACROSS NEVADA
DATE: 9-16-92

RESPONSES

- A The SWIP DEIS/DPA and this document address your concerns. Additional information on the Purpose and Need of the SWIP is on page 3-1 in Chapter 3 of this document. Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

GENTLEMEN:

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE IS
A PROPOSAL TO BUILD A NEW POWER
LINE(S) FROM IDAHO TO LAS VEGAS, NV.

THE LINES WOULD BE BUILT IN AN UNspoiled
AREA.

IT SHOULD BE BLM'S POLICY TO RESTRICT
OPENING OF NEW AREAS FOR ANY DEVELOPMENT
IF IT IS AT ALL POSSIBLE TO USE
EXISTING DEVELOPED AREAS OR RIGHTS OF
WAY. ROUTES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED
AFTER A COMPLETE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
HAS BEEN STUDIED, AND CONSIDERATION
MUST PRIMARILY GIVEN TO ENVIRONMENTAL

LETTER #A-52
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

AND SCENIC CONCERNS AS OPPOSED TO
ECONOMICS OR MONEY MAKING POSSIBILITIES.

AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THERE IS NO NEED FOR
THIS NEW POWER LINE. ALL REQUIREMENTS
CAN BE MET BY EXISTING FACILITIES.
PLEASE, DO NOT APPROVE IT. *M. Valen*

MARIS VALKASS
1728 VAN HORNE, W. REDWOOD BEACH, CA
90278

LETTER #A-53
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Clara Watson
4202 Hallendale
L.V. H.V. 89117

LETTER #A-54
COMMENTS

NORMAN WELER
RT 2 BOX 100A
BISHOP, CALIF. 93514

Grace W. Enfield
262 Academy #4
Bishop, CA 93514

Sept. 9, 1992

Karl Simonson
BLM
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Was alerted to the Southwest Intertie Project and the EIS put out for it by your Office.

Comment time for it is short so will use the following printed statements. They are similar to those my Sister and I used for a proposed intertie corridor here in Owens Valley, handled by the Bishop Office of the BLM. As Avocational Archaeologists we deplore the opening up of large Archaeologically sensitive areas to Vandalism due to easy access from right-of-way maintenance roads.

☐ Support the "NO ACTION" Alternative. No powerline should be routed down our fast disappearing natural valleys unless things are really desperate. No justification is presented in this report which shows a compelling need for the line. In fact it is a redundant line to compete with another Utah to Las Vegas powerline. Neither will run anywhere near capacity.

☐ Support the use of existing already built-upon right-of-ways rather than any designation of new right-of-ways. The impact on a new area is FAR greater than expanding an already built-upon right-of-way. When more capacity is really needed let it be added to the existing routes in Utah. The study dismissed the Utah alternative prematurely based in part upon the assumption that the now discontinued Thousand Springs plant would be built.

☐ Mention the immense visual impact to now-open valleys. The existing criteria for judging the visual impact of powerlines is skewed against preservation of NON-BUILT upon areas. Under the formula an unspoiled valley where few people go is considered less important than the valley which already has a main truck route through it. The BLM should be defending the open public lands against new encroachments, not assisting in their destruction.

☐ Mention significant desert tortoise impact especially in the Pahrnagat Wash area where power lines and highways compete for space with wildlife and wilderness study areas. Powerlines are favorite places for ravens to perch while seeking young tortoises as prey.

RESPONSES

A There would be significant visual impacts to the scenic natural landscapes of public lands. Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to the project study area. The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in their decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model refer to the methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

B There would be impacts to desert tortoise, although mitigation measures taken during construction should be very effective in reducing or eliminating these adverse effects. The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is a subject of ongoing study. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. It is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

LETTER A-54
B

LETTER #A-54
COMMENTS

- C [✖ Mention significant hawk and raptor impacts. This powerline runs the same north-south route taken by one of the largest hawk migrations in North America. The Goshute Range is a concentration point for the birds as they travel south from Canada and the northwest in the Fall. Every year numbers of hawks and eagles are killed by high voltage power.
- D [✖ Mention impacts on Great Basin National Park. The favored route runs a powerline over Sacramento Pass just north of glaciated Wheeler Peak in the Snake Range.
- E [✖ Mention the impact on an estimated 200 to 400 archaeological and historical resource sites in the direct path of the powerlines. An estimated 50 to 125 of these are expected to have "significant value", however NO consistent inventory has been made.

Please adopt the NO ACTION Alternative and put a stop to this destruction of Public Lands.

Very truly yours,

Norman Weller

Grace Weller Enfield

RESPONSES

- C Given the structural configuration of 500kV transmission lines, the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission line proposed for the SWIP would utilize V-guyed steel lattice, self-supporting steel lattice, and tubular steel H-frame towers. The spacing between conductors on towers is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. Conductors are hung on towers in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart. Further, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (refer to the SWIP DEIS/DPA pages 2-12 through 2-14). Because of the distance between conductors and the tower, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the tower.

The BLM acknowledges that numbers of raptors are killed each year in the United States as a result of electrocution. Most such incidents occur, however, on lower voltage distribution lines.

Refer to Avian Collision Hazard on page 3-89 of this document.

- D The proposed 230kV Corridor Route is approximately 2 miles north of Great Basin National Park and 4-5 miles north of Wheeler Peak. To further minimize visual impacts to travel routes leading into the park, several mitigation reroutes through Sacramento Pass have been evaluated (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document).

No significant visual impacts to viewpoints in Great Basin National Park would occur because of the distance of the alternative routes from these viewpoints. Non-specular conductors and steel H-frame towers across the highway would minimize other adverse visual effects of the SWIP.

- E If one of the routes is approved by the BLM, there will be a cultural survey completed for any potentially disturbed areas, (e.g., rights-of-way, access routes, assembly yards) prior to any ground disturbing activities. Refer to mitigation measure #9 in Table 1-6 of this document. All Cultural resource impacts will be mitigated.

LETTER #A-55
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Sept 16, 1992

KARL Simonson
BLM Burley Dist Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson,

I am a resident of Snake Valley Utah-Mojave area and also a farmer there. I have just heard about a 500 KV power line to be built through this valley alongside 2 already existing 230 KV lines and I am in direct protest of this. I AM probably the most

A Refer to the Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute section on page 3-39 of this document for a comparison of the alternative that crosses your fields versus one that avoids your fields on the north side. The alternative route on the north side of your fields has been selected as the Agency Preferred Alternative (refer to page 1-9 of this document).

LETTER #A-55
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A
affected property owner in this area
as there are at least 8 pole sites
Right though my fields already
and not any worse from a responsible
party that another is planned.

- Of all the rooms in this large
Realitively unpopulated area I
would even like to know why
by changing a fraction of degree
the direction of existing line-personal
property could ^{not} have been
completely missed in the ~~past~~
I have to work only under these
lines and it is not just the
fact that I can't receive any radio
waves under them but health ~~hazards~~

LETTER #A-55
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

hazards may also be indicated. Also
Aerial crop dusting for me is
nearly impossible etc. etc.

I understand there is an
alternative route meaning it is
total unnecessary to cross this area.

Please use the alternative Route.

I don't know if this will
reach you in time. I think some
sort of notification to people directly
impacted by big business decisions
in time to respond would be desirable.

Sincerely
Darwin C. Wheeler
P.O. Box 40 GARRISON, UT. 84773
Darwin C. Wheeler

LETTER #A-56
COMMENTS

Howard James Whitaker

7 September 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Burley District Office
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson,

RE: Southwest Intertie Project EIS

I am opposed to the use of additional public land not now used as transmission corridor being used for subject project, particularly when the proposed right-of-way transits so close to Great Basin National Park and through so many other ecologically sensitive areas. To support my opposition, I would call your attention to the following:

- A [1. The EIS fails to support the economic need for the powerline and therefore there is no justification for routing it through now-open Nevada valleys;
- A [2. When the economic justification for new powerlines can be made, then construction of such should only be allowed within existing power-transmission corridors. Adversely impacting now-open valleys is indefensible, yet the EIS gives little weight to such;
- B [3. Adverse desert tortoise impact can be expected, as powerlines are used by ravens as perches while seeking young tortises as prey. Furthermore, powerlines bring roads, roads bring ORV's and smashed tortises are the result (I've seen plenty of it);

RESPONSES

- A Refer to the expanded Purpose and Need section in Chapter 3 of this document. It is not possible to route the SWIP parallel to existing utilities for its entire length. The BLM has selected the alternative routes based on planning methodology to minimize impacts, and has subsequently studied the potential impacts of each route to select an alternative that minimizes impacts to the degree possible.

Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to the project study area. The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in its decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model refer to the methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

- B There would potentially be impacts to desert tortoise. However, the committed mitigation for desert tortoise will help to reduce adverse impacts.

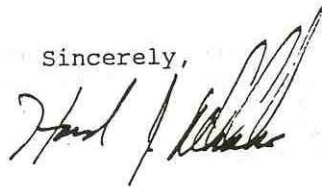
LETTER #A-56
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

C [4. Adverse raptor impact is inadequately addressed. The proposed route and area are both significant for migration and concentration.

I keep hoping and hoping that BLM will one day give wildlife, wilderness and preservation at least equal status with consumptive use of our public lands, but am continually disappointed. Is this going to be a repeat?

Sincerely,



C The entire SWIP route is not an area of known raptor concentration or migration. However, there are portions of the route where raptor populations are known to be of significance. The BLM has identified habitat and nesting areas of species such as ferruginous hawk, golden eagle, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon as areas of concern. The presence of these species has influenced the route selection process over the entire suite of alternative routes and links considered.

The introduction of the SWIP transmission line into the habitat of these species is not likely to significantly affect the continued existence of any of them. On the contrary, concern has been expressed for other species (e.g., sage grouse) because construction of the line would provide more nesting and hunting sites for some raptor species (e.g., golden eagle) with a resulting adverse impact on sage grouse.

2041 Campton Circle • Gold River, CA 95670-8301 • Home (916) 631-0565 • Pvt. Office Phone/Fax (916) 852-8990

LETTER #A-57
COMMENTS

Connie Wilcox
1612 Justin Pl.
Hend. Nv. 89015
(702) 566-6738

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Connie Wilcox

LETTER A-57

LETTER #A-58
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

DR. TERENCE PRESTON YORKS
45 East 500 North
Logan, Utah 84321
801-753-4647

AUG 5 10 04 AM '92

29 July 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The following comments apply to the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), a copy of which you were kind enough recently to forward to me. My background for this response includes formal training in physics and systems engineering (at the master's and doctoral levels), as well as considerable professional experience in energy modeling and in other environmental quality areas.

While contemplating how to respond to this document, I encountered words from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi which seemed particularly apropos, "The task is to learn how to enjoy everyday life without diminishing other people's chance to enjoy theirs". Unfortunately, philosophy at this level does not play much of a part in the current EIS process, despite how much better the public could be served thereby. The massive SWIP document set instead focuses on minutiae. With the exceptions noted below, it appears to deal with the finest details with authority.

LETTER A-58

LETTER #A-58
COMMENTS

However, the DEIS in its present form contains truly pivotal material that is grossly oversimplified in several very critical areas. The document is fatally flawed as a result. You will need, accordingly, to revise your time schedule for a final decision because of these sins of omission in the current publication. The situation regarding the SWIP is not merely a question (as it now presented) of *where* to build a transmission line, or of *how*, but also of *whether* this transmission project is justified at all.

Nevertheless, as one aware of EIS projects' normal progress, let me begin with the technical issues that need more specific attention. Where the numbers to back up the contention (pages 2-7 and 8) that DC (instead of AC) transmission is "too expensive"? In asking this, I am haunted by a mailing that I received some years ago from an electric utility (in this region) which asked me to join with them, as a CO-OP user, in opposing "too expensive" pollution controls. That set of controls, if installed at that time, would have spared the atmosphere thousands of tons of sulfur dioxide annually. When I got past very similar rhetoric to that found in the present DEIS and to the actual calculations used at that time to define "too expensive", that actual cost amounted to less than one one-hundredth of a cent per kilowatt hour. Hence, especially given the high transmission losses involved in long-distance transport of electrical energy (as is the case with the proposed SWIP), reviewers need to see the hard numbers used to define the term "too expensive". Next, those calculations need to be explicitly compared within the EIS to the cost savings that would come from the greater efficiency inherent in DC transport of power. This comparison, to be fair, needs to be made at the marginal cost of producing the power that would be lost in the AC option -- including new, unsubsidized generation costs, and the associated pollution impacts -- over the full lifetime of the project.

Related to that issue, why is the absolute magnitude of transmission losses never given within the DEIS? Over the distances described, and at the intensity specified, they are sure to be quite significant. Power lost

RESPONSES

A A DC transmission alternative for transmitting 1200 MW of power from the Midpoint Substation to the Dry Lake Area would cost about \$488 million (\$200M for line and \$144M for each line DC substation terminal) compared to \$356 million for the proposed AC transmission line. As pointed out in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, the ability to tap is considerably more difficult with a DC transmission alternative. The cost of each tap is an order of magnitude greater (\$100+ million vs. \$10 million) and is not included in the \$488 million estimate for the basic transmission line.

The actual efficiency of a comparable DC alternative would depend upon the design of that system, (i.e., voltage rating and conductor selection). For example, the Pacific DC Intertie transmission line has been uprated twice in its history, once to increase its voltage rating and the other to increase its capacity rating. The line was originally designed to operate at 1600 MW at +/- 400kV. A 1200 MW flow at +/- 400kV would have generated 8.6 percent loss. In the 1980s, the Pacific DC Intertie was uprated to +/- 500kV and is now capable of transferring 3100 MW. For a 1200 MW flow on the current DC system, the losses would be about 5.7 percent compared to 6 percent for the SWIP.

DC and AC transmission lines cause similar environmental impacts. Although DC transmission line towers have two conductors as opposed to three for AC transmission lines, the towers for a DC transmission line would be similar in size because of increased clearance requirements for DC. Further, DC substations are larger and also require neutral ground mats that are quite large.

The losses incurred on the SWIP would depend upon the loading at any given time. For a 1200 MW transfer, the losses would be about 6 percent. Below the 1200 MW level the percent losses would be reduced. For example, at 600 MW the losses would be about 3 percent.

LETTER #A-58
COMMENTS

B during transmission is also sure to require considerable additional generation capacity to replace, with all the ancillary environmental and economic costs that that entails. Transmission losses are not a factor that should be wholly ignored, as they now are.

C Further related to such losses is the specification on page 2-13 of aluminum as the conductor of choice. The use of copper could nearly halve transmission losses (and many of the problems associated with corona discharge that were discussed within the DEIS in some detail). Let's see, accordingly, a full cost/benefit comparison of a copper conductor alternative. That also needs a thorough inclusion of all related costs of transmission losses over the life of the project.

D Following the discussion of copper versus aluminum, the issue of an underground placement will need to be revisited, since lower losses mean less heat generation, thus possibly negating the central objection to the underground option.

E Shifting to the issues of soils and vegetation, on page 4-89 the similarity of SWIP and the Kern River Gas Pipeline is mentioned. Why are the notable failures in revegetation, and the exacerbated soils disturbances, beyond those anticipated in that specifically-called similar project's EIS not explicitly mentioned, instead of merely hinted at? Many of these failures are currently involved in serious litigation, since the damage was so obviously done. Why are additional restraints on construction techniques not accordingly added to this DEIS, and then underlined? The current throw-away line that desert soils are difficult to revegetate is hardly sufficient!

F Under visual impacts, on page 4-39 and in Tables 4-1 and 4-2, "dulled metal" is suggested to mitigate disturbance (where bothered with at all) by the proposed powerline to the visual environment. In the closely-related case of what are actually less visually disruptive gas and petroleum wells, terrain-appropriate painting is now required, since it is well-proven to

RESPONSES

C The equivalent electrical copper conductor size to the proposed 1590 kcmil aluminum conductor is 1000 kcmil. The weight of this size of copper conductor is 3.1 lb/ft. versus 1.8 lb/ft. for the aluminum conductor. The cost of aluminum conductor is quoted as \$.80/lb and for copper conductors is \$1.52/lb. Therefore, the copper conductor sells for \$4.71 per foot versus \$1.44 per foot for aluminum. Additionally, the copper conductor has a low strength to weight ratio which would necessitate additional and higher structures than would be required using the aluminum conductor. The project estimated conductor cost using aluminum is about \$37.4 million versus \$122.2 million for copper.

D The SWIP DEIS/DPA does not mention the most limiting technical restraint to transmitting AC power via underground cables. Voltage control along the cable can limit the distance AC power may be transmitted. The voltage control requirements of a 500kV underground cable are 20 times greater than a typical overhead line. For the SWIP project, this would require facilities spaced evenly (every 5 to 10 miles). The cost of the reactive facilities alone would exceed \$220 million (15,000 Mvar). Also, copper is a component of most high voltage underground transmission cables which would further increase costs.

E If the SWIP is approved by the BLM, a specific revegetation and restoration plan will be developed as part of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance (COM) Plan (refer to page 1-34 of this document). The reference on page 4-89 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA does not draw a similarity to the disturbances of the SWIP and the Kern River Gas Transmission Pipeline. It states instead that the Las Vegas Valley Water Development Project may cause similar disturbance to the Kern River Gas Transmission Pipeline. The discussion under Cumulative Effects in the SWIP DEIS/DPA refers to potential reasonably foreseeable future actions within southern Nevada. The ground disturbance caused by the SWIP would be much less significant than a pipeline project of this magnitude (also refer to Table 2-1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

"Terrain-appropriate painting" is not considered an appropriate mitigation for the treatment of transmission line towers in the landscapes that would be affected by the SWIP. First, painting towers would be very expensive and maintenance would be very labor-intensive. There are numerous examples of this type of tower painting in the West in a wide variety of landscapes. There

LETTER #A-58
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

F dramatically reduce visual-line contrast. Why is a similar option of terrain-appropriate painting of transmission towers not discussed, and then, why is it not required as mitigation? It would seem feasible to satisfy the separate needs of the FAA and the on-ground-viewer by angle-specific tinting.

G Further, given the ubiquity of additional development activity over time, why is the "out-of-(current)-sight, out-of-mind" mentality preserved in this DEIS, and why are not all, rather than just some, towers required to be minimally intrusive in their visual design?

H Relatedly, and introduced on page 4-37, the various photo-simulations of visual impact do not take into consideration the contrast actually perceived by area users who wear contrast-enhancing glasses. This is not a trivial point, since in this bright desert, near-desert, and/or higher altitude environment, the use of dark glasses, including polarizing and similar filters (e.g., haze-cutters such as Corning's trade-marked 'Serengeti Drivers'), will be in fact more common than not. Therefore, in the photo-simulations, the towers need to be darkened by a factor of at least two, and their boundaries sharpened. The towers are virtually certain to be more noticeable visually than they have been represented in the figures presented (even if one cynically adds in the air-quality degradation that will result from the additional electrical energy use and generation that would be occasioned by this project, through its losses, and if the lower prices it promises come about).

I This brings us to the more general issues which have been avoided in the DEIS. Primary among these is the downward spiral in environmental quality that consistently has been brought on by lowering either economic or local environmental apparent energy costs to end-point users. In studies which seem to have been conveniently overlooked within this DEIS (as it now stands), immediately lower out-of-pocket cost are well proven to encourage additional electricity use, and to decrease attention to conservation or to real productivity. As population and other demands

are few cases that demonstrate that this technique would be more successful in mitigating visual impacts than dulled towers, especially considering the substantial cost and the potential for additional environmental impacts associated with frequent access to towers and spillage of paint, thinners, and other chemicals.

G The visual assessment does not use an "out-of-(current)-sight, out-of-mind mentality". First, we have considered future land uses wherever possible. Second, the visual model assesses impacts to the scenic quality of landscapes irrespective of how it is seen. For more information refer to Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report for the full methodology and results of the visual assessment (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

H It is unlikely that the majority of viewers would be wearing "Serengeti Drivers". The photo-simulations were prepared to depict typical viewing conditions without correcting for weather, atmospheric conditions, or other circumstances that might alter the perception of the landscapes viewed.

I The requirements for least cost resource acquisition by the utilities which become partners in the SWIP would insure that the SWIP would not be developed as an alternative to conservation. Rather, the SWIP would be evaluated by potential partners in the project as part of a strategy for meeting load growth at lowest cost using conservation programs and the sharing of existing regional resources. At some time in the future when new regional generating resources are needed, transmission systems, such as the SWIP, would make more resource options available, and should help minimize costs and environmental impacts.

Long-term costs, not immediate out-of-pocket costs, are used by utilities and regulatory agencies to measure the costs of alternative resource options. Participation in the SWIP would be evaluated on this basis by the utilities considering partnership in the project. Also refer to response J below.

LETTER #A-58
COMMENTS

I grow, this strategy eventually and inevitably increases, rather than decreases, the kinds of problems that are listed as primary justification for the SWIP.

J This consideration, which is not covered within the DEIS, is especially important because long distance transmission of electricity is even explicitly noted to allow the related degradation that results from of local action to be transferred elsewhere. Similar past projects have already permitted Los Angeles and Las Vegas to ship pollution that they themselves could not allow to Arizona (e.g. the Page plant that is now being painfully at least partially housebroken), to New Mexico (at the Four Corners plant, whose airborne effluent was literally visible from the moon), and to Utah (the carefully hidden from the public Intermountain facility that is to be tied into SWIP). The second-to-the-last comment on page 2-11 in the DEIS seems the very essence of the underlying operating philosophy, which could be more simply expressed by an Anglo-Saxon containing analogy: my backyard, as a result of my activities, is getting stinky; therefore it's now time to start pissing over my neighbor's fence so that I can do even more of what created the waste in the first place, without bothering to consider its consequences. Accordingly, the opening quote of this letter needs explicit inclusion and discussion within the cumulative impacts section of the SWIP-EIS, since it is precisely SWIP's long-distance transmission ties that allow such placing of ones' electricity-use effluent in someone else's backyard.

K Somewhat less sarcastically, perhaps, but no less importantly, on page 2-2 and following, how can a complete document discuss the costs and potential of conservation without even mentioning the name of Amory Lovins, or quoting his group's, and so many others (including Southern California Edison's), much more encouraging figures? This omission is clear proof that considerably more work needs to be done before a fully-informed decision on SWIP's justification can be made.

RESPONSES

J Conservation and demand-side management are integral parts of the resource strategy of every utility considering partnership in the SWIP. Federal and state regulatory requirements dictate that supply-side and demand-side resource options be considered on an equal basis in a utility's plan to acquire lowest cost resources. Conservation and other demand-side management programs are expected to reduce, but not to eliminate, the region's need for new generating resources.

Transmission facilities can contribute in several important ways to the task of the region's utilities to meet future load growth in the most efficient manner possible and with the smallest amount of new generating capacity. First, it is important to recognize the seasonal diversity of loads within the region. Transmission would allow existing resources to be used to serve seasonal load requirements in one part of the region while also meeting new load growth requirements in another part of the region. Therefore, total regional resource requirements (e.g., generation) can be reduced by using transmission. Then, when new regional generating resources are needed, transmission, such as the SWIP, would make more resource options available, and should help minimize costs and environmental impacts.

The SWIP participants are expected to include only utilities which have found through their least cost planning that the transmission capacity provided by the SWIP would be a cost effective strategy to acquire the new resources needed to serve load growth.

Also refer to expanded discussion of Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document.

K Refer to Response J above.

LETTER #A-58
COMMENTS

As a sub-point here, on page 2-5 in the DEIS, how was the stated conclusion reached that conservation has only a local impact? As an unsupported opinion, as it now stands, it seems both specious and inadequate, especially when the basic decision of whether or not to build is so directly related to it, and so much literature exists to suggest quite the opposite conclusion. Another issue also should be included as a portion of these discussions. A primary form of increased productivity is increased efficiency, and the very definition of increased efficiency is the use of less energy. America's economic competitors, particularly in Europe and Japan, have learned this lesson well; why is this factor ignored here?

L Hence, why are the real costs and more complete benefits of conservation not more directly compared to those of the proposed project? (It is curious in this regard that even immediate economic cost of the SWIP is never mentioned.) This a special key to the overall point. Many of the utilities that are indicated to be partners in SWIP have explicit legal requirements to realize conservation alternatives as their first choice for action, not just, as stated in the DEIS, when they are the immediate lowest cost option. Why is this requirement not mentioned in the DEIS? What happens when these companies start to take their legal mandate more seriously? What happens if the rest start to take into more consideration the needs of the rest of planet, or if the rest of the planet starts to make them aware of that need? In direct counterpoint to the statement made on page 4-90, there is more solid evidence available that all conservation directly, absolutely, and repeatably reduces global warming. These are just two among many reasons for a more thorough re-evaluation of this alternative.

M Finally, why (on page 1-5) are utility projections of future demand presented as if they are gospel truth (to two significant figures, no less, and without indicating a margin of error!)? Should not the not-so-distant past failures of these same sources' real-world accuracy, and the massive financial results of those failures in prediction validity (e.g., the \$5 billion lost with WPSS), be mentioned alongside the estimates now presented?

RESPONSES

L Refer to Response I above.

M Current utility forecasts of resource requirements recognize the fact that the future is uncertain and take steps to reduce the risks resulting from that uncertainty. For the same reasons that investors diversify investment portfolios to minimize the risks associated with individual stocks, utilities seek to diversify their system resources to minimize the risks associated with individual resource options. To reduce the risks associated with load growth uncertainty, utility planning favors resource options which can be developed in the shortest possible length of time. Reducing the "lead time" of resource options allows the actual commitment to construct a resource to be made at a point when forecasting uncertainty has been reduced as much as possible. By increasing the number of resource options available to a utility, the SWIP would serve as a tool for reducing the risk of over-building or under-building generating resources as a result of load and resource uncertainties.

LETTER #A-58
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

M Relatedly, on page 1-7, is not California, especially Southern California, now experiencing a decline in population growth rates, which may soon turn into a net out-migration, rather than continued growth as indicated?
Certainly, neighboring, and more distant, areas are reporting an influx of California businesses and their employees. Why is this possibility not mentioned, along with the very real possibility that neither electric demand nor immediate area population demand will occur as claimed, and why are not these points discussed in more detail?

N It seems amazing, in conclusion, that the recent dismissal of the closely-related proposal for the Thousand Springs Project in Utah is mentioned just in passing in the SWIP DEIS, and quite inappropriately without examining the very valid reasons why that project was set aside. The SWIP project seems, by reflecting upon what it now leaves unsaid, to deserve a similar oblivion.

To achieve its rightful place, however, whatever that fate may be, the SWIP EIS needs a more complete document regarding its key environmental and economic relationships, rather than just concentrating on deep coverage of its ancillary details (no matter how important these may be). As it now stands, the SWIP DEIS reminds me of a dog that is designing a very carefully constructed and comfortable bed, but without noticing that he was doing so in the middle of a passing lane of a major highway.

N The SWIP is in no way tied to the Thousand Springs Power Project. However, NEPA requires that "foreseeable" future projects be addressed under cumulative effects. The Thousand Springs Power Project was a current proposal during the SWIP EIS process. It appears now that it has been withdrawn from further consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Terence P. Yorks, Ph.D.

LETTER #A-59
COMMENTS

Mason Valley at sunrise, looking south at the Laguna Mountains. Teddy bear cholla, agave and ocotillo, which dominate the foreground here, are found in abundance in this valley. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Photo: Paul R. Johnson

RE: Southwest Intertie Project

It is important to use existing right-of-ways for power lines. The visual impact on open valleys of new power lines would be horrendous + would not be protecting resources for future generations. An undisturbed valley is an important legacy and is emotionally satisfying to many people. Isn't the BLM supposed to manage public resources? Keep the visual impact minimized by protecting open valleys.



Published, 1980 by Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

**COMMENT LETTERS AND
RESPONSES FROM ORGANIZATIONS**

LETTER #B-2
COMMENTS



September 10, 1992

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CHRIS BROWN
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GRACE BUKOWSKI
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FELDING M. McGEHEE III
Membership/Publications

JOE SANCHEZ
Native American Program

J.R. WILKINSON
Administrative Assistant

Karl Simonson
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Greetings. Citizen Alert is a 2600-member statewide citizens organization founded in 1975. Our mission is to address significant environmental, nuclear and military issues from the perspective of how these impact the land, economy and people of the Great Basin. Following are our comments on the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS):

- As no need for the crosstie has been demonstrated, and the project will result in environmental degradation around Great Basin National Park, we urge the "no action" alternative.

- The environmentally preferred Cutoff Route, and NOT the Crosstie Route must be the preferred route should the project go ahead at all. To cite the FLPMA policy of consolidating corridors "where possible" as the reason for supporting the Cutoff Route is ludicrous and disingenuous in the extreme. The present 230 kV lines are invisible compared to the odious specter of massive steel towers and 500kV lines. What a wonderful first impression to give visitors to Great Basin National Park! BLM admits it is concerned about the visual effects of the Cutoff Route on page 2-48. Transfer this concern into action, and mandate the environmentally preferred route.

RESPONSES

A The visual impacts of the 230kV Corridor Route, including those to Great Basin National Park viewpoints, are accurately described on page 4-45 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Refer to Table 2-5 for a summary of the environmental comparison and pages 2-57 and 2-58 for the reasons that the 230kV Corridor Route is the Agency Preferred route. Also refer to page 3-12 in this document for a description of cumulative effects. Your preference for the Cutoff Route is noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER B-2

LETTER #B-2
COMMENTS

B [• The DEIS suggests potential human health risks exist from exposure to high voltage transmission lines. Unlike the Crosstie Route, the Cutoff Route avoids homes and farms, greatly reducing continual human exposure to electromagnetic radiation. As any expert in this field (who is not on the payroll of an electrical utility) will tell you, the Cutoff Route is clearly more acceptable from a public health perspective.

- The DEIS states the Corridor Route and the Cutoff Route have similar environmental impacts. This would be credible only if you did not consider visual pollution and continual human exposure to electromagnetic radiation, both of which are guaranteed by the Corridor Route and greatly minimized by the Cutoff Route.

Finally, if the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and BLM were genuinely committed to minimizing environmental and human health impacts, there would be no question about which route to pursue. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Bob Fulkerson
Executive Director

RESPONSES

B Please refer to Cumulative Effects on page 3-12 of this document for additional information regarding environmental comparisons of the Ely to Delta segment routing alternatives. Also refer to Electric and Magnetic Fields on page 3-72 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and Recent EMF Research Results on page 3-19 of this document.

LETTER #B-3
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



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September 17, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Rte. 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Re: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS on SWIP DEIS

Dear Mr Simonson,

Citizen Alert has submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP). The following additional comments are submitted by Citizen Alert's Southern Nevada Office in Las Vegas.

PURPOSE AND NEED: SWIP is a proposal by Idaho Power Company (IPC) 500 mile 500 kV powerline from Shoshone, Idaho to Dry Lake Valley near Las Vegas. The stated purpose is to allow for north-south power transfers.

The DEIS does not present adequate information to show a need for SWIP. A transmission line to a desert valley in southern Nevada does not satisfy the stated need for power transfers with the Southwest. Obviously, SWIP would be a component of a complex regional system, but this DEIS does not give enough information on this system to indicate the feasibility of either the regional system or the SWIP component.

There is not enough information to support a choice of Dry Lake Valley as terminus, nor is there sufficient indication of why substations need to be located at Thousand Springs, Ely, and possibly Delamar. One is left to infer that SWIP is dependant on plans to locate coal burning generators at these sites and that SWIP will encourage rather than defer new power projects.

A Additional information is presented under Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 on page 3-1 of this document. The SWIP DEIS/DPA was not intended to evaluate the regional transmission system.

B Potential interconnections have been identified in the Wells and Ely areas which could provide significant load or interconnection service to the local utilities. The SWIP would require series compensation sites located along the line for voltage support. Due to the nature of series compensation stations, these sites would also be a good location for any interconnections that may be desired by other utilities. The SWIP would not be dependent upon any specific power plant integration. Refer to page 1-3 in Chapter 1 and the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project under Cumulative Effects on page 3-14 of this document.

LETTER #B-3 COMMENTS

C [The analyses of power demand in the Northwest and in the Southwest are not adequate to show need for SWIP. In fact it appears from the DEIS that the higher rate of load growth in the Southwest in winter makes SWIP less feasible. The "balanced demand peaks" in the IPC service area indicate a similar conclusion.. The coastal regions with the highest demand already have existing transfer systems as well as the new Third AC Intertie project.

"Reliability," which essentially means a proliferation of widely spaced powerlines redundantly connecting the same points is not sufficient justification for SWIP which represents a secondary, seasonal power source: the high environmental costs outweigh the meager benefit, "Enhancement of the electrical grid" is not sufficient justification for defacement of the Great Basin.

D [The DEIS mentions few benefits to rural Nevadans from SWIP. Employment opportunities are limited and of short duration. If SWIP is intended to increase the availability of low cost power to rural areas in the state, this is not mentioned.

E [This DEIS also applies to a proposed 200 mile "Crosstie" from Ely, Nevada to Delta Utah. An examination of the relationship of these two different projects is essential under cumulative impacts. However, the purpose and need for the two projects do not coincide, and the crosstie project should not be submitted for decision in this document. The argument that "Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, will probably reapply" for this transmission line is inadequate to justify including the Crosstie in this DEIS, especially since the overwhelming public response to the scoping hearing in Delta, Utah was "no more transmission lines."

Citizen Alert urges the NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE because of lack of sufficient need for SWIP.

F [PROJECT ALTERNATIVES; While the EIS considers alternative routes it does not consider real alternatives to the project such as alternate energy sources, including energy efficiency. While the mention of some of the existing energy efficiency programs in the Northwest and Desert Southwest is a plus, there is inadequate discussion about expanding these programs. The omission of Nevada is significant. The rapidly growing power demand of Nevada's urban centers is cited as justification for SWIP; the untapped opportunity for energy and water conservation in Nevada is not mentioned.

The Deis argues that SWIP's purpose is regional while conservation programs are local. Therefore the latter are not worthy of further consideration. This argument is absurd. It assumes that the final

RESPONSES

C The IPCo may have more of a balanced winter/summer peak demand, but the remainder of the Northwest does not. Please refer to page 1-10 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of 3000 MW of seasonal diversity and Chapter 3 of this document for the expanded Purpose and Need.

System reliability would be a major benefit or result of the integration of the SWIP into the WSCC system. System reliability is not a major part of the purpose and need for the SWIP.

D The SWIP is not intended to supply low cost power to rural Nevada.

E Refer to the Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document for additional explanation of the relationship between the SWIP Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and the Ely to Delta segment.

F The statement that conservation affects energy use and system reliability on a local rather than a regional basis is meant simply to indicate that the conservation programs of individual utilities, like their generating resources, have a localized impact. Of course, conservation throughout the western region certainly will have an impact on overall future generating resource requirements in the region.

By reducing new regional generating requirements, however, conservation does not correspondingly reduce the value of regional transmission for minimizing resource costs. Even with reduced generating requirements, environmental and economic considerations may require siting new generation at substantial distances from population and load centers, thus requiring new transmission such as the SWIP. Also, because of the seasonal diversity which exists between Northwest and Southwest loads and resources, purchases and exchanges of power over the SWIP would be expected to help the entire region meet load growth by utilizing existing resources more efficiently. Finally, regional conservation potential may be developed more fully given the availability of adequate regional transmission to move it.

Without such transmission, the cost effectiveness of conservation programs must be determined on the basis of the avoidable generating resource costs of an individual utility. Utilities having a lower avoided cost will be able to develop conservation resources to a lesser degree than utilities with a higher avoided cost. Transmission can enable the development of conservation

LETTER #B-3 COMMENTS

F objective is to build a major project, forgetting that the true purpose is to serve costumers efficiently at the least monetary and environmental cost.

G ROUTE ALTERNATIVES: The DEIS considers seven alternative routes for SWIP. While northern route alternatives are based on extensive study, alternatives routes from Ely south have not been developed. The main considerations in the selection of the one proposed route appear to have been avoidance of Air Force training routes and consolidation of routes with other power lines, in particular the White Pine Power (WPPP) and Utah Nevada Transmission (UNTP) projects. Insufficient attention has been paid to avoidance of visual impacts near Hwy 93 and from other important view points in the area.

H The west slopes of the Highland and Bristol ranges are visited frequently by local residents and tourists. These are historical mining districts of great interest. The sites also provide locally famous vistas of unspoiled valleys and distant ranges. The intrusion of SWIP on this scene would be a significant defacement.

I Nevada's highways offer a unique experience to the traveler; our clear open spaces are visually and spiritually rewarding. Hwy 93, named by act of Congress the Great Basin Highway, offers some particularly fine views that will be permanently defaced by SWIP, WPPP and UNTP: in particular, the west escarpment of the Arrow Canyon Range with its strikingly banded limestones and the view of Comet Peak in the Highland Range (a national landmark) from Delamar Flat. The DEIS dismissal of Hwy 93 as a "moderate sensitivity viewpoint" is inadequate, as is the omission of other important viewpoints. .

Of the four alternative routes for the crosstie, Citizen Alert strongly urges the cutoff route as opposed to the "preferred alternative" through Sacramento Pass. The latter route would degrade the vistas of Mount Wheeler and the Snake Range from outside the Park and spoil views of the valleys from the Parks mountainsides. This defeats the Parks intended purpose of preserving a classic example of the Basin and Range Province of the western U.S.

J DESIGN: Because of Air Force concerns SWIP will employ towers less than 100 feet high in some areas. If IPC will consider lowering the towers sufficiently so that airplanes can fly over them, why not lower ALL the SWIP towers to mitigate visual impacts?

K SWIP requirement for 2,000 ft separation from other transmission lines appears excessive. The reliability argument is inadequate and not supported by data in the DEIS. There is no indication how wide a separation would satisfy the WSCC criteria and the 2,000

RESPONSES

throughout the region at a level determined by the highest avoidable generating costs in the region.

Also refer to the expanded Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document.

G Refer to pages 2-31 through 2-32 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of the expansion of the project south of Ely to the Dry Lake area. The BLM believes that sufficient attention has been paid to visual impacts on the Ely to Dry Lake segment of the SWIP. All impact studies for all the alternative study corridors were completed to the same level of detail.

H Few historic mining sites have been formally recorded along Links 673, 674, and 675, but the historic mining town of Bristol Wells, dating from 1880, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (refer to Volume IV - Cultural Environment Technical Report, page 9-69). Link 674, which would have the most impact on this resource, was dropped from all alternative routes. The chosen alternative, Link 673, is more than three miles away and residual visual impacts are projected to be low (refer to Appendix H for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

I The visual sensitivity rating for U.S. State Highway 93 is accurate. This highway has no formal designation as a scenic highway or byway, but it meets the use volume and user type criteria to be considered a moderate sensitivity viewpoint. No other important viewpoints were pointed out during the inventory or subsequent reviews of the documents.

J In fact, lowering towers would not decrease visual impacts, but would likely increase the significance of visual impacts because more towers would be required to maintain adequate clearance between the ground and conductors (per National Electric Safety Code standards). The average span of about 1/4 mile allows the best balance between height, number of towers, and economic costs.

K The 2,000-foot separation requested applies specifically to separating the SWIP and the UNTP. Each right-of-way evaluation or request within the WSCC system should consider the specific line combinations to determine whether a specific separation is required. The issue is the credibility of a

LETTER #B-3
COMMENTS

K [apparently influenced Bureau of Land Management planning for utility corridors up to three miles wide in some districts. This represents an over commitment of public land for this use, and invites the proliferation rather than the reduction and consolidation of projects. Separation will likely increase the visual impacts and extend the area of environmental impacts related to surface disturbance. Cumulative impacts will multiply from over development of the SWIP route due to the over-wide corridor.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS; This DEIS must go a lot further to present the impacts of SWIP in the context and in relation to the impacts of all other major utility projects existing or proposed in the region impacted. The DEIS should include information on regional planning to reduce the cumulative impacts of these projects. The analysis of likely cumulative impacts needs to be considerably expanded, for example,

L [1) If Coal burning generator plants are likely to be built at any of the substation points what would be the effects on air quality and visibility. Air emissions from the existing Moapa plant result in reduced visibility north of Caliente, as can be observed from the BLM fire lookout station at Ella Mt. What would be the effect of a plant at Dry Lake Valley on air quality in Moapa. Is the Delamar substation a possible generation site? If so what likely impacts would result?

M [2) Would the viability of SWIP likely depend on new power generating facilities being developed in Nevada? To what extent would the existence of SWIP as proposed increase the likelihood of that other projects with major environmental effects would be approved? These would include power generating plants, additional transmission lines, and water pipeline projects such as the Las Vegas Valley Water District's rural water importation plan.

Citizen Alert urges the No-Action Alternative for SWIP because of the extensive environmental impacts which would probably result from cumulative effects of this and other projects which the DEIS fails to adequately address.

Sincerely,



Louis Benezet

Southern Nevada Office

RESPONSES

simultaneous loss of the circuits involved. The WSCC Criteria says:

"..., the credibility of loss of a particular set of lines will depend upon the total distance of common corridor shared by the lines and upon the vulnerability of the circuits over that distance to a common mode failure. Considerations for this vulnerability assessment will include line design; length; location, whether forested, agricultural, mountainous, etc.; outage history; operational guides; and separation. For example, some utilities use separation by more than the span length as adequate to designate the circuits as being in separate corridors."

This issue is not new. For example, the Third Pacific 500kV AC Intertie requested and received miles of separation between it and two existing 500kV interties in forested areas. This separation was required to allow adequate response time to adjust the system following the loss of the existing lines and a potential loss of the third 500kV line. Similar to the SWIP and the UNTP, the consequences of such an outage would be wide spread outages in the WSCC system. Without this separation, that project would probably not be feasible.

L There is no information to indicate that generation plants may be constructed at substation locations. A series compensation station is planned in the Delamar area (refer to Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

M The SWIP would not be dependent on the success or failure of any generation facilities proposed now or in the future (refer to Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the expanded Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document). It is unknown what effect the SWIP would have on the likelihood of other projects being permitted. Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, in the SWIP DEIS/DPA states that the construction of the SWIP may defer the need for new generation. The Cumulative Effects section of Chapter 4 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA discusses reasonably foreseeable future actions, but they would not be dependent on the success or failure of the SWIP.

LETTER #B-4
COMMENTS



COMMITTEE FOR IDAHO'S
HIGH DESERT
P.O. BOX 2863 BOISE, IDAHO 83701

Phone 208-587-4326 * FAX 208-788-4259

RESPONSES

- A The purpose and need has been expanded in this document (refer to Chapter 3).

September 17, 1992

Mr Karl Simonson
BLM Project Director
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

RE: SIP DEIS

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The Committee for Idaho's High Desert (CIHD) is Idaho's largest desert conservation organization and was incorporated in 1981. Our members use the deserts of Idaho, Nevada, and Utah for educational, scientific, literary, social, recreational, artistic, and religious purposes.

CIHD, in this letter, is also providing comments for Idaho members of the Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association, Inc. (NORA). CIHD submits the following comments on the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

A. INADEQUACIES UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT:

- A[1. The Purpose and Need Statement is inadequate and presupposes the Preferred Alternative, in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

LETTER B-4

LETTER #B-4
COMMENTS

- B [2. The range of alternatives is inadequate (consisting of one choice!) and presupposes the Preferred Alternative, in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.
- C [3. The No Action Alternative is not adequately analyzed, in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act, and the EIS presuppose the Preferred Alternative. For example, the consequences of conservation are not adequately analyzed.
- D [4. Specific mitigation plans for effects on raptors, wildlife, and other resources are inadequate, in violation of National Environmental Policy Act regulations, and monitoring plans for foreseen and unforeseen effects on such resources as raptors are not present in the EIS.
- E [5. Cumulative impact studies for raptors, visual resources, and other resources are inadequate for National Environmental Policy Act compliance.

B. SPECIFIC CONCERNS AND INADEQUACIES:

- F [1. The maps in the EIS fail to adequately describe the land gradient from north to south along the project. Contours of the proposed rights-of-way for the project appear to follow water grade from the Snake River in Idaho to Las Vegas (and the nearby Colorado River), with existing or proposed substation located suspiciously near the several lift points.
The maps should reveal the gradient for all alternatives.
- G [2. The EIS should more clearly describe the business relationship between Idaho Power Company and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for this project.
- H [3. The EIS should specifically list all undesignated, and reserved rights-of-way which are associated with this project.
- I [4. Any Congressional requirements regarding granting of rights-of-way for the project on Public Lands, military lands, or private lands should be explained in the EIS.

RESPONSES

- B The range of alternatives studied in the SWIP DEIS/DPA is adequate and meets NEPA requirements. Alternatives must be considered but can be eliminated from further consideration if they are not found to be "reasonable and feasible" in meeting the project's stated purpose and need, with the exception of the No-Action Alternative. Please refer to Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of the range of alternatives considered.
- C The No-Action Alternative is adequately analyzed. Energy conservation and load management are addressed on page 2-2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and further discussed on page 3-16 of this document.
- D The mitigation planning for this project has been adequate to assess alternatives and arrive at an environmentally preferred route. It would not be practical to prepare either specific mitigation plans or monitoring plans, for all the alternative routes. The number of iterations of mitigation and monitoring plans that would have to be prepared to incorporate all of the possible link combinations examined for the EIS would be enormous.
- A Construction, Operation and Maintenance (COM) Plan for the project will be developed following a Record of Decision. The COM Plan will address such issues as biological and cultural resources clearances, specific mitigation planning, and monitoring (refer to page 1-34 of this document).
- E The studies conducted for the SWIP DEIS/DPA are adequate for NEPA compliance.
- F The gradient of the various routing alternatives is irrelevant. The alternative routes were in no way laid out to set up a water project as you suggest. Refer to page 2-9 under Routing Alternatives in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the SWIP Regional Study (D&M, 1989).
- G The relationship between the IPCo and the LADWP is described on page 2-17 of the DEIS/DPA and further explained in Chapter 1 of this document.
- H Figure 1-1 in this document shows the designated utility corridors as well as the planning corridors. These utility corridors are described in the resource management plans (RMPs) or management framework plans (MFPs) of the

LETTER #B-4
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- J 5. The EIS should explain the relationship of the proposed corridors to the raptors migration routes. The corridors appear to follow the principle raptor migration route for North America and cumulative impacts and mitigation for raptor electrocution, etc. must be specifically addressed.

C. OTHER CONCERNS:

CIHD specifically objects to, and will oppose, any intrusion, including visual intrusions, into any Wilderness Study Area.

Please notify CIHD of all actions regarding this matter.

Thank you for attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



Randy Morris, Chairman

affected BLM districts and resource areas. There are no records of any undesignated or reserved rights-of-way in the project area.

The BLM does have numerous small rights-of-way for access roads, ditches, pipelines, buried fiber optic lines, and other uses throughout the SWIP corridors. The BLM will contact all holders of existing rights-of-way to notify them of the selected route and solicit their concerns.

- I There are no Congressional authorizations needed to grant a right-of-way across public lands for the SWIP. The BLM and other federal land management agencies have the authority to grant rights-of-way on public lands. Rights-of-way across private lands would be negotiated between the project proponent and the private land owner.

- J A specific raptor migration route has not been identified. It is well known that large numbers of migratory raptors are present in the Goshute Mountains during both spring and fall.

Given the structural configuration of 500kV transmission lines, the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The SWIP 500kV transmission line would use V-guyed steel lattice, self-supporting steel lattice, and tubular steel H-frame towers. The spacing between conductors and towers is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. Conductors are hung on the supporting towers in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart (Olendorff, 1986, p. 13). Further, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (refer to pages 2-12 through 2-14 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Because of the distance between conductors and supporting towers, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower of a 500kV transmission line.

Also refer to Avian Collision Hazard on page 3-89 of this document.

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

**CONNECTING POINT
FOR
PUBLIC LANDS**

POB 705 - Picabo
Idaho - 83348
208 788-2837

9/17/92

TO: Mr. Karl Simonson, project manager
SWIP DEIS
FROM: Janet OCrowley

Dear Sir: I do not see the NEED for another power transmission line through Nevada heading toward Las Vegas.

If Intermountain Power Project could not find sufficient incentive in the demand market to complete its AC power line south through Delta and beyond -- and if Idaho Power plans, or if UNTP plans, or if a consortium plans a cross-tie line from Delta - N. Ely, what conceivable reason could Idaho power have for building yet another line?

That may be a rhetorical question if it is true that Idaho Power has other objectives concealed within this proposal. What the nature of those other objectives need not be the concern of BLM, but BLM should take more seriously the need of the applicant to show NEED for the project - the stated project.

What I see here rather than need is opportunity. opportunity to reap a huge profit in the future water and power market. The cost will be born by owners of the public lands in loss of amenities. I am very familiar with the Lincoln County-Clark County terrain, have lived there, having explored its byways and revelled in its open and unimpaired naturalness (except along highway right-of-ways). I cannot agree that any private company should be allowed to disfigure and clutter, to irretrievably and irreversibly disfigure our public lands in this manner when no need other than a corporation's desire to expand and to increase profits at the public expense.

RESPONSES

- A The IPCo has requested the right-of-way to construct the SWIP because of the reasons stated in the Purpose and Need statement in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in the expanded discussion under Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document. Also refer to the discussion of the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project which is fully described on page 2-37 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

LETTER B-5

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

B I should like also to comment on the DEIS itself as a document. Succinctly, my impression is of a great deal of data gathering and engineering study which will no doubt be utilized in construction design. That is a plus for the applicant. What I do not see in the discussion of Impacts is any concern for what those impacts mean to the public. They are simply stated and that is that. They do not enter into the decision of "whether or not to proceed" as the National Environmental Protection Act specifies. For example: p 4-11 pp2 *There is no way to mitigate predation of sage grouse...these impacts would remain high even after mitigation and would be long term and significant.* pp3 *These impacts (to curlews) would be adverse and long-term.* pp 4 *These impacts (to sage grouse) would be significant, adverse, and long-term.* And on and on and on all through the wildlife section.

C We are referred to Table 2 for specific mitigation measures only to find no intention to repair, or offset these horrendous, permanent damages to our wildlife populations. There are instead 12 design features listed such as non-shiney insulators and dulled-finish metal towers. There is a total absence of on-site or off-site mitigation which might include purchase of other roadless lands to be managed for sage grouse, or dedication of sandhill crane or curlew grassland.

Apparently what Idaho Power considers its sole responsibility in the way of making up to the public for what it wants to destroy **significantly, adversely and long-term** is a one-time expenditure of its structures and their emplacement (as by helicopters).

My reaction as a long-suffering, significantly, adversely affected public citizen is this plan cannot be approved. No way, until Idaho Power offers **significant, benign, long-term** measures to offset the impacts to the land and the wildlife.

D May I ask in all seriousness What does Idaho Power offer the public in return for the assets we are expected to give up? Perhaps a perpetual royalty percentage of the profits to be invested in a land-water-wildlife trust to be administered by a public citizen selected trust corporation? Or are we to expect a reduction of power rates so long as the adverse impacts continue? I expect this question to be answered in the Final Impact Statement.

RESPONSES

B The intent of NEPA documents is disclosure of facts, without bias. The decision of whether or not to proceed must be based on many criteria, including environmental impacts (disclosed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA), project costs, and public input. The alternatives development, inventory, and impact assessment have been an environmental process. Some engineering input is necessary to determine routing feasibility and to understand what activities could result in impacts.

C There are a number of generic mitigation measures listed in Table 4-1 of the DEIS/DPA that would be applied throughout the project to minimize impacts. Specific mitigation, rehabilitation, and monitoring plans will be developed with the BLM during preparation of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan (also refer to page 1-34 of this document).

D The IPCo's mandate is to provide reliable, low-cost energy in the most efficient manner possible. Also, as explained in the Purpose and Need in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, the SWIP would reduce the need for the construction of new generation resources. It would also push out the need for rate increases to customers. The regional economic benefits of the SWIP are described on page 3-8 of this document. In addition, some of the direct benefits include annual right-of-way rental fees paid to the public land-administering agency and the tax benefits to the various counties that would be crossed (refer to the socioeconomic sections in Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Also, please refer to the expanded discussion of the purpose and need in this document, specifically the section on least-cost planning.

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

E May I ask what is the Bureau of Land Management doing here to fulfill its duty of land manager? In what way is it fulfilling the FLPMA behest that "public lands remain under the stewardship of the Federal Government, unless disposal is in the national interest, and that their resources be managed under a multiple-use that will best meet future needs of the american people." Quote from BLM *Wildlife on the Public Lands*.

I am enclosing an analysis I made of the corridor selection and a cover letter I have sent with it to prominent persons in Idaho. Will you please make it part of the record of public comment?

Janet Crowley

RESPONSES

E The BLM public lands policy is based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Use of the public lands for rights-of-way is one of the multiple uses just as is the use of the public lands for recreation, wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, timber production, mineral production, and the protection of cultural and historical resources. All of these uses are considered by BLM managers in making a decision on any given land use proposal.

Use of public land for right-of-way purposes is not a disposal of the land. A right-of-way is an authorization to rent public land for a definite period of time and is subject to an annual rental payment, specific stipulations for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility, and is subject to regular compliance checks to assure compliance to the terms and conditions of the Right-of-Way Grant. Public land within a right-of-way, in most cases, is open to public use like any of the other public lands. The BLM can require joint occupancy of a right-of-way by other compatible facilities. BLM managers are managing the public lands for multiple uses and are taking into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources in their decisions.

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

**CONNECTING POINT
FOR
PUBLIC LANDS**

POB 705 - PICABO, ID 83348
(208) 788-2837

RESPONSES

- F The gradient of the various routing alternatives is irrelevant. The alternative routes were in no way laid out to set up a water project as you suggest. Refer to page 2-9 under Routing Alternatives in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the SWIP Regional Study (D&M, 1989).

9/15/92

ANALYSIS OF IDAHO POWER'S SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROPOSED ROUTING
Perhaps this SWIP acronym should more properly be spelled "SWIPE".
The informed opinion of a reliable observer has long held that the powerline routing here shown conceals within itself the lowest gradient course for conducting water from vicinity of Hagerman, Idaho to Las Vegas, NV.

Many seemingly unrelated details known to me strengthen this suspicion.
Nothing in this analysis of route chosen by Dames and Moore for Idaho Power goes contrary to the hypothesis.

- F Using only U.S. Geodetic Survey maps: Twin Falls, Wells, Ely, Lund I retraced the thrice-favored route shown in the Draft Environmental Statement of June 1992 "Southwest Intertie Project DEIS DPA" (available from Dames and Moore, POB 1601, Boise, ID 83701.) I transposed the route shown as "Environmentally, Utility and Agency Preferred route" shown in green, blue and red onto GS maps in the library. To the degree of accuracy possible to ascertain from the DEIS' obscured background, and considering the apparently much smoothed DEIS lines, I laid out the route on Geodetic Survey maps with 200' contours to discover that there are only three upgradient portions on the preferred route. One of these roughly coincident with a major generating station "Salmon Falls"; one is at the end of a major intertie line (from IPP's Delta substation in Utah); while the third route point where a major lift would be required is at Wilkins, NV, where a major generating plant was planned. This Thousand Springs plant was only scrubbed in 1989 when a consortium fell apart due to internal

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

disagreement and the apparent involvement of crime family money. Major opposition on environmental grounds to the Thousand Springs plant was voiced in Utah, and Idaho, which caused Congressional delegates to publicly oppose the project.

Note: The Midpoint to Salmon Falls segment of the proposed power line is shown in the DEIS as an alternative eliminated, however this corridor is already heavily powerlined and could be added later if and as a water-transport corridor is requested. The lift required to raise water from the Snake River at Salmon Falls is the smallest at any point after the River leaves Milner Dam. The gradient UP the Salmon Falls Creek is relatively gentle, and could be powered from the Salmon Falls generating plant.

Note 2 The electrical energy necessary to lift water through the gap in the Egan Range north of Ely could well be supplied by 345 KV from the Intermountain Power Project at Delta, Utah, which the DEIS explains is not integral to Idaho Power's intertie Project, but is left in the DEIS as a favor to the IPP, and will be signed over to them after approval of the SWIP.

Note 3 Substations are conveniently situated to the necessary lift points: Thousand Springs, Goshute, North Steptoe, Robinson Summit. The three major lifts required appear to be 1) up the Salmon Falls Creek bed, 2) at Cobre 3) at Steptoe over Robinson Summit on Highway U.S. 6.

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Points on the Utility Preferred Route with elevations in feet:

Hagerman Rim	3000	Townsend Well	7000
Salmon Falls Res.	5100	Jake's Wash	6300
Jackpot	5200	White River Vly	6000
Follow RR route to Wilkins		Preston	5400
Siding	6000	Adams, McGill Lake (could	
Up Toano Draw	6000	stay higher)	5100
Cobre	5800	Pahroc	5400
RR route to Goshute		Dry Lake Vly	4800
	5600	Delamar Vly	4000
Currie	5700	Maynard Lake	3200
Warm Springs	5800	Down all the way to	
Steptoe	6200	Dry Lake Subst.	
Cross Egan Range	7600		

F

Major lifts are: Hagerman Rim, Up Salmon Falls Crk to Jackpot, Up Toano Draw, and at Steptoe over the Egan Range. Proper engineering could doubtless follow contours to maintain elevation in many places, or the use of "siphons" would move water over descents without the need for power. It must be noted that the route highlighted in this DEIS for "powerline" follows many deviations from direct line, and all of these deviations appear to coincide with finding the lowest gradient route.

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

**CONNECTING POINT
FOR
PUBLIC LANDS**

POB 705 - Picabo
Idaho - 83348
208 788-2837

9/17/92

Dear _____

*Letter to prom-
inent persons
in Idaho*

F Herewith is a short selection from my file on schemes to move massive quantities of water around in north America.

I believe you will be interested in the possibility that Idaho Power may be prepositioning itself to obtain an optimum gradient corridor for water transfer in the guise, or at the same time it becomes permitted for a power transmission corridor from the Snake River to the Las Vegas vicinity.

I do not have access to the sources that could add more details to this shadowy outline. We are all aware of Southern California's insatiable thirst, of its history in acquiring water from whatever source by any means. We also know of Clark County, Nevada's ongoing initiative to preempt all the water sources in its nearby defenseless sister counties.

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

F | All I can claim is that the elements are here that allow Idaho Power to participate in this grandiose scheme. I present it for your information, in the hope that you will scrutinize these documents in the light of information you may have already. If the logic appears clear to you, that you would take steps to publicize and to thwart these designs on Idaho's water.

If not you, then who?

James Crowley

LETTER #B-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

**CONNECTING POINT
FOR
PUBLIC LANDS**

POB 705 - Picabo
Idaho - 83348
208 788-2837

9/18/92

*Next-day acknowledgment
to letter*

Please bear with me. After mailing a letter to you yesterday concerning Idaho Power's Southwest Intertie Project that points out an arguable connection with the Los Angeles Water and Power Department's schemes to pipe Northwest water to the Southwest, then I discovered in the Draft Environmental Impact study this following paragraph. The evidence would not be comprehensive without it.

Here it is: *page 4-89 "Future Projects"*

- Las Vegas Valley Water Development Project - a proposed water development project is being planned by Clark County to increase the municipal and industrial water supply of the Las Vegas area. The pipeline planned to transport the water from north of Clark County will utilize utility corridors used by the SWIP or prepare a plan amendment. The pipeline could be in the range of 36 inches in diameter

Soils - Expected ground disturbance would be similar to the recently constructed ~~Yam River~~ Gas Transmission Pipeline. The disturbed area would be about 100

Please consider this carefully

Cordially

LETTER B-5

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



DESERT SURVIVORS
P.O. Box 20991
Oakland CA, 94620-0991

September 17, 1992

Karl Simsonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Comments on the Draft EIS for the
SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT

Dear Sir:

Thank you for this opportunity to address our concerns with this proposal. **Desert Survivors** is a cooperative non-profit desert conservation group. We have been working to protect arid lands in California and Nevada for many years. We sponsor numerous trips yearly introducing hundreds of people to desert areas in the Great Basin, Mojave, and other desert habitats. Our interests are most closely allied with preservation of the habitats of remote areas, wildernesses, wilderness study areas, and other roadless tracts. In recent years we have come to realize that these now identified islands of wilderness cannot be expected to sustain themselves for long without a regional approach to their management.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

SUPPORT FOR THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

A [The EIS has identified fairly clearly the enormous impact upon the local environment that this proposed project would have. We feel that the EIS has not gone far enough in uncovering the whole impact.

B [Here you have presented us with a project which has taken a regional approach to solving what seems to be largely a inter-state power-marketing problem but which ignores regional issues when assessing the impacts upon the environment. For example, much time has been spent looking at local powerline impacts but little at regional issues such as:

[What is the effect on the huge raptor migration annually using the proposed project's north-south pathway for international flights?

C [How many structure-free open space valleys will be left in this inter-state region if this project is completed?

D [How do powerlines impede inter-region migration of animal life needed to preserve biological diversity?

E [How much uncluttered open space should be available for urban people throughout the country to get a rightful sense of what remains of the "wide open spaces?"

We recognize that the answers to these questions are difficult to quantify but it is becoming clear that we as the public and you as the care-takers of our public lands must begin to grapple seriously with these issues. As the answers are not clear yet, only an over-whelming need for short term benefits should budge you from a staunch protective attitude toward these precious remaining open space lands.

Has an over-whelming need for short-term benefits been presented? Clearly not, the utilities are stumbling over themselves with vague partial justifications for this powerline. The main benefit will be the presence of a redundant powerline giving them competitive power marketing advantage.

RESPONSES

A The intent of NEPA documents is disclosure of facts without bias. The SWIP DEIS/DPA, Map Volume, Technical Reports, and Data Tables disclose the predicted impacts of the SWIP in great detail.

B A specific raptor migration route has not been identified. It is well known that large numbers of migratory raptors are present in the Goshute Mountains during both spring and fall.

Given the structural configuration of 500kV transmission lines, the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The SWIP 500kV transmission line would use V-guyed steel lattice, self-supporting steel lattice, and tubular steel H-frame towers. The spacing between conductors and towers is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. Conductors are hung on the supporting towers in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart (Olendorff, 1986, p. 13). Further, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (refer to pages 2-12 through 2-14 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Because of the distance between conductors and supporting towers, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower of a 500kV transmission line.

Also refer to Avian Collision Hazard on page 3-89 of this document.

The BLM does not have this information.

D The BLM is not aware of any scientific literature that suggests electrical transmission lines impede inter-regional migration of animal life. In a study of desert bighorn sheep in western Arizona, this was one of the focal questions. The study lasted for more than seven years and involved as many as 39 radio-collared bighorn. The study involved a 500kV transmission line and was divided into pre-construction, construction, and post-construction phases. The only significant difference between the pre-construction phase and the other phases of the study was that some radio-collared sheep spent more time within the transmission line corridor during construction than they did before or after construction. There was no statistical evidence to suggest that the presence of the energized transmission line kept sheep from moving within and among the mountain ranges of the study area.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

We therefore advocate the **NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**.

Please **STOP** this project as it is currently proposed.

We feel it would significantly erode existing natural values across the entire eastern portion of the State of Nevada and only return questionable short-term benefits. Your role as administrator and protector of the Public Lands in the United States should allow you to see clearly that projects of this massive scale can no longer be routinely justified in our rapidly vanishing western open space lands. We are disappointed that your participation in this proposal seems to take only the most narrow viewpoint.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION UNFOCUSED

- F
- Is this a project for inter-regional power transfer?
 - Is this a project for market place power brokering?
 - Is this a redundant powerline in case something happens to existing lines?
 - Is this a project to connect power sources which might or might not be built?
 - Is this a project to have in place in case energy conservation becomes unfashionable?
 - Is this a project which got started for different reasons not now valid but no one wants to kill?

To one extent or another all of these reasons are present or implied in the EIS. It seems clear that the construction of this powerline will create a large excess of power-carrying capacity which may be used only in emergencies for the foreseeable future.

The main short-term purpose seems to be to pit this new unused capacity against current powerline owners so that the sponsoring utility companies can obtain favorable powerline usage rates. This may be a benefit to some but cannot be seriously weighed against the immense impact this project will make upon currently unbuilt upon open spaces across eastern Nevada and Utah.

RESPONSES

E The BLM agrees that it is important to retain uncluttered open space wherever possible. This is one of the primary reasons why the Agency Preferred Alternative would use the 230kV Corridor Route.

F The SWIP is proposed to facilitate inter-regional power transfer. Many sections of the SWIP DEIS/DPA describe the purpose of the SWIP as providing additional transmission capacity between the northwest and the southwest transmission systems (i.e., inter-regional power transfers).

The capacity of the SWIP would provide the ability to better utilize power resources that are available and push into the future the need for the construction of new generation resources. Open access to the power market means that many entities will be able to compete for energy supplies which will create market forces that tend to hold down price increases. This creates a situation that will make it difficult to "broker" power since all entities will have their own access to the market. Refer to page 1-11 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and page 3-8 of this document.

No, the SWIP is not redundant to any other project. However, the SWIP will provide support to other power lines, like all other AC power lines in the WSCC region.

The SWIP's primary function would be to provide inter-regional power transfers. To the extent capacity is available and reliability is maintained, future interconnections with the SWIP will be allowed.

No, the SWIP would not replace conservation. Conservation and demand-side management are an integral part of the resource strategy of every utility considering partnership in the SWIP. Federal and state regulatory requirements dictate that supply-side and demand-side resource options should be considered on an equal basis in a utility's plan to acquire lowest cost resources. Conservation and other demand-side management programs are expected to reduce, but not to eliminate, the region's need for new generating resources.

Transmission facilities will contribute in several important ways to the task of the region's utilities to meeting future load growth in the most efficient manner possible and with the smallest amount of new generating capacity. First, it is important to recognize the seasonal load diversity within the region.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

REDUNDANT CAPACITY FOR ARTIFICIAL COMPETITIVE REASONS

A major impetus for this powerline project is the concept of a Marketplace and power brokering. This is a totally artificial reason for spending huge sums of money and making huge impacts on formerly unspoiled Western Public Lands. The powerline gets put in not because we need added capacity but to force parallel powerline owners to reduce transmission rates or provide access. This is what happened to railroads in the Robber Baron Era of the late 19th century. Boom and bust rate wars and monopoly pricing freeze-outs kept western farmers in turmoil for decades until some measure of government regulation somewhat leveled the table in the public interest. Unfortunately similar situations of monopoly capitalism are still going on today. The tragic thing here is that its being done on PUBLIC LAND right-of-way.

The hodge-podge of conflicting state and federal regulations and low cost public right-of-way is allowing these large utility companies to monopolize their grants to existing powerline right-of-ways. This forces competing utility companies to demand more parallel redundant public rights of way to get their power product to market.

A perfect example of this is proposed for California commercial gas customers in the Bay Area. The utility company PG&E provides gas to residential and commercial users and is regulated by the California State Public Utilities Commission. A utility company with rights to an interstate gas line right-of-way (a few miles into the Arizona border) wants to construct a new gas line to the Bay Area from Southern California. There is no need for extra capacity for gas transmission to the Bay Area. They only want to sell to current PG&E commercial customers at a lower rate than PG&E. If the project is approved, the impact of an added gas pipe line on the land will occur with no public good other than raising residential rates and lowering commercial rates.

This abuse of public lands for artificial competitive purposes must be stopped. Especially where the values of untouched lands are so high and the remaining stock of untouched land is rapidly shrinking. Say NO to this type of project!

Transmission would allow existing resources to be used to serve seasonal load requirements in one part of the region while also meeting new load growth requirements in another part of the region. Therefore, total regional resource requirements (i.e., generation) can be reduced by using transmission. Then, when new regional generating resources are needed, transmission, such as the SWIP, would make more resource options available, and should help minimize costs and environmental impacts.

No, the purpose and need of this project has not changed. Refer to the expanded discussion of purpose and need in Chapter 3 of this document.

LETTER #B-6

FLAWED PROCESS - WRONGLY ELIMINATED ALTERNATIVES

G We are greatly concerned that attention is being focussed upon the wrong area for this powerline. The original study contained alternatives which included the present-day rights of way which allow power to be moved from Las Vegas to Idaho via Salt Lake. The project eliminated them from consideration in 1989, three years ago, with the comment that it had to go through the ELY area and that land use conflicts were difficult in the Salt Lake area. (p 2-10). No further explanation of this is made in the EIS. What is the compelling reason for going through ELY? There is now no Thousand Springs Power plant. If the approved White Pine plant is built near Ely two already approved powerline right-of-ways exist for that. For the stated purpose of inter-regional power transfer upgrading the Salt Lake corridor would be an adequate alternative. Expansion of an existing built-upon right-of-way is preferable to the initial can't-turn-back damage of the first construction in an unbuilt open space. No information is provided in the EIS about the extent of "land-use conflicts" in Salt Lake. H

In any project when basic purposes and assumptions change in the review process, any previously eliminated alternatives should be put back on the table for re-review under current requirements. The refusal to reconsider this alternative is a major flaw in this EIS.

NEED FOR BASIN CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION

Basin Conservation, the need to identify and conserve the BASIN habitat in the Great Basin area of the West. Numerous studies have identified roadless areas, wilderness areas and wilderness study areas. Most are now undergoing some phase of evaluation for preservation or management. However when you look at these areas collectively, almost all involve mountainous terrain, almost all have had the flat or basin portions carved away or not recommended. Very few Basins in the Basin and Range province have been studied or identified.

H We are only now beginning to realize difficulties of long term habitat management when only isolated islands of habitat are kept. Regional ecosystems need all

RESPONSES

G There is the distinct possibility of a 230kV interconnection in the Ely area as well as possible interconnection with the future White Pine Power Project (WPPP). There are no existing rights-of-way for the future WPPP although there was a favorable Record of Decision in 1985 to grant these rights-of-way. If the WPPP is constructed, the SWIP would likely interconnect with it.

The Salt Lake City alternative was eliminated from further consideration, not only because of the land use conflicts, but also because it would not meet the purpose and need. In 1989, it was determined that the UNTP would not have available capacity for the SWIP at which point the project description was revised (refer to page 2-25 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). The SWIP Regional Study (D&M, 1989) documents the potential impacts of the regional routing alternatives including the Salt Lake City alternative.

The SWIP would result in very little long-term destruction of habitat. Overland construction has been recommended in sensitive habitat areas to minimize the area of disturbance and eliminate the long-term disturbance associated with new access roads. There is no evidence that the SWIP would result in habitat fragmentation or impair the movement of any wildlife species.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

H elements managed and considered in long term habitat plans. Range islands without basins cannot long endure. Nevada is lucky to have a number of basins which are in fairly good shape or can be recovered with good management. A project like the SOUTHWEST INTERTIE, if approved, will cut away at the number of basins available. No regional inventory of these basins has been made, much less taken into consideration for this project. Since the benefits of the project are generally of regional impact, the regional impact of the vanishing basin habitats should be considered.

INTERNATIONAL RAPTOR MIGRATION IMPACT SLIGHTED

I The Goshute Mountains are a concentration point for one of the few major annual hawk migrations in North America. Thousands of hawks of numerous species from large areas of the Northwest and Canada funnel down through the Goshute corridor on their way South for the winter. The world famous raptor monitoring station on Goshute Mountain logs and bands hundreds of hawks per day in peak migration periods. These hawks are under pressure at both ends of their annual flights as habitat shrinks in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. The migratory bird act does not allow for the purposeful destruction of any of these birds by new projects. The entire 500 mile Southwest Intertie follows the highly used raptor corridor. The EIS mentions that powerlines do kill some birds. There is no quantitative estimates of annual dead hawks per mile of powerline. A recent EIS in California estimated perhaps 20 raptor deaths per year for a 50 mile powerline not in a major hawk corridor. If we double the number of deaths per fifty miles due to the higher density of birds and multiply by 10 to allow for 500 miles of new powerline we get an estimate of 400 dead raptors per year.

400 Dead Hawks per year is a large toll. No information is presented about the regional impact of an annual raptor kill of this magnitude.

RESPONSES

I The BLM is aware of the migratory hawk banding station in the Goshute Mountains, and of the impressive numbers of hawks that have been captured and banded there by Hawkwatch International and its cooperators. The BLM is not, however, aware of documentation of a clearly defined migratory corridor that is coincident in location with the preferred SWIP corridor.

The BLM has not attempted to estimate the number of raptors that might be killed each year as a result of collisions with the SWIP transmission line. To generate such an estimate in the absence of any real data on the numbers of hawks, resident and migratory, that occur in the vicinity of the transmission line on an annual basis would be highly speculative. Additionally, the BLM would need to know the average altitude at which all species migrate through the area. The Goshute banding station, for example, is several thousand feet higher in elevation than the SWIP (i.e., 9,500 feet versus about 5,500 feet). The BLM sees no reasonable possibility of the project affecting birds at that elevation.

It is interesting that an EIS in California estimated 20 cases of raptor mortality per year for a 50-mile transmission line. Olendorff and Lehman (1986, "Raptor Collisions with Utility Lines: An Analysis Using Subjective Field Observations", Pacific Gas and Electric Co., San Ramon, CA.) issued a worldwide call for information on raptor mortality from collisions with utility lines. They received a total of 121 responses to their request for information. Of this number, only 88 could be analyzed due to inadequacy of information. Their conclusion: "Collision with utility lines apparently is a random, low level, and inconsequential mortality factor in raptor populations." It is the BLM's opinion that your estimate of 400 dead raptors per year is a very significant over-statement of real probabilities.

Also refer to the discussion of Avian Collision Hazard on page 3-89 of this document.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

NEED FOR OPEN SPACE

People need open space. We can't all live in open space areas. Most of us have to live in crowded cities. Most of us however can get away for various lengths of time to be in less crowded lands. One of the major aspects of the Wilderness Act is the opportunity for solitude that wilderness areas afford people who enter these areas. What is that solitude? Part of it is a separation from other people. Part of it is a separation from other people's impact on the natural environment. Part of it is a feeling of attachment to a natural environment. How does this differ in a wilderness area (Range) and in an open space valley (Basin). In an open Nevada valley even when in a car driving on a dirt road, the feeling of expansiveness and freedom is quite tangible. You can see from ridgeline to ridgeline across wide valleys; now little impedes your feeling of solitude. An occasional structure, corral, cabin, side road, does not greatly impact that experience.

But a large powerline does. It divides the valley into segments, it breaks the expanse, it intrudes the presence of people into your consciousness and that feeling of solitude is dashed. This may seem to be a purely aesthetic argument. You may say that it applies only to a few people. Well we don't think so. Those of us in the city are oppressed in many ways and as a release need open space areas, even if we can only drive through occasionally. When we do it should be an atmosphere as free as possible from urban care. We need the relief the country can bring us. Those living in the open west already well know the feelings I'm talking about, that's a reason they like it there. However we, the public, haven't well defined our need for this "aesthetic" requirement. Well we're putting it forth and think more and more of us will be demanding it as a consideration in regional planning.

No inventory of open space valleys exists as yet. Lets start one. As an agency required to take the long view, keep this issue in mind, you will be hearing more of it. Meanwhile don't give away open areas easily. Hold onto them fast until we can make better regional assessments which give proper weight to long range needs such as this.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

VISUAL IMPACT CRITERIA MISWEIGHTED

J We have a large problem with the general method used to evaluate visual impacts in projects such as these. You give lip service to the idea that the impact of the first powerline is greater than an additional one, but seem to evaluate impacts based upon a persons viewing per day scale. This means that where this powerline will cross a main highway which already has another powerline in the same corridor, a high visual impact rating is accrued because a lot of people per day see the new added powerline. When a new powerline is built across a now clear valley with only a few dirt road travellers per day, a lower impact rating results.

This is wrong. It fails to weight the initial impact of the first intrusion. The first built powerline changes the open space character of the valley enormously. Any first powerline should be rated as having high visual impact on every currently open space valley it proposes to cross.

ARCHEOLOGICAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANT

The EIS does make a stab at quantitative impacts upon unstudied archeological sites in the path of the powerline. The estimated number of significant sites is stunning. This should put you on guard as caretakers of our Public Lands. These sites can't be replaced. When they are disturbed they become like Humpty Dumpty, they don't go back together again. You have chosen a natural north-south corridor for the proposed powerline. We have found over and over again that choices we make for routes of travel are the same that other people going before us have chosen. People and animal travel patterns will naturally congregate in these natural corridors. So, naturally, will the sites and evidence of stone age man in the Great Basin.

K Your estimates of site concentration may be accurate but they may also represent a concentration of the total sites in the larger region of the Great Basin, especially along valley margins when the climate allowed damper conditions. There is no regional study placing these estimated sites in a larger context of possible total sites for the

RESPONSES

J Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM system tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys in Nevada and Utah possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM system. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to much of the project study area.

The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in their decision process. The BLM uses the VRM system to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM system and the visual impact assessment model refer to the Methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

Most of the roads and highways within the study area were considered a moderate visual sensitivity. For example, roads leading to WSAs and Wilderness areas were considered high sensitivity while Interstate 80 was considered of moderate sensitivity. Only roads designated as scenic highways or byways were considered high sensitivity viewpoints. Residences were all considered a high sensitivity viewpoint regardless of the number of persons in residence.

K Because cultural resources in the project area are largely unknown, it cannot be demonstrated that "a larger than acceptable slice of a certain type of site" will not be lost. However, the regional study used in determining the alternatives for detailed consideration ensured that the vast majority of the most significant known cultural resources were avoided (refer to pages 3-88 and 3-89 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). The discussion of cumulative impacts (refer to pages 4-85 and 4-86 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA) indicate that the project is likely to result in only a minor incremental loss of the regional resource base. Detailed inventories, evaluations of significance, and development of avoidance or mitigation measures will be carried out in consultation with regulatory agencies if the project is approved for construction.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

K | region. Are we losing a larger than acceptable slice of a certain type of site? How
L | can we know this without the broader look being taken. Another reason for you the
Public Lands caretaker to pause and stand on the side of conservation.

SUMMARY

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment. We have reviewed the EIS and discussed it in our Study Group. We have alerted other concerned people regarding the impact of this project and hope that you will strongly consider our arguments.

In summary:

The EIS has identified the huge adverse local impact of this project.

The EIS has not done an adequate job of evaluating regional impacts.

The EIS has wrongly discarded possible alternatives routes with existing powerlines.

The EIS has not presented a compelling benefit to justify even the impact identified.

LETTER #B-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

For these reasons you should:

SELECT THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

If you have any questions regarding these comments please contact us as noted below.

Yours truly,

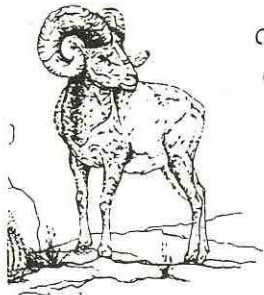


Steve Tabor - President
510 357-~~6585~~
6585



Bob Ellis - Communications Director
510 482-0466

LETTER #B-7
COMMENTS



Fraternity Of The Desert Bighorn

Box 27494 Las Vegas, Nevada 89126-1494

September 16, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn is pleased to provide this input to the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Our comments are limited to Link 720 that crosses the southern portion of the Arrow Canyon Range.

A [On page 4-14, second paragraph, the EIS mentions two bighorn sheep water developments in the southern end of the Arrow Canyon Range, and that the BLM has recommended no new access within two miles of water and no winter construction. For your information the two water developments are three miles apart and Link 720 is planned to go between them. The EIS does not assess any impact on these critical water sources. How do you plan to avoid sheep watering developments by two miles when they are only three miles apart?

RESPONSES

A Your concern for the impact of the road through the Arrow Canyon Range, and the impact of increased public access on desert bighorn sheep is understandable. However, it is not necessary to re-route this transmission alternative to accommodate this concern. The most appropriate means of reducing impact to bighorn sheep would be to re-contour and rehabilitate the road (refer to mitigation measure #4 in Table 1-6). Limiting construction to winter months (mitigation measure #4) would further reduce the impact to bighorn sheep populations.

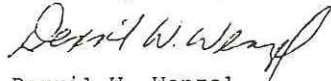
Minimizing or eliminating impacts to these water sources will be fully addressed in the Construction, Operation, and Management (COM) Plan for the project. Possible scenarios that will be explored include seasonal construction limitations, no new road construction, re-contouring and closing the existing road, and fencing or obstructing public access to the area. Refer to page 1-34 of this document for more information regarding the COM Plan.

LETTER #B-7
COMMENTS

B [The road that splits the two developments has never had an environmental assessment. It was constructed illegally for an off-road race after the two water developments were constructed. The Stateline Resource Area Manager did not approve the road for racing because local television networks became aware of the illegalities. Any construction or commercial access along this road is probably illegal and subject to protest without a proper environmental impact statement.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SWIP EIS.

Sincerely,



Derril W. Wenzel
President

" A MEMBERSHIP UNSELFISHLY DEDICATED TO THE UTILIZATION,
CONSERVATION AND WELFARE OF THE DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP"

RESPONSES

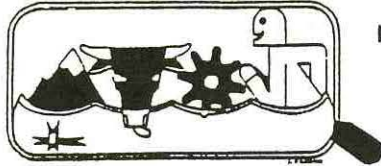
B It is not expected that the proposed access road construction will have a significant impact to the surrounding area. Any increase of access to public lands for this project will follow federal road management policies outlined in management guidelines or EISs. It is possible that new roads or roads with controversial uses can be locked.

There is an existing dirt road approximately 3/4 mile from the most southerly water development. This existing road runs for 2 1/4 miles and dead-ends. This road was located on our October 11, 1976 aerial photography, and was present when the second water development was constructed. This second catchment to the south of the existing road was constructed after the road was built. In the mid-1980s an extension of this road was illegally bladed for a distance of approximately 1/2 mile. However, it was not used as part of the Mint 400 ORV race course in 1985, or in any other event. The road does not tie into other roadways and the road is not held by a right-of-way.

The road is not new, and it may be used for construction access before being closed and rehabilitated. An alternate route around the southern tip of the Arrow Canyon Range may also be considered. Construction of the SWIP during the critical periods for bighorn sheep can be avoided.

The purpose of the SWIP DEIS/DPA was to assess the potential impacts of the construction, operation, and maintenance of a 500kV transmission line, not the potential impacts of an existing road that is located near bighorn sheep water developments.

LETTER #B-8
COMMENTS



INTERMOUNTAIN WATER ALLIANCE A

721 Second Avenue
Salt Lake City
Utah 84103

September 10, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr Simonson:

Concerning the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft PL&R Amendment:

After I read the Draft Statement, I wondered how many more interties will be built across the western United States. Will each power company build north-south interties to take advantage of seasonal use of electricity and water? Will each power company build east-west interties to take advantage of coal supply in Montana, Wyoming, Utah and Colorado and Hydropower in California? And it became apparent that each intertie has to have its own corridor. And each proposal will no doubt utilize public lands because they are cheap.

A [There does seem to be an assumption that the White Pine Power Project will be constructed and hence the Southwest Intertie route runs through Steptoe basin. What is the status of this Power Project? With all the surplus potential (Intermountain Power Project with plans for a unconstructed 1500 megawatts, for instance) within the west due to poor projections of need of electricity, perhaps all reference to both the White Pine Power Project and the Thousand Springs Power Project should be eliminated and the routing and corridor re-examined. (See Page 1-4)

B [When one looks at projections of energy demand (Page 1-5) from 1990 to the year 2000, perhaps one should also look at the same projections from the same region from the same North American Electric Reliability Council from the years 1980 to 1990 in which all the surplus capacity in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and other western states was constructed based on similar projections. Past projections have been a financial disaster for

RESPONSES

It is appropriate to address both the White Pine Power Project (WPPP) and the Thousand Springs Power Project (TSPP) in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. These projects are considered "reasonably foreseeable" future actions that NEPA guidelines direct to be addressed. The WPPP, although no construction dates have been scheduled, is an option in future resource planning for the LADWP and other participants. Although the TSPP has been canceled, the region where the TSPP was proposed is a proposed series compensation station for the SWIP and the likely future location for possible interconnections with the SWIP in northeastern Nevada.

The LADWP, as have many utilities throughout the country, has implemented conservation, load management, and customer energy efficiency programs. The LADWP has projected a deferment of 600MW of supply-side resource requirements by the year 2000 as a result of implementing demand-side management programs. When these programs are combined with this proposed transmission system that will provide access to the surplus generation in the Northwest and Intermountain regions of the country, the LADWP could defer the need for major new generating plants during the next ten years.

Because of the financial risk associated with the large capital expenditures required to build new generating facilities, utilities are reluctant to commit to large new projects. The cost of the transmission system, when associated with generation projects, is a relatively small percentage (10 to 15 percent) of the total project costs. Getting these projects on-line is often delayed while the transmission system is permitted and constructed. Permitting of major projects must start many years before they are to be brought on-line. Therefore, the LADWP believes that it is prudent to have transmission lines permitted or actually in place before making the financial commitment to construct a generating plant.

B [Current utility forecasts of resource requirements recognize the fact that the future is uncertain and take steps to reduce the risks resulting from that uncertainty. For the same reasons that investors diversify investment portfolios to minimize the risks associated with individual stocks, utilities seek to diversify their system resources to minimize the risks associated with individual resource options. To reduce the risks associated with load growth uncertainty, utility planning favors resource options which can be developed in the shortest possible length of time. Reducing the "lead time" of resource

LETTER #B-8 COMMENTS

B utilities and regional economies in the late 1980's and the present time. The Nevada projections (Page 1-7) suggest that gold mining will continue indefinitely and this industry consumes somewhere near 50% of Sierra Pacific production of electricity (It should be noted that the gold prices have been declining as gold production throughout the world surged in recent years and continued decline of gold prices will bring about mine closures.) The extensive expansion of the gambling industry may be at the expense of others as each new expansion obtains clientele from the previous expansion suggesting that bankruptcy may be the new industry in Las Vegas.

C ON Page 1-12, it is stated that "access to surplus northwest hydropower may reduce the risk of uncertain future oil and gas prices for southwest generation". Perhaps there will be no surplus northwest hydropower if the threatened and endangered salmon are given their fair share of water. Perhaps the intertie as proposed will be only one direction: from the excessive capacity of the New Mexico and Arizona utilities to the northwest.

D Through the report there is mention of the Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act (PIFUA) of 1978 which discourages the use of fuel oil and natural gas for generating electricity (see Page 1-12). Is this Act still applicable? It seems that many utilities in the west are again utilizing fuel oil and natural gas. Further the Department of Energy is proposing multi-fuel plants that burn coal, fuel oil and natural gas. I propose here that throughout the report where PIFUA is used, it is used as a un-necessary justification of the Intertie Project.

Although Idaho Power has an excellent conservation program, its continued support of all-electric homes suggest that some of the conservation programs are self-serving. Certainly natural gas is cheaper and cleaner for heating. And the change from mercury vapor to high pressure sodium light may cause more light pollution. Page 2-2).

E Is Idaho Power the sole owner and operator of the Jim Bridger plant (see Page 2-3) as is suggested in the text?

F Page 2-5: "Through energy conservation and load management can somewhat reduce energy consumption, they affect energy use and system reliability on a local rather than a regional basis". What is the basis of this statement? It seems that if every utility as such a program it would affect energy use and system reliability on a regional basis.

G Page 2-6. Reference is made to 362 MW of transmission capacity between the Northwest and UP&L system. What capacity is between UP&L system and the south west (four corners region). Is there any plans by Pacific Power to upgrade this entire system in which the proposed Southwest Intertie would become obsolete? Does Californians have access to Arizona and New Mexico surplus electricity (i.e., is there an east-west intertie in the southern tier of states)?

RESPONSES

options allows the actual commitment to construct a resource to be made when forecasting uncertainty has been reduced as much as possible. By increasing the number of resource options available to a utility, the SWIP will serve as a tool for reducing the risk of overbuilding or underbuilding generating resources as a result of load and resource uncertainties.

C Because weather conditions are not predictable, hydropower is a variable resource for utilities. There are many proposals now being considered to determine how the federal dams on the Columbia River system will be operated. It is unknown how the Columbia River operations and the salmon recovery plan will affect Northwest-Southwest power exchanges at this time.

D That is correct. PIFUA is no longer applicable, and it is an inappropriate justification for the SWIP. It has been removed in this document (refer to the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document).

E PacifiCorp and the IPCo jointly own the Jim Bridger Power Plant. PacifiCorp is the operator of the facility.

F The statement that conservation affects energy use and system reliability on a local rather than a regional basis is meant simply to indicate that the conservation programs of individual utilities, like their generating resources, have a localized impact. Of course, conservation throughout the western region certainly will have an impact on overall future generating resource requirements in the region.

By reducing new regional generating requirements, however, conservation does not correspondingly reduce the value of regional transmission for minimizing resource costs. Even with reduced generating requirements, environmental and economic considerations may require the placement of new generation at substantial distances from population and load centers, thus requiring new transmission such as the SWIP. Also, because of the seasonal diversity which exists between Northwest and Southwest loads and resources, purchases and exchanges of power over the SWIP are expected to help the entire region meet load growth by utilizing existing resources more efficiently. Finally, regional conservation potential may be developed more fully given the availability of adequate regional transmission. Without such transmission, the cost effectiveness of conservation programs must be determined on the basis of the avoidable generating resource costs of an individual utility.

LETTER #B-8 COMMENTS

H Page 2-10. It seems that the corridor along the Wasatch Front is eliminated because of realstate costs, and that some power would flow to other lines, and the lack of connection with Ely. These excuses are rather shallow since the same problems would occur in some areas between Ely and the southern routing due to narrowness of the corridor. Routing to Ely is comparable to routing from Ely to Intermountain Power Project and considered as a separate project within this environmental statement. Certainly the higher realstate costs compensate for the lack of environmental problems associated with the existing corridor.

I Page 2-11 again brings up PIFUA. Although it is true that oil and gas are more expensive for baseload generation, seasonal use and peaking power use of these energy sources are economically justified in every region of the country. The Southwest Intertie proposal is one alternative to the use of seasonal and peaking use of energy. Oil and gas energy in peaking facilities is an equivalent use and should not be summarily dismissed. And what is the status of PIFUA, 1978? See above comment?

J What is not discussed in this Environmental Impact Statement is that all these Intertie Proposals can bring both regional stability of electrical use and regional instability of electrical use. The report only mentions the first first use. The best Utility will operate the best at local situations where it has first hand information. Once a utility is connected to interties and computers, it no longer can control local effects of electrical storms, fires, earthquakes as these effects will now affect the entire region and these effects can reduce reliability at the local utility. These are the trade-offs. Should events in Las Vegas and Los Angeles affect the people of Idaho?

Thus these criticisms are directed at the project purpose and planning. I have seen similar projects proposed in the passed with all their internal justification and these projects were not needed and they cost the ratepayers much money and only promoted the utility administration. After reading the Environmental Impact Statement on the Southwest Intertie Project, I sense a very similar self-justification as the recent Thousand Springs Power Project proponents used. Hence I suggest a ten year delay in the construction of the Southwest Intertie project.

RESPONSES

Utilities having a lower avoided cost will be able to develop conservation resources to a lesser degree than utilities with a higher avoided cost. Transmission can enable the development of conservation throughout the region at a level determined by the highest avoidable generating costs in the region.

Conservation and demand-side management are integral parts of the resource strategy of every utility considering partnership in the SWIP. Federal and state regulatory requirements dictate that supply-side and demand-side resource options should be considered on an equal basis in a utility's plan to acquire lowest cost resources. Conservation and other demand-side management programs are expected to reduce, but not to eliminate, the region's need for new generating resources.

Transmission facilities would contribute in several important ways to the task of the region's utilities to meet future load growth in the most efficient manner possible and with the smallest amount of new generating capacity. First, it is important to recognize the seasonal load diversity within the region. Transmission will allow existing resources to be used to serve seasonal load requirements in one part of the region while also meeting new load growth requirements in another part of the region. Therefore, total regional resource requirements (i.e., generation) can be reduced by using transmission. When new regional generating resources are needed, transmission, such as the SWIP, would make more resource options available, and would help minimize costs and environmental impacts.

Because of the seasonal diversity that exists between the Pacific Northwest and the Desert Southwest, loads and resources, purchases and exchanges over the SWIP would be expected to help the entire WSCC region meet load growth by utilizing existing resources more efficiently. Regional conservation potential may be developed more fully given the availability of adequate regional transmission.


Also refer to the expanded discussion of purpose and need in Chapter 3 of this document.

G The Western Systems Coordinating Council (WSCC) reports the non-simultaneous transfer capability between Utah and Arizona at 550-590 MW.

LETTER #B-8 COMMENTS

The second aspect of the EIS is the selection of the alternative routings through and among some very sensitive ecological habitats. In this respect, the EIS did a good job in the description of the environments and route selection (even though the necessity of the project is questionable!).

Sincerely,


Peter Hovingh

Trustee,

Intermountain Water Alliance

RESPONSES

PacifiCorp has requested 240 MW of capacity on the SWIP. This interest expresses their desire to utilize the SWIP to help serve their increasing regional transmission needs.

California is heavily interconnected with the Southwest. The WSCC reports the non-simultaneous transfer capability in an east to west direction at 5700 MW. However, most of the firm capacity is committed to moving existing resources to California. A proposed transmission line from southern California to southern Nevada could increase the available capacity for east-west transfers.

H When the SWIP was originally proposed to terminate in the Delta, Utah area, alternative routes through the Salt Lake City area were possible, at least from a system connection standpoint. Several facts changed after the routes through the Salt Lake City area were first considered. First, the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP), of which the SWIP was intended to interconnect near Delta, was found to be fully subscribed (i.e., did not have the capacity for the SWIP). This made a termination of the SWIP in Delta infeasible. The project description was then changed to extend the project from the Ely area to the Las Vegas area. Las Vegas is the termination of the UNTP and is considered "marketplace". One of the SWIP's goals was also to reach "marketplace". Second, the Ely area was also seen as a potential marketplace. For example, an interconnection with the existing 230kV system is viewed as a possibility. And finally, land use conflicts in the Salt Lake City area would have been very difficult to overcome.

I The cost effectiveness of a gas- and oil-fired generating resource for peaking applications cannot only be maintained, but can be enhanced, by transmission which would allow the resource to serve peaking loads in one part of the region during one season and peaking loads in another part of the region during another season. The SWIP would affect regional resource construction and operation only to the extent that it would provide resource alternatives which would be superior to existing alternatives.

PIFUA is no longer applicable and it is an inappropriate justification for the SWIP. It has been removed in this document (refer to Errata in Chapter 4 of this document).

A benefit of the SWIP is to postpone the requirement of utilities in the WSCC

LETTER #B-8
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

region to construct additional generation facilities. The discussion on 2-11 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA focuses on cost differential between fuels. The fuel costs associated with these generation facilities represent about one third of the total production costs. While fuel costs are significant and represent a major economic savings for short-term transactions, long-term reductions in generating capacity are more significant.

- J The IPCo system has been interconnected with other utilities in the WSCC region since the 1940s. The events in the Las Vegas and Los Angeles areas already impact the IPCo system. The main reason for interconnecting different regions is to improve the reliability of each system. An interconnected system provides for a more robust and stronger electrical system allowing the regions to help each other during a disturbance. One of the main functions of the WSCC is to evaluate system reliability and minimize the effect of disturbances on other utility systems. The addition of the SWIP could significantly improve system reliability in the WSCC region, including the IPCo system.

LETTER #B-9
COMMENTS



RUSSELL D. BUTCHER
Southwest-&-California Representative

August 12, 1992

RE: DRAFT SOUTHWEST INTERTIE
PROJECT EIS & DRAFT PLAN
AMENDMENT DEIS/DPA

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

National Parks and Conservation Association, a 300,000-member nonprofit organization, founded in 1919 to promote the protection, enhancement, and public understanding of the National Park System and related public lands, appreciates this opportunity to respond to the BLM's draft Southwest Intertie Project environmental impact statement and draft Plan Amendment DEIS/DPA. We are focusing our comments exclusively on the "Crosstie Alternatives," as follows:

(1) We urge that it is appropriate for the public to sincerely challenge the basic justification for the "Crosstie" line from eastern Nevada (where the Southwest Intertie line is to be located) into western Utah. As we understand this proposal, it was not originally part of the Southwest Intertie Project, but was subsequently added to it. Therefore, it gives the appearance of not being an integral or essential component of the Project. To drop out this controversial Crosstie line would consequently seem to have no detrimental impact upon the Intertie Project. Given the fact that much environmental or other controversy revolves around the Crosstie, we strongly

RESPONSES

A The Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP has been a part of the SWIP from the beginning. The portion from Ely to Dry Lake was added later in the EIS process. The reason the Ely to Delta segment was maintained in the SWIP DEIS/DPA document is explained on pages 2-31 and 2-32 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The Ely to Delta segment was originally a joint SWIP and Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP) transmission line segment. When the SWIP was amended in June 1990, the IPCo's need for the Ely to Delta segment changed. However, this segment remains an important link to the UNTP and the need for it remains unchanged.

When the SWIP was originally proposed to terminate in the Delta, Utah area, alternative routes through the Salt Lake City area were possible, at least from a system connection standpoint. Several facts changed after the routes through the Salt Lake City area were first considered. First, the UNTP, of which the SWIP was intended to interconnect near Delta, was found to be fully subscribed (i.e., did not have the capacity for the SWIP). This made a termination of the SWIP in Delta infeasible. The project description was then changed to extend the project from the Ely area to the Las Vegas area. Las Vegas is the termination of the UNTP and is considered "marketplace". One of the SWIP's goals was also to reach "marketplace". Second, the Ely area was also seen as a potential marketplace. For example, an interconnection with the existing 230kV system is viewed as a possibility. And finally, land use conflicts in the Salt Lake City area would have been very difficult.

LETTER #B-9

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A recommend that it be deleted from further planning...at least unless or until far greater justification for investing in this line can be provided in the future.

(2) Regarding the Crosstie Alternatives, we very emphatically oppose the Agency (BLM) Preferred Alternative between Ely, NV, and Delta, UT. While National Parks and Conservation Association has usually supported and even at times encouraged BLM's policy of placing new transmission lines within existing corridors, there are several reasons why we oppose doing so in this instance:

(a) Had the existing 230kV line (through Sacramento Pass at the north end of the South Snake Range) been subjected to the present-day standards of NEPA-mandated environmental impact studies and had Great Basin National Park already been established, we are confident ^{that} routing would then have been selected, thereby leaving this scenically spectacular route free of the visual impacts of the 230kV line and free, as well, from the threat of transmission line expansion, like the proposed 500kV facility.

(b) We oppose the large-scale 500kV transmission line--even with visually mitigating design and color of the towers and the use of non-specular cable--because of the significant visual prominence the line would have, both from within many key parts of the national park and from stretches of the highway that offer motorists with grand, unobstructed views of the park and its magnificent mountains.

(c) The existing 230kV corridor is a round-about routing for the proposed 500kV Crosstie; and given (a) and (b), above, if any line is built, we strongly prefer a more direct corridor: either the Direct Route, which is clearly the shortest and therefore, we assume, the least costly option; or the Cutoff Route, which would utilize an existing 230kV corridor for about half its length--and which the document characterizes as the environmentally preferable alternative.

While we understand BLM's reluctance to push a new powerline through largely undisturbed landscapes, as would occur along the Direct Route and along about 50 percent of the Cutoff Route, we urge that environmental impacts of the 230kV Corridor Route would be even greater--particularly in relation to one of America's magnificent units of the National Park System. Nor should we ignore the likelihood that sometime in the future, a second and

LETTER #B-9
COMMENTS

even a third 500kV transmission line will be proposed to expand the capacity of the Crosstie (again assuming that the Crosstie can be justified in the first place).

B [Regarding the Leland Harris Spring complex, would it not be reasonable, as frequently occurs along other powerline and pipeline projects, to simply shift the alignment far enough from such sensitive resources as to avoid the concern? We doubt seriously that the presence of this spring and other wetland habitat is reason enough to argue against the Direct Route.

C [Regarding the argument concerning low military training flights, it seems unreasonable to conclude that the Department of Defense would be unwilling to make some adjustments in its flight patterns, should either the Direct Route or Cutoff Route be determined to be in the best public interest.

In summary, we very strongly urge a thorough re-evaluation of a NO-ACTION Alternative for the Crosstie proposal. Of the suggested alternative corridors, we very strongly oppose utilizing the existing 230kV corridor--because it shouldn't have been selected as a transmission corridor in the first place; because of the visual impacts upon adjacent Great Basin National Park; and because shorter and presumably less costly alternatives exist under the Direct Route and Cutoff Route alternatives. Rather than adding transmission lines to the 230kV Corridor Route and thereby increasing the visual impacts of that route, we would like to hold out the hope that the existing 230kV line may ultimately be removed in the future, so that this scenically outstanding area could be restored to a natural condition. This "window of opportunity" is before us now. Were one or more 500kV lines added, that window would be closed virtually forever. We hope you will seize the moment on this worthy opportunity...before it is too late.

Sincerely,


Russell D. Butcher

Pacific Southwest Regional Director

RDB/prb
cc: Sup't Al Henderson,
Great Basin Nat'l Park
NPCA headquarters

RESPONSES

B The Leland Harris Spring complex encompasses an area that is actually larger than it seems. The complex stretches for many miles in either direction from the alignment of the Direct Route. Throughout the Snake Valley occur many natural springs and wetland habitat for certain species of fish, frogs, and butterflies which are dependent on the springs for their survival. To simply shift the alignment of the transmission line would not be enough and it could add another ten to twenty miles to the corridor. The species within these springs [Category II and Endangered (one species)] have also not been mapped because of wetland soils and the possibility of underwater tributaries which would make this area even more sensitive. The presence of the Leland Harris Spring complex is certainly not the only impact along this route. The impacts to flight operations in the R-6504 Restricted Area, visual impacts, cultural resources, and other biological concerns all combine to present problems with this route.

C Regarding the Direct Route and the R-6504 Restricted Area, the Department of Defense has stated in correspondence that building any towers over 30 feet in height is unacceptable due to constant use of the area by military missions and exercises as part of the Utah Testing and Training Reserve (UTTR). The UTTR is one of the largest training areas in the West still operable and able to maintain a large variety of missions. Also as more bases are being closed by Congress, it is very unlikely the Department of Defense will easily relinquish alterations to its Restricted Area. It is incorrect to state that the military is unwilling to negotiate on the routes through the Military Operating Areas (MOAs) on the other Ely to Delta segment routes. There is agreement where towers would be kept to 105 feet or less through specified areas to minimize impacts to low-level flying operations.

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

NEVADA OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSOCIATION, INC.
NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS TASK FORCE
SOUTHWEST WILDLANDS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE (NORA)
NORTHERN ROCKIES BLM TASK FORCE (NORA)

WINNERS:

1974 Hillard Memorial Award (ROMCOE)
1981 Desert Wilderness Conference Award
1987 Desert Protective Council Award
1989 Chevron Conservation Award

Founded 1958

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Charles S. Watson, Jr.
Carson City, Nevada
Alvin McLane
Reno, Nevada
Darwin Lambeert
Luray, Virginia
Prof. Ross Smith
U.S.R., Reno, Nevada
Jeri Van Ee
Las Vegas, Nevada
Howard Booth
Las Vegas, Nevada
Carola Hutchinson
Carson City, Nevada
Harold A. Kantrud
Jamestown, North Dakota
Hugh C. McMullan
Bedford, New York
C. Clifton Young
Reno, Nevada
Richard Pough
New York, New York
Marjorie Sill
Reno, Nevada
Michael Frome
Moscow, Idaho
Grace Bukowski
Reno, Nevada
Russell Pengelly
Burns, Oregon
John B. Aymer
Reno, Nevada
Clifton R. Merritt
Denver, Colorado
Kirk A. Peterson
Reno, Nevada
Dr. Richard Borgen
Gibbs, Nevada
William Meiners
Boise, Idaho

September 3, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley Idaho 83318

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan
Amendment (DEIS/DPA) on the proposed Idaho Power
Company 500kV Transmission Line (Southwest Intertie
Project).

Dear Mr. Simonson,

Please accept these comments on the above
referenced DEIS/DPA on behalf of the Nevada Outdoor
Recreation Association and Paul C. Clifford, Jr. both
jointly and severally. Please send each of us a copy of
the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Proposed Plan
Amendment (FEIS/PPA) and Record of Decision at our
addresses listed below.

The Bureau of Land Management and Dames and Moore
are to be congratulated on producing a document
reflecting remarkable consensus in an exceedingly
difficult endeavor, namely the siting of a major
electric power transmission facility. WE SUPPORT THE
AGENCY PREFERRED ROUTE FOR BOTH THE SWIP AND CROSS-TIE.
From our point of view there is only one major
difficulty regarding routing alternatives - the choice
of the Cut-off route as the environmentally favored
alternative for the Cross-tie, which will be addressed
below. However, certain other questions also remain.

LETTER B-10

LETTER #B-10 COMMENTS

Amy Mazza
Reno, Nevada
Roscoe Poland
Sea Ranch, California
Roger Scholl
Reno, Nevada
Drummond Pike
San Francisco, California
Charles H. Carlson
Denver, Colorado
Charles H. Stoddard
Minong, Wisconsin
Paul Clifford
Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Harriet Allen
San Diego, California

Unfortunately, a number of proposed activities by A various public and private entities including, but certainly not limited to, land transfers between the public and private sectors (particularly for utility rights of way), transfer of water from one basin to another within Nevada and interstate or international transfers of water by pipeline and/or aqueduct through eastern Nevada, have forced the citizens of eastern Nevada to be very wary of all large scale projects such as the SWIP. As a result, can you answer for us some basic questions which do not seem to be directly or adequately addressed in the DEIS?

ISSUE 1) The SWIP as documented in the DEIS is really two distinct projects: Midpoint to Dry Lake (what is now referred to as SWIP) and the Cross-tie (Ely to Delta). The bulk of the SWIP (however defined) is situated in Nevada. Both SWIP and the Cross-tie have major impacts in the Ely BLM District. Idaho Power Company will not be responsible for the Cross-tie in any way. They have agreed to transfer their rights to any Cross-tie transmission right of way to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

A QUESTION 1) Why was this project permitted to so change its character that the areas with the greatest impacts were left with no control over the development, management, and determination of alternatives, unless this is a callous, calculated maneuver to limit the adverse reaction anticipated from those excluded from the management loop?

B QUESTION 1A) Why is the "Cross-tie" not a separate issue, under the jurisdiction of either Utah or Nevada BLM? This project does not enter Idaho at all. The entity which is to actually use the right of way is from California, not Idaho. What is the rationale for Idaho BLM to be the lead Agency? Most of the controversy about the Cross-tie concerns lands in the Ely BLM District. Will the ELY BLM District be essentially granted the lead role in determining the suitability of the several Cross-tie routes through its District for the Final Record of Decision?

C QUESTION 1B) Will this DEIS/DPA set a precedent for starting a relatively limited project in an area where favorable administrative review might be anticipated, and then gradually changing and expanding the program into areas

2 of 12

RESPONSES

The Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP has been a part of the SWIP from the beginning. The portion from Ely to Dry Lake was added later in the EIS process. The reason the Ely to Delta segment was maintained in the SWIP DEIS/DPA document is explained on pages 2-31 and 2-32 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The Ely to Delta segment was originally a joint SWIP and Utah-Nevada Transmission Project (UNTP) transmission line segment. When the SWIP was amended in June 1990, the IPCo's need for the Ely to Delta segment changed. However, this segment remains an important link to the UNTP and the need for it remains unchanged.

When the SWIP was originally proposed to terminate in the Delta, Utah area, alternative routes through the Salt Lake City area were possible, at least from a system connection standpoint. Several facts changed after the routes through the Salt Lake City area were first considered. First, the UNTP, of which the SWIP was intended to interconnect near Delta, was found to be fully subscribed (did not have the capacity for the SWIP). This made a termination of the SWIP in Delta infeasible. The project description was then changed to extend the project from the Ely area to the Las Vegas area. Las Vegas is the termination of the UNTP and is considered marketplace. One of the SWIP's goals was also to reach marketplace. Second, the Ely area was also seen as a potential marketplace. For example, an interconnection with the existing 230kV system is viewed as a possibility. And finally, land use conflicts in the Salt Lake City area would have been very difficult.

Also refer to the expanded discussion of Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document.

B The BLM is the designated Lead Federal Agency. The BLM Director assigned Idaho as the lead state for meeting BLM NEPA responsibilities on this project on October 31, 1988. It has remained so during the various changes in the project. This is explained in Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The Ely District of the BLM will be involved in the decision process. The Idaho BLM lead for the project by no means restricts Ely's input.

C No. Please refer to page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for an explanation of why the SWIP was expanded from the Ely area south to the Las Vegas area. Also refer to the response to comment "A" above.

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

- C [where less favorable review or more controversial issues might be anticipated, even including changes of beneficial ownership of rights to the permitted activity (IPC to LADWP)?
- D [QUESTION 1C) Where is the limit between reasonable convenience to the petitioner versus the need for real power in oversight and management of the permitting process by those potentially adversely affected? Why is it not reasonable to expect LADWP to deal with the ELY BLM District directly with regard to the Cross-tie? Why are mitigation measures of import to the Ely BLM District being determined by two surrogates, Idaho BLM and Idaho Power rather than those directly affected, Ely BLM and LADWP?
- ISSUE 2) This DEIS/DPA is written in such a summary form that it is very difficult if not impossible to make any definitive decision or comment based on technical data. Such data are crucial to informed comment and are the heart of the requirements of NEPA, which mandates this DEIS/DPA. A very limited number of technical reports and data tables were printed and distributed to public agencies but not to individuals. NEPA also requires that all persons wishing to comment be heard. Those of us who have legitimate interests in the project, but who do not live conveniently close to a "file" copy are effectively excluded from informed comment. If expense is the issue, such expenses should be bourn by the petitioner and be a routine expense of the permit process. The respondent has no control over the magnitude of the project and hence the amount of technical data required to support the decision. NEPA requires that this data be available to all respondents.

- E [QUESTION 2) Why were the technical reports and data tables not made available to ALL interested parties?

- F [QUESTION 2A) There have been numerous mailings associated with this project. A form for requesting the technical reports and data tables could have been included in each of the last four mailings. Why was this not done?

- G [QUESTION 2B) Since the technical reports and data tables were not made routinely available to individual respondents, which severely limits their ability to make informed comment, is this in fact a valid DEIS/DPA? Will the FEIS and Record of

RESPONSES

- D Please refer to Response B above. The IPCo is the project proponent for the Ely to Delta segment because of the original right-of-way application. The LADWP has been involved in all aspects of the SWIP EIS process because of the IPCo's intent to request the BLM to transfer the right-of-way grant for this segment, if granted, to the LADWP. Again, the BLM in Ely has also been involved in every step of the EIS process, and will be involved in the decision process with the rest of the potentially affected BLM districts. If a right-of-way for the Ely to Delta segment is granted, the BLM in Ely will be directly involved with in the development of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plans, as well as the actual construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. Refer to page 1-34 of this document for more information regarding the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan.
- E The technical reports and data tables were made available to all interested parties to review, as explained in Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Only a limited number of technical reports were printed because of the costs of printing and mailing the nine document sets. The alternative to making these limited number of documents available for public review would have been to restrict public review to the project files. The technical reports were produced to facilitate public review of all of the detailed studies without having to travel to Idaho. Additional sets of these documents were sent to the local libraries indicated on page 4-17 of this document.
- F Refer to Response E above.
- G Refer to Response E above.

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

G [Decision be delayed until this deficiency is met by determining if anyone wishes to receive these documents and is given a reasonable and customary time to either enter a comment or amend comments already submitted?

ISSUE 3) The Federal Lands Policy and Management Act explicitly requires that existing designated utility corridors be used whenever possible when siting new transmission facilities. This portion of the law appears to have been totally ignored in formulating alternatives in this DEIS/DPA, even after citing this fact! Each of the BLM Districts traversed has an in place land use plan, which in effect constitutes a form of internal zoning. These plans delineate a number of utility corridors requested by the various utility companies. The DEIS/DPA contains no map of ANY existing designated utility corridors (utilized or empty). Existing long distance power transmission lines are shown only where they interact or enter the proposed right of way.

H [QUESTION 3) Where are the currently existing designated utility corridors which are germane to this project (contained within the five map sheets)?

H [QUESTION 3A) Where are the proposed or existing utility corridors for the proposed White Pine Power Project (WPPP)?

QUESTION 3B) What relationship, if any, exists between the WPPP proposed or existing utility corridors and the proposed SWIP corridor?

ISSUE 4) Utility corridors are designated in the normal planning process within each agency's land use planning process, most particularly in Master Framework Plans (MFP) or Range Management Plans (RMP) for each BLM District. The SWIP has been in the making for many years.

I [QUESTION 4) Why are segments now proposed (such as the Cut-off route) which lie outside any designated utility corridor, particularly when existing designated corridors fill the same transmission needs?

J [QUESTION 4A) Of what use is the planning process if major modifications, such as totally new utility corridors, can be introduced outside the scope of the general planning process?

RESPONSES

H Please refer to Chapter 1 of this document for this discussion and for maps (Figure 1-1 and 1-2) of the designated and planning corridors.

I The NEPA process mandates evaluating "reasonable and feasible" alternatives which in this case include routing alternatives which lie outside of designated utility corridors. The Record of Decision for the SWIP may amend Management Framework Plans and Resource Management Plans for the BLM if appropriate. This is why the EIS process is combined with a plan amendment process.

The Federal land management agency will retain ownership of the land within the right-of-way. For private lands, an easement would be purchased from the land owner, but the private land owner would still own the land unless a fee purchase was made by the utility company.

J A planning process must be dynamic to respond to changes. When land use plans are completed, the plans are responsive to the resource issues at that point in time. A land use plan must have the flexibility to be responsive to changing situations or new information. That is the reason why the BLM regulations allow for plan amendments. Like any new land use plan, land use plan amendments also require public input and allow for public comment.

LETTER #B-10 COMMENTS

ISSUE 5) Land ownership and control of use of the right of way is also a concern.

K[QUESTION 5) Who will own the land contained within the right of way?

L[QUESTION 5A) Who will control additional or ancillary uses of the utility corridor/right of way for uses other than the direct construction, maintenance, and utilization of the right of way for SWIP or the Cross-tie? What environmental safeguards will remain? Will additional uses require a formal EIS?

M[QUESTION 5B) Will creation of these utility corridors (assuming they are not already designated) facilitate their use by the current petitioners (IPC and LADWP) or others for the inter-basin transfer of water, interstate transport of water, or international transport of water through eastern Nevada by pipeline, aqueduct or any other means?

ISSUE 6) There are at least two major components of visual values and hence visual impacts. All other things being equal, the fewer people offended, the better. More fundamentally, there is the issue of introduced visual characteristics, i.e. what will be fundamentally changed. Throughout the DEIS/DPA this second component is totally ignored even though this is recognized as a legitimate issue, especially if the area is remote. This seems to be an acute problem wherever the environmentally preferred route is different than the Agency or utility preferred routes. However, since these are the only places that one can observe the independent interplay of issues in selecting a given route/alternative, one is left with little confidence that this criterion received more than passing lip service in any route determination.

N[QUESTION 6) Will the visual impacts of the project be re-thought in the FEIS and ROD to include the critical visual impact component of fundamental changes in the character of the viewshed and its surrounding area?

ISSUE 7) The choice of the Cut-off route as the environmentally preferred alternative for the Cross-tie project is most unfortunate, and we believe, does not withstand reasonable scrutiny. For the purposes of these comments, when we refer to the Cut-off route we are speaking only of links 262, 265, 266, 267, 268, a total distance of about 79 miles. The remainder of the route is coincident with the 230kV corridor

RESPONSES

K The land management agency or private land owner will retain ownership of the right-of-way.

L The land management agency will control the right-of-way for the uses designated in the right-of-way grant or special use permit. The National Environmental Policy Act will apply to any revisions of the operations other than what is stated as the permitted uses.

M Establishing utility corridors means potential use by other linear facilities. However, a right-of-way grant would be needed before any other project could be constructed. This would require complying with the National Environmental Policy Act.

N Impacts to the scenic quality of the landscape were assessed consistently for each of the alternative routes. Please refer to Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report for a complete discussion of the methods. Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA explains where the Technical Reports can be reviewed. Also refer to Appendix H in the Errata of Chapter 4 for locations where additional copies of the Technical Reports can be reviewed.

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

of which we approve. The Cut-off alternative was added relatively late in the decision making process to allay concerns raised by the Great Basin National Park concerning degradation of the ambiance and viewshed to the north of the Park. We are unaware of any instance in which the implementation of a transmission line enhanced the visual, aesthetic, or environmental quality of the corridor along its route. There is no "good" place to put a transmission line, only "less bad" locations. Certainly, the Cut-off route is among the worst that could be rationally proposed when judged from an environmental point of view. Perhaps this is the result of not developing all of the criteria for this route to the same degree as for other parts of the project such as the main SWIP alternatives - there is much white unassigned value along this route on the cultural and biological impact maps and much misinformation on the visual and land cover maps. All noted errors and omissions appear to undermine or under value the ecological integrity found along this route. In terms of data collection and evaluation, this route appears to be an afterthought. Whatever the reasons, the designation of this route as the best environmental alternative is totally unacceptable.

O QUESTION 7) Since the Cut-off route does not comply with the existing Schell Resource Area RMP which contains no provision for a utility corridor with this alignment and is in apparent conflict with FLPMA which provides that, where possible, future transmission lines should be sited in existing corridors and there being an existing corridor to achieve the same transmission goal, i.e. the 230kV Corridor, is the Cut-off alternative legally viable? Will the FEIS and Record of Decision be in accordance with the Schell RA RMP and FLPMA and/or delete the Cut-off Alternative?

P QUESTION 7A) With regard to the biological resources present along the Cut-off corridor, are you aware that there is CRUCIAL YEAR LONG and KIDDING GROUND use by antelope along essentially all of links 266 and 267? In fact, this area is sufficiently important that it was designated as the Antelope Game Refuge in the early 1920's by the State of Nevada. This refuge extended from the northern limit of the Mt. Moriah Unit of the Humboldt National Forest northward to the Elko/White Pine County Line and 15 to 17 miles westward from the Nevada/Utah State Line. This refuge was in existence until the mid to late 'Forties. During this time all big game was in real danger of extirpation in Nevada.

RESPONSES

O Yes. The SWIP process may amend existing Resource Management Plans or other land use planning documents; a decision by the BLM to establish a route would also establish a utility corridor.

P Major portions of Links 266 and 267 were identified as pronghorn antelope habitat, including pronghorn winter range. However, no crucial yearling or kidding ground designations were indicated to the document preparers for these links during the inventory. Similarly, the preparers were never informed of the antelope refuge.

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

P Were the existence of the refuge and both the biological and cultural/historical significance of this area known to the evaluators? Will these factors be considered in the FEIS and Record of Decision?

Q QUESTION 7B) A statement is made in the DEIS (page 3-18, Wildlife, wild horses and burros) that "none occur within the study corridors". In point of fact the Cut-off corridor crosses at least two herd areas in Nevada, the Antelope Herd Management Area and the Mt. Moriah Herd Management Area. Both of these HMA's have very real horses in them! Are the preparers of the DEIS aware of these HMA'S? Why are they not considered at all? Will the FEIS and Record of Decision reflect their existence?

R QUESTION 7C) Virtually the entirety of the Cut-off route in Nevada is in prime Ferruginous Hawk habitat. While buried in the text, why is this not depicted on the Biological Resources Map #3 & #4? The open sage to scattered pinion/juniper stands of the adjacent mountains are the ideal habitat for this species. Will their presence along this corridor be recognized and given weight in the FEIS and Record of Decision?

S QUESTION 7D) At least link 267 crosses an unusual succulent transition zone giving rise to most peculiar appearing cacti. This statement is based on observations made by Alvin McLane of the Desert Institute at the University of Nevada-Reno. Why is this area not given consideration in the DEIS? Will the FEIS and Record of Decision reflect the existence of this transition zone?

T QUESTION 7E) Why is there a large (presumably barren) playa area on link 267 between miles 15 and 20? There are no playas at this location. The playas are about 3-4 miles west. What does occur are fairly large stands of winterfat on a gently rolling terrane with a general westward slope of perhaps 5%, which might give similar reflectance from satellite imagery. On the ground no one should make this mistake! It is in part this large percentage of winterfat that makes this excellent winter range for antelope and other big game species, such as elk which are moving into the area from both north and south. Will someone actually go out and properly evaluate the environmental suitability of this route on the ground before the FEIS and Record of Decision? Will the FEIS and ROD reflect the actual facts as they are on the ground and

RESPONSES

Q This has been corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document. Refer to page 3-35 under Herd Management Areas.

R One of objectives in mapping resources was to illustrate the occurrence of discrete, relatively sensitive biological features. Where ferruginous hawk habitat was represented by discrete units within a link, it was mapped. Where it occurred essentially throughout a link, the BLM did not map it. The same is true of pronghorn habitat. The BLM mapped discrete elements of pronghorn natural history (e.g., crucial wintering grounds), but did not attempt to map all pronghorn habitat in the study area. The presence of ferruginous hawks throughout this part of Nevada has been considered and will be further addressed during the development of the Construction, Operations, and Maintenance Plan (refer to page 1-34 of this document).

S The BLM was unaware of this transition zone until receipt of your letter. Kim Otero contacted Alvin McLean at the Desert Institute. He had no recollection of the "unusual succulent transition zone" referred to in this comment. Surveys for sensitive plants will be conducted along the right-of-way and access roads of the selected route (refer to the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan on page 1-34 of this document).

T The areas labeled as playa on Link 267 between miles 15 and 20 (Cutoff Route) have been incorrectly identified. The correct landcover is sage scrub. The 230kV Corridor Route is the environmentally preferred route with consideration of cumulative effects (refer to Chapter 3 of this document).

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

T | rescind the designation of this corridor as the environmentally preferred route?

U | Link 266 does not traverse the ridge of the Red Hills.

U | QUESTION 7F) Link 266 appears to go out of its way to take dead aim on the Red Hills and run along the entire length of the top of this topographic feature. There is no road on this ridge top and the slopes are significant. Construction costs must be higher in this constrained environment unless grievous damage is to be done to the ridge top. Erosion will be generally more severe for both the short and long term than the short stretches indicated on the Earth Resources Map #3. Why does the route go the length of these hills instead of at their base? If this route is chosen for construction, will the actual alignment be changed to avoid the ridge of the Red Hills?

V | Neither the Direct Route or Cutoff Route corridors would cross VRM Class II areas in the Ely District. According to the Schell Resource Area, Ely District, most of the area is Class III and Class IV. These routes would pass near VRM Class II areas around the Blue Mass Scenic Area, the Gandy ACEC, and Marble Canyon WSA. Both routes would pass near the Mt. Moriah Wilderness, which is VRM Class I. All other areas that would be crossed are Class III and Class IV.

V | QUESTION 7G) The Visual Resources Map #3 and #4 depict the entire Cut-off route as having minimal visual impact over its entire length except the short link 262. Nothing could be farther from the truth. This entire route is in fact noteworthy for the absence of visual impacts due to human activity. We believe that the Ely District now classifies much of this area ("Mike Springs Pass") as Visual Resource Class II. Except where the corridor crosses the relatively low voltage rural electrical distribution lines at the road on the west side of North Spring Valley, at Tippet Pass, and at the road on the west side of Snake Valley, there is essentially nothing man-made higher or more intrusive than an occasional fence over a corridor distance of about 75 miles (links 263, 265, 266, 267, 268)! No houses, barns, silos, industry, smokestacks, chimneys, or poles. Even for rural Nevada, this area is remote! The introduction of a 500kV powerline with four-legged lattice towers at least 130 feet tall, especially running the Red Hills ridgeline and "Mike Springs Pass", would be a massive change in the visual character not only of the corridor, but the entire area. The viewsheds of the Mt. Moriah Wilderness Area, the Blue Mass Scenic Area and the Gandy Area of Critical Environmental Concern are all severely adversely impacted by this corridor. Why is this massive visual impact ignored in the DEIS? Will the FEIS and ROD take this massive visual impact into account and upgrade the visual impact from minimal to high. If not, why not?

Visual impacts to the Mt. Moriah Wilderness, the Blue Mass Scenic Area, the Gandy ACEC and the Marble Canyon WSA were evaluated in the SWIP DEIS/DPA (refer to Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report). Because views from dispersed recreation can occur from virtually anywhere within their boundaries, the effects of the SWIP alternative routes were characterized in somewhat general terms (refer to page 3-26 of this document).

Mitigation has been recommended to minimize the potential adverse effects of alternative routes on views from dispersed recreation viewpoints. Recommended mitigation measures consist of using non-specular (non-reflective) conductors and dulled structures in sensitive areas where the visual contrast would be strong.

W | Public Law 102-328, enacted August 3, 1992, designates both the California National Historic Trail and the Pony Express National Historic Trail as components of the National Trail System. This designation did not exist at the time the SWIP DEIS/DPA was released, although both routes were considered and all crossings were identified. Both trails would be crossed by the SWIP in northern Nevada.

It is incorrect to say that the recent act, amending the National Trail System Act, "puts the trail under their (NPS) care and safekeeping." Similarly, the new law does not mandate NPS acquisition or corridor management. While the NPS serves in an advisory capacity and conducts studies relative to national trails, the National Trail System Act states, in Section 7(a)(1)(A), that: "Nothing contained in this Act shall be deemed to transfer among Federal agencies any management responsibilities established under any other law for federally administered lands which are components of the National

W | QUESTION 7H) The National Park Service is the only serious "Agency" opponent of the 230kV Corridor route. They are

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

LETTER B-10

W apparently willing to sacrifice other major ecological values to preserve their own viewshed at Great Basin National Park. However, they may wish to re-think their support for the Cut-off route. A recent law has been enacted which puts the Pony Express Trail under their care and safekeeping. The Law mandates that NPS acquire and/or manage the corridor of the Pony Express Trail to preserve its character and integrity. Cut-off link 265, the north end of link 266 in the vicinity of Tippitt Pass, and probably link 262 would have major visual intrusions and totally change the historically accurate ambiance of this 20 mile segment of the Trail. Given this new mandate, will the NPS now oppose the intrusion of the Cut-off into the viewshed and ambiance of the Pony Express Trail?

X QUESTION 7I) Given the genuine and valid concern of NPS for the viewshed of Great Basin National Park, is not the incremental impact of a third transmission line north of the Park in the established 230kV Corridor less of a total impact than almost 80 miles of new transmission line in a pristine area where none currently exists?

Y QUESTION 7J) If the Park indeed must place its information kiosks within the immediate viewshed of the new transmission line, why not make the object lesson that the viewer, 90% of whom come from major metropolitan areas, have only themselves to blame for this visual intrusion, since it is to support their demand for more electricity that the line was built?

Z QUESTION 7K) The LADWP insists that it will only consider the most visually intrusive four-legged lattice towers for the Cross-tie because this is the only style of tower in which they purport to have confidence, despite contrary experience elsewhere in the country. Would not the NPS have greater ability to insist that less intrusive towers be used in areas impacting their viewshed?

AA QUESTION 7L) LADWP has indicated that they will only consider four-legged lattice towers on the Cross-tie route. These are the most visually intrusive towers possible. If the Cut-off alternative is selected for implementation, will the visual intrusion be mitigated over approximately 80 miles of corridor by the use of less visually intrusive guyed tower designs? Will both towers and wires be covered with a non-reflective coating to reduce visual impact? If not, why not? Will the utility be permitted to dictate its preference to

Trail System." The federal lands involved at the crossings of these two trail components and the SWIP are currently administered by the BLM. This management does not change as a result of P.L. 102-328. The above notwithstanding, the National Park Service agrees that these two trails are significant cultural resources which merit protection. The BLM also believes that the recent designation of the California Trail and Pony Express routes as National Historic Trails heightens even further the level of protection that should be afforded.

X The impact comparison between these two routes is discussed on pages 2-53 through 2-54 and summarized in Table 2-4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA (also refer to Table 1-2 in this document). There is also additional documentation of these impacts in this document in Chapter 3.

Y Your comment is noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Z This has been done. Corten-steel H-frame towers will be used as mitigation at the proposed road crossings which lead to Great Basin National Park. The H-frame poles may be used elsewhere as necessary to mitigate visual impacts. Refer to Table 4-2 #5 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

AA The guyed tower is not being considered as visual mitigation for the Ely to Delta segment. Yes, there are locations along all alternative routes, including the Cutoff Route, where non-specular conductor and dulled towers are specified to mitigate visual impacts. The utilities have already negotiated the mitigation measures with the BLM and have agreed to all of the mitigation measures that were recommended in the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

From the Selectively Committed Mitigation Measures listed in Table 4-2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, the LADWP has committed to the use of measure numbers 5, 7, and 10 in conjunction with the self-supporting (four-legged) steel-lattice towers on the Ely to Delta segment routes. Steel-lattice towers tend to be less visually evident in distant views than steel pole towers. The LADWP has strong internal policy reasons for not using the guyed tower design. The LADWP has developed current designs for transmission line towers based on its many years of experience in construction and maintaining high voltage transmission lines. The LADWP's experience includes the construction of 1838 guyed towers in 1969 and maintaining them for 23 years.

LETTER #B-10 COMMENTS

AA

the BLM? How can less visually intrusive guyed tower designs be acceptable to IPC for the SWIP corridor but be unacceptable designs for LADWP for the Cross-tie covering essentially similar terrane?

BB

QUESTION 7M) On July 30, 1991, at about 9:55 P.M. an F-16 flying out of Hill AFB crashed in "Mike Springs Pass" while on a low level training mission. The plane dug a furrow in the ground about three-quarters of a mile long a few miles south of Mike Springs, essentially along the proposed centerline of the Cut-off corridor. Hundreds of missions are flown through this pass every year. the planes are often so low (several hundred feet or less) that they are blocked from view by the slightest clump of bushes or rise of ground. The planes are often banking sharply to stay within the envelope of the UTTR as defined by the navigation beacon on Kern Mtn. A picket fence of high tension lines and 130 foot high pylons is about the last things these pilots need to distract them!!! Assuming that the Air Force will continue to train for low level missions over this area, will the FEIS and ROD recognize the extreme danger to human life that this segment of corridor presents to military pilots? The 230kV Corridor also crosses military air space, but not so near the UTTR itself, and there are existing towers and lines in this right of way. Why not keep the hazard concentrated where it currently exists?

CC

QUESTION 7N) The Cultural Resources Map #3 shows major un-evaluated areas along the Cut-off route. The DEIS makes the implication that statistically, these areas will have about the same importance as most of the rest of eastern Nevada. We believe that this may not be so. The Kern Mtns. have an unusual, more east-westerly trend than the typical basin and range mountains. This gives rise to a very high percentage of northern and especially southern facing micro environments well suited for large and small game, pinion nuts, and edible grasses such as Great Basin Rye. The Kerns are also unusually well watered with numerous well dispersed springs. There is only about 20 miles between these mountains and the North Spring Valley marshes, now often dry playas due to use of water for irrigation. In former times these marshes would have been a major food and fiber resource locality. Archaeological investigations, as noted in the DEIS, indicate that the general area has been occupied for about 12,000 years. Unlike most subsistence hunter/gatherers, the local inhabitants would only require

RESPONSES

When compared to free standing towers, the LADWP feels that guyed towers have the following advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

- lower initial costs
- less visual impact

Disadvantages

- not as capable to handle broken wire conditions, resulting in increased probability of tower failure and, in particular, the cascading failure of many towers at one time
- vandalism/sabotage leading to tower failure easier to accomplish by cutting guy wires
- corrosive action on guy anchors can lead to releasing the guy wires and tower failures far easier than the same corrosive action on footings of a free standing tower
- anchors and guy wires easily damaged by vehicle traffic with increased chances of liability lawsuits resulting from public use of access roads.
- guy wires require frequent monitoring for proper tensions
- costs incurred for additional line outages required for maintenance
- transmission line reliability reduced

The LADWP is willing to incur the additional initial costs because they consider the disadvantages of a guyed tower to be a major concern.

Except for areas where the United States Air Force requires the structures to be more visually apparent, the mitigation measure to use dulled towers and non-specular conductor will be implemented in the recommended locations.

It is the LADWP's policy to work with the land management agencies to develop mitigation measures for specific environmental impacts that occur along the selected route. The environmental process does not allow a utility to dictate its preference.

BB

All of the alternative Ely to Delta segment routes would cross through the Utah Testing and Training Range (UTTR) operated by Hill Air Force Base. The Direct Route is the only route that would cross through a significant

LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

CC

an annual trek of 40 miles rather than the more usual several hundred miles to get all necessary resources. Even obsidian, chert, and hornfels for making implements is relatively close at hand. The area has always been on or near significant cultural boundaries for as long as these can be differentiated. This compression of activity into such a relatively small area should significantly increase the density and scientific importance of pre-historic and ethno-historic sites exactly along the proposed corridor. Will the FEIS and ROD recognize the likelihood of a unique area of cultural resource concern along the Cut-off route?

ISSUE 8) The Las Vegas District of the BLM is currently involved in the updating/renewal of its existing RMP. Our support for the southern portion of SWIP in Clark County is predicated on SWIP remaining in utility corridors as currently defined, especially outside but adjacent to the Delamar Mts. WSA, Coyote Valley, Aerojet Corridor, Arrow Canyon WSA, and other WSA's west of US Highway 93.

DD

QUESTION 8) Will the SWIP transmission facility be confined to existing utility corridors, as currently defined, within Clark County? Despite industry preferences, will stacking of multiple lines on a single set of towers be utilized before expanding the corridor into WSA's, ISA's, and ACEC's? If not, why not?

ISSUE 9) There is currently a plethora of utility corridors, in various states of designation and approval and utilization in and around Las Vegas. Not even the Nevada State BLM can definitively state what is authorized to be where and when.

EE

QUESTION 9) Will there be a cumulative Environmental Impact Study of utility corridors of all types within Clark County for ALL utility users including power transmission, water transfers, communications, etc. especially as to how they relate to Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area, Rainbow Gardens Area of Environmental Concern, and private property, WSA's, ISA's, and ACEC's generally, before ANY additional corridor designations or modifications or utility construction takes place?

RESPONSES

portion of the R-6405 Restricted Area. The Cutoff Route also passes through a corner of this restricted area. The BLM has recognized the danger to human life. The impacts to the UTTR are found in the land use section of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and are documented in the Map Volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA and the technical reports (refer to Appendix H in the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed). The BLM will consider your comments when it makes its decision.

CC

This is an interesting hypothesis that could be investigated in the course of intensive surveys and any data recovery studies if the Cutoff Route were selected for construction.

DD

There are no designated utility corridors in Clark County except through the Aerojet lands, the Apex area, and across the Moapa River Indian Reservation. The SWIP, if approved, will pass through the Aerojet corridor. Since the SWIP's southern terminus is Dry Lake it would not pass through the Apex corridor. The current Resource Management Plan (RMP) process for the Stateline Resource Area will designate utility corridors. However, no decision has yet been made on the RMP. The utilities have agreed to double circuit towers in the Pahranaagat Wash area because of the confinement created by WSAs in this area.

It is not possible to answer at this time how the utility corridor south of Dry Lake will be configured. Please refer to pages 2-52 and 4-81 in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and page 3-14 of this document for a discussion of the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project proposed by the Nevada Power Company. Rights-of-way cannot be authorized in WSAs or ISAs, since the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the BLM's Interim Management Policy disallow them. A right-of-way can be authorized in an ACEC.

The preference of utilities not to stack multiple lines on a single set of towers is based on reliability (e.g., if a failure occurs all the multiple circuits would typically malfunction). However, typically if a single circuit line fails, only that line is affected.


EE

Except for establishing corridors in the Stateline Resource Management Plan, a cumulative EIS of utility corridors within Clark County is not

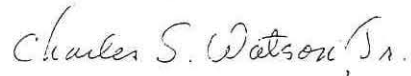
LETTER #B-10
COMMENTS

Thank you for considering our concerns. Please send a copy of your response to the above questions and concerns to each of us. Please keep each of us informed of any further developments. If you desire any further information or clarification, please feel free to call or write at the phone numbers and addresses below.

Sincerely,



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cc: Mr. Billy Templeton
Nevada State BLM Director

Mr. Kenneth Walker
Ely District BLM Manager

RESPONSES

planned. The RMP will analyze the impacts of the location of the corridor, not the specific facilities within that corridor. In accordance with NEPA, each EIS for a proposed facility will analyze the cumulative impacts.

LETTER #B-11
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



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September 1, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

RE: COMMENTS ON SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT DEIS/DPA

I am in receipt of the June, 1992 Southwest Intertie Project DEIS/DPA, and I wish to place the following comments on the official record on behalf of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

Our primary concern in the matter is the effect which the proposed Intertie routing would have on the California Trail corridor in north-eastern Nevada. As you know, this historic overland emigrant route comes into Nevada at the very northeast corner of the state, proceeds up Goose Creek, crosses over to and down the Rock Spring Creek drainage, then up the Thousand Springs Creek drainage to Thousand Springs, over the Windemere Hills via Brush Creek, and then splits--one branch going through Bishop Creek Canyon and the other down the Town Creek drainage to the present town of Wells, Nevada, where it swings southwestward down the Humboldt River.

All of the proposed routes would at some point cross over and have an impact upon the California Trail. Our concern is see to it that this impact is as little as possible, and my comments are framed with this goal in mind. This concern has to do with physical impacts and, perhaps even more importantly, with the inevitable visual impacts upon this most important historic trail corridor.

It should be noted before presenting our comments on the specific routes proposed for the Intertie that there are several new developments which should affect thinking on the routing of the Intertie. The first is that the present road from Highway 93 over to Thousand Springs Ranch, down Thousand Springs Valley, up Rock Springs Creek Valley and back over to Highway 93 to a point just south of

LETTER #B-11 COMMENTS

Jackpot has now been officially designated and established as a BLM Scenic Byway. There are proposals to extend this scenic byway on to Goose Creek and over to City of Rocks National Reserve. In addition, the entire California Trail complex, including this most important section of the California Trail through northeast Nevada has now been placed under the provisions of the National Trails Act by act of Congress. This legislation was passed by Congress and signed by the President only a few weeks ago. This action gives the California Trail significant additional historic standing and protection.

The portion of historic trail which would be impacted by the Intertie is in Panel 2, and the following comments refer to that panel of maps in the DEIS.

Both the Environmentally Preferred Route (Routes A,D,E) and the Utility and Agency Preferred Route (G) would cross Thousand Springs Valley and would do extreme damage to the visual integrity of the historic trail corridor. Thousand Springs itself was one of the most important stops for emigrants traveling the overland trail. Almost without exception, every emigrant wagon party stopped and camped at the hot springs, and a power line through this broad, open valley would be a most unwelcome and disturbing intrusion.

A Alternative Routes B,C,F would be somewhat of an improvement over the Environmentally Preferred and Utility and Agency Preferred Routes in that the line would cross the trail in a less open landscape, but the route would then parallel the trail within sight for many miles to the south of the crossing. This would also be a most unwelcome intrusion within the viewshed of the trail corridor.

Of all the Alternatives, Route D, would be perhaps the least visually-intrusive because it would be basically following the Highway 93 alignment in which there are already the highway, the old railroad bed, and an existing powerline. Route D would cross both branches of the trail, however, and these crossings would be in wide-open places.

B OCTA would, of course, strongly prefer that the proposed Intertie be located further to the east and out of the historic viewshed of the California Trail entirely--located in such a way that there would be only a right-angle crossing of the trail to ensure the least visual impact. If Routes B,C,F were moved eastward in the lower Thousand Springs drainage and then connected with the indicated Rocky Point-Six Mile-Spruce Mountain alignment, that would certainly answer our objections to the greatest degree possible.

C Barring such an eventuality, of all the alternative routings cited, in the DEIS, the unnamed alignment which is shown to the west of Route D would be the one which would answer most of our objections. There is an existing powerline already in place along this alignment, and

RESPONSES

A Your preferences are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

B Your preference for the connection to the Rocky Point-Six Mile-Spruce Mountain alignment is not possible. This is the path for the microwave signals from one mountain top location to another, not a potential transmission line route. The microwave path would establish a communication link for operation of the transmission line and substations.

C All the routes would cross the California Trail, either at a right angle or parallel to it, for several miles. Links 150 and 151 were selected as the least disturbing, both to highway travelers and persons experiencing the California Trail in the Winecup area. The visual disturbances associated with the ranching operations at the Winecup Ranch would tend to de-sensitize persons on the trail to the presence of the power line. Your preference is, the BLM believes, for Link 170 through Wells. This link was analyzed and was found least preferable environmentally (refer to the discussion on Link 170 in Appendix D in the Appendices for the SWIP DEIS/DPA). However, your preference for Link 170 is noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER #B-11
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

C | our position is that any additional powerline should simply be placed in this already existing corridor. We can see no reason to destroy the existing visual integrity of the California Trail corridor further when the Intertie could be routed right along a powerline which is in place and which already constitutes a major visual intrusion.

Our recommendation is that this unnamed alignment be reconsidered and chosen as the Southwest Intertie alignment if it is not possible to route the alignment out of sight of the trail corridor entirely as recommended above.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Southwest Intertie Project DEIS/DPA. We hope that our comments will have some bearing on a decision which will have a major effect on the preservation of a most vital part of our American heritage.

Sincerely,



Thomas H. Hunt
National Trails Preservation
Officer

LETTER #B-12
COMMENTS



SIERRA CLUB

Toiyabe Chapter — Nevada and Eastern California
P.O. Box 8096, Reno, Nevada 89507

RESPONSES

- A The SWIP is not dependent on the electrical resources of any specific generation source. A major part of its purpose and need is to provide for regional transfers of bulk power (e.g., seasonal exchanges). The SWIP DEIS/DPA considered an adequate range of alternatives to the electrical connection proposed by the SWIP. Please refer to pages 2-1 through 2-10 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of alternatives considered but eliminated.

September 12, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP). A brief oral statement was made at the hearing in Las Vegas on August 20, 1992 by Dave Brickey, Conservation Chair, Southern Nevada Group. Our comments today are in more detail and represent concerns that we have with the entire project. Our comments focus on the EIS and analysis of alternatives, proposed mitigation for environmental impacts, and relationship of this EIS to other EISs. Detailed comments are provided, whenever possible, on the proposed routes for the line.

Purpose and Need

- A The Toiyabe Chapter appreciates the arguments made in the EIS that transmission lines interlinking major power facilities with major load centers can lead to more efficient, reliable operation of power plants and power systems. An argument is made in the EIS that excess capacities in the Southwest and Northwest at certain times of the year can be conveyed to areas in need through the construction of the SWIP and that the need for additional power plants may

LETTER #B-12 COMMENTS

A be reduced. Most of the EIS is then devoted to an analysis of the impacts of the SWIP on the environment with several possible routes considered. Relatively little space is devoted to an analysis of alternatives to the project as a whole.

B The Toiyabe Chapter believes insufficient data has been presented in the EIS to support the arguments for the SWIP. No data are presented on the costs of building and operating the transmission line, and no data are presented on the amount of power that will be wheeled on the SWIP at various times of the year. Thus, it is impossible to evaluate whether the proposed SWIP is, in fact, the least-cost-alternative to providing reliable electrical energy to the areas it is supposed to serve.

C The service area for the SWIP has not been sufficiently identified in the EIS. As presented, the backbone of the line runs from Midpoint, Idaho to a dry lake at Apex, Nevada. These nodes, by themselves, are not major load centers. If much of the electrical power is intended for Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Portland, Boise, Seattle, and Salt Lake City at certain times of the year, then other transmission lines will be required to convey the power from Midpoint Idaho and Apex, Nevada. Unfortunately, the environmental impacts of conveying power from Apex, Nevada to Los Angeles are considered by the Club to be substantial because the likely route for the necessary transmission lines will be through the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Sunrise Mountain Wilderness Study Area. (This area is being recommended by the BLM as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, in part, because of the world-class geology.) Thus, if the power conveyed by SWIP is needed to increase reliability and efficiency of the power distribution system in the West, the EIS for SWIP needs to view the proposed project as part of a larger system. The relationship of SWIP to the larger system has not been sufficiently developed in the EIS to consider the cumulative costs and impacts of this proposed project.

D Utilities that might be served by the SWIP are covered by state regulatory agencies. Virtually all of the utilities have various demand side management programs with various goals and timetables. Little discussion has been provided in the EIS on the status of the applications to the state regulatory agencies for approval to build the SWIP and to recover costs. Little discussion has been provided of the interrelationship between the various demand side management programs and the projected requirement for new power plants that will feed into the SWIP.

E Increasing pressure is developing on a world-wide scale to limit emissions of green house gases to reduce the chances of significant global warming. A target is CO₂ emissions from fossil fueled power plants. Increasing emphasis is being devoted to energy efficiency. If energy

RESPONSES

B Please refer to the expanded Purpose and Need section in Chapter 3 of this document (specifically the section about least-cost planning of page 3-4) and the Purpose and Need statement in the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

C There is no service area per se for the SWIP. Please refer to the Purpose and Need for the SWIP in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the expanded discussion in Chapter 3 of this document. Also refer to discussions of the proposed Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project (MAT) on pages 1-11, 2-52, and 4-81 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and page 3-14 of this document.

D Conservation and demand-side management are an integral part of the resource strategy of every utility considering partnership in the SWIP. Federal and state regulatory requirements dictate that supply-side and demand-side resource options be considered on an equal basis in a utility's plan to acquire lowest cost resources. Conservation and other demand-side management programs are expected to reduce, but not to eliminate, the region's need for new generating resources.

Transmission facilities will contribute in several important ways to the task of the region's utilities to meet future load growth in the most efficient manner possible and with the smallest amount of new generating capacity. First, it is important to recognize the seasonal load diversity within the region. Transmission will allow existing resources to be used to serve seasonal load requirements in one part of the region while also meeting new load growth requirements in another part of the region. Therefore, total regional resource requirements (i.e., generation) can be reduced by using transmission. Then, when new regional generating resources are needed, transmission, such as the SWIP, will make more resource options available, and should help minimize costs and environmental impacts.

Refer to the expanded discussion of purpose and need in Chapter 3 of this document.

E As described in response to previous comments, the SWIP is intended to operate as an integral part of least-cost resource strategies of the participating utilities. The anticipated need for the SWIP, measured by statements of interest in participation in the project, exists in the current regulatory environment which recognizes the resource value of conservation and

LETTER #B-12 COMMENTS

efficiency becomes more widely implemented on a global, national, and regional scale, then the future needs for new, costly power projects, such as the SWIP, may become significantly reduced. Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute has made these arguments on a number of occasions. The discussion in the SWIP EIS on the impact of demand side management in all of areas served by the SWIP is incomplete and needs to be dramatically expanded from the simple discussion of Idaho Power Company's demand-side management program.

F If the primary purpose of SWIP were to increase reliability of the power system in the West and increase the efficiency at which energy from existing power plants is used, why is the SWIP an AC line rather than a DC line to exchange energy between major load and power producing centers? What significant source of energy, or significant load, exists at Thousand Springs, Nevada? What significant source of energy, or significant load, exists at Ely, Nevada? The answer to the last two questions is presently "none"; therefore, the arguments being made in the EIS that DC power lines are only cost-effective when long distances are considered would appear to lend weight to a DC line being used to wheel power from the powerplant in Utah to the major substations at Apex, Nevada and Midpoint, Idaho. The inference drawn from the arguments made in the EIS for an AC line and substations at Thousand Springs, Ely, and Apex is that major proposed powerplants at these sites are still being seriously contemplated. If not, the type of DC transmission line depicted in Figure 1-1 from Utah to Los Angeles would be proposed for the SWIP to efficiently convey power between major power facilities and loads. If the project proponents are seriously considering future power plants which would not be possible without SWIP, then the EIS for SWIP should consider the cumulative, future impacts of this major transmission line with additional coal-fired power plants in Nevada. Can the SWIP be justified without these power plants? Can a DC powerline be rejected if no major power facilities will be constructed at the proposed substations for the proposed AC line?

The No Action Alternative

G The rejection of the no action alternative in the EIS, and short summary of arguments presented, leads the Club to conclude that the draft EIS is inadequate. The stated objective that the SWIP would "increase the reliability and capacity of the transmission system in the western U.S." (p. 2, EIS) is presented without supporting data to show that the historical use and present operation of today's grid has been unreliable and prone to catastrophic failures and power interruption. "There is a gap in this system through the inland West (p. 1, EIS)"; yet, the arguments presented for plugging this hole are not well supported with facts or by the growing realization within the power industry that there are alternatives to transmission lines that can lead to lower costs, more

RESPONSES

encourages the development of all cost effective conservation programs. The SWIP would complement rather than compete with conservation in least-cost planning to meet future load requirements of the region.

Refer to Chapter 3 of this document for the expanded discussion of purpose and need.

Potential interconnections have been identified in the Wells and Ely areas which could provide significant load or interconnection service to the local utilities. The SWIP requires series compensation sites located at quarter points along the line for voltage support. Due to the nature of series compensation stations, these sites would also be a good location for interconnections that may be desired by other utilities. The SWIP is not dependent upon any specific power plant integration.

A DC transmission alternative for transmitting 1200 MW of power between from Midpoint to the Dry Lake Area would cost about \$488 million (\$200 million for line and \$144 million for each line terminal) compared to \$356 million for the proposed AC project. As pointed out in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, additional load taps are not nearly as feasible with a DC alternative. The cost of each site is an order of magnitude greater (\$100+ million v. \$10 million) and are not included in the \$488 million estimate for the basic line.

The actual efficiency of a comparable DC alternative would depend upon the design of that system (i.e., voltage rating and conductor selection). For example, the Pacific DC Intertie line has been uprated twice in its history, once to increase its voltage rating and the other to increase its capacity rating. The line was originally designed to operate at 1600 MW and +/- 400kV. A 1200 MW flow at +/- 400kV would have generated 8.6 percent loss. In the 1980s, the Pacific DC Line was uprated to +/- 500kV and is now capable of 3100 MW. For a 1200 MW flow on the current DC system, the losses are currently about 5.7 percent compared to 6 percent for the SWIP.

G The BLM believes that an adequate range of alternatives to the SWIP was evaluated and that the SWIP DEIS/DPA discussion of the no-action alternative is adequate. The no-action alternative would result in other actions being taken, which is discussed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 2-10 and 2-11.

LETTER #B-12 COMMENTS

G efficient use of existing power sources, and lead to reduced environmental impacts. A small sampling of statements from a small number of documents that have been made available to the Sierra Club leads the Club to conclude that the BLM has not done their homework in evaluating alternatives to the proposed SWIP.

H "According to a 1990 report by EPRI [The Electric Power Research Institute], it is technically feasible to save from 24 to 44 percent of U.S. electricity by 2000 - some of it rather expensively - in addition to the 9 percent already included in utility forecasts. . . . Rocky Mountain Institute estimates long-term potential to save about 75 percent of electricity at an average cost of .6 cent per kilowatt-hour - several times lower than just the cost of fuel for a coal or nuclear plant."¹ This article and supporting documentation lead the Club to question the supposition in the EIS that the proposed powerline is the least-cost option (environmentally and economically).

I The stated need for the SWIP to "furnish access to the economy energy market" (p. 2, EIS) does not appear to be supported by the present grid of powerlines in the west. Power is presently being wheeled throughout the West even though a "hole" presently exists in Nevada according to project proponents. Power in the southern western states is presently being shared by powerlines that extend at least as far from Nevada as New Mexico and central Utah. Power in the northwest is presently being shared with southern California through a large array of existing power lines and across the Cascade Range through another major set of existing powerlines. North-south powerlines in Utah and Colorado interconnect major power plants with transmission line substations and population centers.

J Excerpts from the testimony of Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute on a proposed powerline through a sensitive area of New Mexico (the OLE project) is presented because Mr. Lovins address issues such as: "gaps" in transmission line networks, demand side management as an alternative to transmission lines, and least-cost analyses of energy production and distribution systems. These issues are relevant to SWIP; however, the Club finds the discussion

¹ "Efficient Use of Electricity", A.P. Fickett, C.W. Gellings, & A. B. Lovins, Scientific American, September 1990.

RESPONSES

The no-action alternative could lead to construction of new generation resources in various parts of the West because existing electrical resources would not be able to utilize the SWIP for regional exchanges. Environmental impacts associated with generation (e.g., air quality) and transmission (e.g., similar types of impacts to the SWIP) would occur if generation is constructed.

A second possible result of the no-action is that electrical rates in various parts of the West may be impacted if the SWIP is not constructed and more expensive generation options are exercised. Finally, the stability and reliability of the electrical system in the West would not be enhanced without the SWIP.

The BLM believes that the SWIP is a desirable action for the utility industry to most efficiently utilize electrical conservation and availability and minimize environmental impacts in the western United States.

Please refer to Chapter 3 of this document for an expanded discussion about the purpose and need for the SWIP.

The SWIP DEIS/DPA Purpose and Need Statement does not contend that the existing electrical system in the western U.S. is unreliable or prone to catastrophic failures. Reliability of the existing system is adequate. The SWIP will provide additional capacity for seasonal exchanges and other commercial transactions. The seasonal load and resource diversity between electric systems in the North versus those in the South may allow power exchange contracts to replace or defer new resource construction. The additional capacity provided by the SWIP would allow utilities to take advantage of this regional diversity and would promote the efficient utilization of existing power resources. The purpose of the Western System Coordinating Council is to promote reliability of the electrical system in the western U.S. through efficient design and operation as well as to provide mechanisms to insure the future system continues to be reliable and efficient. Reliability is not the sole purpose of the SWIP but is a direct benefit to the western electrical system.

The SWIP is intended to operate as an integral part of the least-cost resource strategies of the participating utilities. The public and regulatory agencies have mandated that the region's utilities recognize the resource value of conservation. Regional utilities have expressed interest in participating in the

LETTER #B-12
COMMENTS

of these issues in the EIS for SWIP to be inadequate in that none of the analyses and facts presented by Mr. Lovins are presented in the EIS in the discussion of the "no-action" alternative.

. . . utilities in the Puget Sound area, for example, are engaged in a Bonneville-led collaborative process . . . to find cheaper alternatives to a third transmission line across the Cascades. Many such alternatives, chiefly in end-use efficiency, have been emerging. Resolving the "Puget doughnut" transmission bottleneck is the main motivation for such efforts as Bonneville's recent reexamination, and major enlargement, of industrial electricity-saving potential.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) has been evaluating similar, though smaller-scale, opportunities to displace transmission expansions, as have New England Electric System, Central Maine Power, and probably other utilities. The Wisconsin Public Service Commission's least-cost planning process rejected a major power line (WISINTOBA) after [Amory Lovins] showed that demand-size alternatives would cost less and provide other benefits.

Even at the distribution level, PG&E has pioneered, and many other utilities are becoming very interested in . . . "precision-guided programs.: PG&E produces loadshape graphs for heavily loaded substations and feeders, showing the contribution to their peak demand from each major end-use - and then targets [demand-side-management (DSM) programs] directly on those end-uses The utility designs its DSM programs like a rifle instead of a shotgun, and so specifically addresses the opportunities that will defer distribution investments often costing upwards of \$300/kW. This saving alone more than pays for the DSM programs, so the accompanying benefits in generation, fuel savings, and avoided pollution are free.

Many utilities also count grid benefits from DSM programs. For example, a 1984 study by Houston Lighting & Power Co.'s staff noted that the 60-108 MW, initially achieved by rebates for more efficient household air-conditioners had more benefits than displacing generating capacity and purchasing power: "The 40,000 existing-home participants have provided capacity for over 10,000 new residential customers with no additional

RESPONSES

project because they recognize the benefits of the SWIP to their least-cost planning process. Transmission facilities will contribute in several important ways to the region's task of meeting future load growth in the most efficient manner possible and with the smallest amount of new generating capacity. First, it is important to recognize the seasonal load diversity within the region.

Transmission will allow existing resources to be used to serve seasonal load requirements in one part of the region while also meeting new load growth requirements in another part of the region. Therefore, total regional resource requirements (i.e., generation) can be reduced by using transmission. Then, when new regional generating resources are needed, transmission, such as the SWIP, will make more resource options available, and should help minimize costs and environmental impacts.

Refer to the expanded discussion of purpose and need in Chapter 3 of this document.

H Refer to Response E above.

I Please refer to discussion of the existing system on page 1-3 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

J The BLM agrees that non-cost effective transmission projects should not be built. The utility partners in the SWIP project are expected to include only utilities which, having considered all options, have found the transmission capacity provided by the SWIP to be part of a cost effective strategy to acquire the new resources needed to serve load growth.

LETTER #B-12
COMMENTS

J demand on our system." "Capacity" includes grid capacity: the study cited, for example, "reduced transformer loads which result in extended transformer life" and hence "more reliable service" spilling over to 200,000 additional customers.²

Compliance with NEPA

² "Direct Testimony of Amory Lovins," New Mexico Public Service Commission, L Case #2382 (OLE powerline)

Relationship to other EISs

K The National Environmental Policy Act allows for the tiering of EISs on interrelated, complex, long-term projects. The EIS for the SWIP was required because the application for the right-of-way did not fall within the normal planning process of the BLM in developing their Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and EISs for the BLM lands. Regrettably, we believe the SWIP EIS has not sufficiently referenced other applicable and relevant EISs to better portray the cumulative effects of this transmission line. What is needed is a regional, programmatic EIS for power lines and power facilities in the West rather than the individual EISs that are being prepared for powerplants and power lines. The RMP EIS being developed for the Las Vegas District of the BLM is considering utility corridors - some of which could provide alternative routes for interconnection of the present coal-fired power plants in Utah with major load centers. Since the EIS process for SWIP is separated administratively from the EIS process for the Las Vegas District and other BLM districts and further isolated from the other EISs by a lack of cross-referencing, it is very difficult to analyze the cumulative impacts of the interrelated energy projects to ensure that the least cost, least damaging alternative is chosen. We recommend the BLM consider restructuring their EIS process to allow greater tiering of the pertinent EISs.

L A great concern of the Club is the impact of the SWIP on wilderness study areas (WSAs). The BLM has evaluated a great many WSAs for their uniqueness, scenic qualities, opportunities for solitude and relative nonimpairment by man. Recommendations have been provided for designation of some of the WSAs as wilderness, but Congress has not yet taken the required action. The BLM must, in the interim, manage all the areas to ensure that none of the WSAs are further impaired to the point where Congress is precluded from considering an area as

RESPONSES

K Cumulative effects have been analyzed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The BLM agrees that no programmatic EIS has ever evaluated power system needs and corridors for the West. Individual land use plans for the BLM typically do evaluate utility needs and identify utility corridors. The efforts to establish these corridors are usually based on projected needs by regional utilities. For example, the Western Regional Corridor Study by the Western Utility Group is now being updated to aid both utilities and agencies in planning and establishing corridors.

None of the centerline alternatives would cross wilderness study areas (WSAs), wilderness areas, or semi-primitive areas. The Wilderness Act of 1964, and subsequent legal decisions, led to the BLM Handbook, H-8560-1, Management of Designated Wilderness Areas, where Chapter I, Section A.1.b, states that "Wilderness must be viewed in context with other public lands, recognizing that no buffer zones will be created. Construction of high standard roads, recreation facilities or other developments adjacent to a wilderness should consider the effect they will have on the wilderness." It further states that non-wilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from areas within the wilderness shall not, of itself, preclude such activities or uses up to the boundary of the wilderness area. The Interim Management Policy (IMP) for the BLM does not apply to activities (e.g., transmission lines) outside of the boundaries because the IMP applies only to actions within the WSA.

Since the BLM manages WSAs as potential wilderness areas the impacts to these areas have been analyzed and appropriate mitigation has been recommended to minimize the potential effects of the alternative routes.

The potential effects of the SWIP to WSAs and the status of wilderness recommendations are addressed on page 3-26 of this document. Tables 3-2 and 3-3 list the number of miles of each alternative route near WSAs. The locations of WSAs are indicated on the Land Use maps in the Map Volume accompanying the SWIP DEIS/DPA (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

LETTER #B-12
COMMENTS

wilderness. The EIS process by the BLM for considering an area as wilderness was completed prior to the proposed location of SWIP near many WSAs. The Sierra Club is concerned that the proposed siting of SWIP may be used in the future to argue against the designation of adjacent WSAs as wilderness.

The draft EIS for SWIP evaluated, to some extent, the impact of SWIP on WSAs. Tables are presented that highlight the number of miles the transmission line comes within varying distances of a number of WSAs. Three-mile and 1/4-mile distances from WSA boundaries are several of the criteria used to list the number of miles a particular route may impact WSAs. The Club finds this type of analysis and presentation of the impacts of the transmission line on WSAs to be unsatisfactory. The Club believes a better approach would be to identify specific WSAs that might be impacted by the SWIP and to highlight in narrative form the type of visual impacts that might be experienced by a person standing within the WSA boundary.

Some WSAs stand a high chance of being designated as wilderness and some do not. The final EIS should highlight those areas being recommended for wilderness by the BLM, or outside parties, and evaluate in some detail the impact of the transmission line on those areas. Better maps in which WSAs are clearly delineated would be useful in evaluating the impacts of various routes on WSAs.

A number of EISs have been prepared over the years for major energy projects in the west. EISs were prepared for the Harry Allen power plant, White Pine power plant, Thousand Springs power plant, and for, we have been told, another major interconnecting powerline between the Northwest and the Southwest. We have been told that these EISs carried with them authority for powerline right-of-ways, e.g. through the Rainbow Gardens area outside of Las Vegas. No comprehensive discussion has been provided on whether the SWIP would supersede these previous commitments so that fewer additional powerlines would be provided in the West to interconnect major power projects and load centers.

Qualification of Preparers

Our concern that insufficient analysis has been given to alternatives in the SWIP EIS may be associated with the background of the staff who helped prepare the EIS. Virtually all of the people have backgrounds in natural resource issues and geographical information systems. The Club believes an economist and an energy consultant would be a natural addition to a team that evaluates a project of this scale. More pages were devoted in the EIS to the health and

RESPONSES

The White Pine Power Project 1985 Record of Decision did not grant rights-of-way. A Final EIS was never released on the Thousand Springs Power Project and a Record of Decision was never issued. The Utah-Nevada Transmission Project does have a right-of-way grant through the Sunrise Mountain ISA although The BLM has not allowed the construction to proceed. Nevada Power Company is considering the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project, which in theory may limit the number of lines through the Sunrise area. The SWIP will not supersede any of the other decisions for previous projects, although if a right-of-way is granted for the SWIP south of Ely the White Pine Power Project Record of Decision would be amended to follow the same route.

The project proponent is capable of supplying all of the necessary information and data for the BLM and the public to adequately evaluate the purpose and need. The BLM and the IPCo have received numerous letters from other utilities that support the IPCo's conclusions about the need for the project. For example, BLM received a letter from Sierra Pacific on January 15, 1993 stating that they will be short of power in the Ely area. The BLM also received a letter from Deseret Generation & Transmission Co-op on January 17, 1993 stating that they are unable to meet their load growth.

The purpose and need statement has been expanded in this document with information supplied by the utility. Please refer to Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document.

LETTER #B-12 COMMENTS

RESPONSES

N [ecological effects of AC transmission lines than were devoted to an evaluation of demand side management, the economic feasibility of the proposed project, and the no action alternative; this is not surprising because there was, on the team, a consultant on the electromagnetic aspects of powerlines. Had there been an economist and energy consultant, whose mission were to evaluate in more detail the need for the project, the Club expects that there would have been more details provided on the basic need for the project. We recommend the addition of this expertise to the EIS team.

Circulation of Draft to Interested Parties

O [The Club is concerned with the circulation of the EIS to potentially interested parties. Despite formal comments being provided by Dave Brickley of the Southern Nevada Group of the Sierra Club, the Southern Nevada Group did not receive a copy of the draft EIS. The Club wonders whether other potentially affected groups and individuals received a copy of the draft EIS.

Corridor Siting Considerations - Great Basin National Park

P [Our substantive objections dealing with the need for the Proposed Southwest Intertie itself, notwithstanding, we especially object to the crosstie addition, Ely to Delta, to the main intertie proposal. Specifically, 1) the Club finds the argument advanced in the DEIS/DPA for any powerline linkage from eastern Nevada to western Utah to be unconvincing. 2) Further, we are absolutely opposed to the BLM's preferred alternative route selection of Sacramento pass along U.S. 50 immediately north of Great Basin National Park.

1. BLM Must Remove Crosstie From DEIS/DAP

Q [The justification [1-5] for the crosstie between Ely and Delta (hereafter referred to simply as crosstie) is purported to "[increase] the electrical strength and capacity of the system" and "[reduce] the potential for and the severity of the electrical disturbances" The Club believes this crosstie argument is clearly supplemental to the primary purpose of the DEIS/DAP and is, overall, so unsupported and unjustified as a necessary part of the SWIP in the DEIS/DAP that it must be removed entirely as a part of this document.

R [Should the original (and main) Intertie Proposal ever receive approval in some form, then consideration of this large, add-on project could be considered by the agency. The crosstie stands out as an entirely separate proposal and must receive the detailed justification and scrutiny

O For over four years many newsletters have been circulated to keep the public involved in the progress of preparing the SWIP DEIS/DPA. This list grew to over 3,000 during this period. Public workshops were held before the release of the SWIP DEIS/DPA in addition to the many scoping meetings. In nearly every newsletter the public was asked to send back an enclosed comment sheet requesting a copy of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. If comments were returned without having requested a copy of the SWIP DEIS/DPA, none was sent. There were roughly 600 copies of the SWIP DEIS/DPA distributed. Copies were sent to each person requesting a copy (refer to Appendix G of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Dave Brickley of the Southern Nevada Group of the Sierra Club has been sent a copy of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

O Please refer to the expanded discussion of Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document. Your comments regarding the selection of the 230kV Corridor Route past Great Basin National Park will be considered during the BLM's decision process. Also refer to page 3-12 of this document for a discussion of cumulative effects.

Q The Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP has been a part of the SWIP from the beginning. The portion from Ely to Dry Lake was added. The reason the Ely to Delta segment was maintained in the SWIP DEIS/DPA document is explained on pages 2-31 and 2-32 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The Ely to Delta segment was originally a joint SWIP and UNTP transmission line segment. When the SWIP was amended in June 1990, the IPCo's need for the Ely to Delta segment changed. However, this segment remains an important link to the UNTP and the need for it remains unchanged.

R Refer to the response to comment "Q" above.

The SWIP DEIS/DPA described the purpose and need for each portion of the project (i.e., Midpoint to Dry Lake segment and Ely to Delta segment) in an attempt to clearly describe each segment. The SWIP and the UNTP remain integral in that each would mutually enhance the reliability of the other. Further, separate impact assessments and comparisons of alternatives were conducted for the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Also refer to the expanded discussion of Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document.

LETTER #B-12
COMMENTS

R of its own DEIS/DAP. By making the crosstie merely an appendage of the major 500-mile electrical transmission line, the important issues related to detailed study of need, efficiency, and cost are lost as noise in the context of the larger proposal. The Intertie proposers appear to have successfully "piggy backed" a second major (but smaller) project on top of a large, major project to improve chances that deficiencies in one, the other, or both will be less noticeable and the responding public more likely to focus on just one aspect.

To summarize this point, we believe we are fully justified in requesting of the BLM that the entire crosstie proposal be stricken from the DEIS/DAP and the document reissued considering only the 500 mile intertie proposal as a single, major project. The crosstie must be considered its own major project with a separate DEIS/DAP. (This EIS may be tiered with the EIS for the SWIP.)

2. BLM Preferred Alternative for Crosstie between Ely, Nevada and Delta, Utah Strongly Opposed

The Club strongly opposes the agency preferred alternative in the DEIS/DAP for the crosstie electrical transmission corridor. We do not believe that any additional transmission corridors should be allowed to impact the Great Basin National Park (GBNP). Following are our specific reasons for opposing the preferred alternative for the crosstie.

S a) Park vistas from many points include views of Sacramento pass and even with the best construction techniques, the line will be a major feature on the landscape unlikely to be missed. Alternate entrances, campgrounds, interpretive sites, and highway pull outs will undoubtedly be desirably located at some future time near to this easy access portion of the GBNP, USFS and BLM scenic lands. A powerline, like that proposed, is such a intrusion it will likely have the undesirable effect of reducing or preventing potential and current recreational/interpretive uses of the Sacramento Pass area. The loss of these public benefits were not considered in the BLM decision process.

T b) GBNP has been proposed by many to include lands up to US 50 on the north. In fact, during legislative debate park boundaries in one bill did include all lands of the South Snake Range within the USFS boundary. Park expansion to include this scenic corridor is foreseeable. Approval of this powerline corridor forecloses on many desirable benefits to the public to enhance enjoyment and understanding of the Great Basin by expanding the GBNP itself. The inability of the GBNP to meet future needs were not considered in the BLM decision process.

RESPONSES

S All existing and proposed sites within the Great Basin National Park were evaluated for visual impacts, including the proposed interpretive facilities outside of the park. The BLM agrees that there will be visual impacts to some of these sites, although none of the sites within the park would be significantly impacted. The visual impacts of future recreation site developments on BLM-administered lands and national forests were considered. Please refer to Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report for a complete discussion of the visual impact methodology and results (refer to Appendix H in the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed). Also refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document.

T The 230kV Corridor Route parallels the two existing 230kV transmission lines on their north side and should not further impact park expansion. Your comments will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

U It is speculative to believe that the two existing 230kV lines would not be placed in their present route had Great Basin National Park been in place twenty years ago. It appears, based on the end points to which these lines are connected, that they were routed reasonably. This route is a designated BLM corridor.

LETTER #B-12 COMMENTS

RESPONSES

U c) The existing 230kv powerline over Sacramento pass should not be considered as justification for placing one (or more) new powerlines through the area. We believe that the current line could never be built adjacent to the GBNP if it were subject to the NEPA EIS process. The BLM inappropriately depends on the existing line to support its preferred alternative.

V d) While the Club believes that existing powerline corridors should be used when new lines are needed, this general policy assumes that the corridor in use is a reasonable and justifiable one. In the case of the existing 230kv line, we would be strongly in favor of removing this line for the reasons given above regarding the proposed crosstie. The BLM inappropriately fails to consider eventual removal and rerouting of the existing 230kv line over Sacramento pass and restoring the areas full scenic, recreational, and interpretive potential.

W e) Powerline consolidation in other corridors is not considered by the BLM. For example, removal of the 230kv line, included with one of the other (non-Sacramento pass) routes to reduce the overall impact of powerlines on this remote region of clear air and huge vistas. At a minimum, the BLM should consider such alternatives which would decrease the impact of powerlines.

In conclusion, we urge the BLM to select the "no action" alternative regarding the crosstie portion of the DEIS/DAP because it is a major project in its own right being "piggy backed" on an even larger power corridor and the preferred crosstie route has high environmental impacts (actually compounding existing negative impacts) which precludes many future and existing public benefits.

Mitigation Measures

X The Club is interested in knowing whether the corridor for SWIP will be available for use by other utilities. In particular, will the corridor be available for water, gas, and communication lines? If so, will environmental assessments be required for additional activities in the corridor? Powerline access roads, adjacent to WSAs may impact the potential of the WSA for being recommended as wilderness particularly if the access road is used for competitive off-road races. If underground utilities are allowed in the corridor, experience with present corridors in Nevada (e.g., Kern County gas transmission line) indicates that the loss of vegetation and scaring can be dramatic and potentially long lasting. The Club desires answers to these questions.

V The BLM is not aware of routing opportunities through this area which would result in lower environmental impacts. Also, the Cutoff Route would not be an appropriate routing for the 230kV transmission lines. The SWIP regional study evaluated all potential routing opportunities in the region, and all reasonable and feasible routing opportunities are being considered in this EIS process.

W The BLM cannot consider terminating a right-of-way grant and have the existing 230kV transmission lines removed to a different location. This would be considered only after the right-of-way expired or possibly in cases of extreme non-compliance. The earliest expiration date of the right-of-way grant on these lines is the year 2020. Use of the 230kV Corridor Route for the "Crosstie" is in compliance with the BLM policy to consolidate power lines. Section 503 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires, to the extent practical, the utilization of rights-of-way in common.

X Establishing a utility corridor means that other linear features would be consolidated parallel to existing linear features to the degree possible. This would hold true for water, gas, communication, etc. However, an important distinction is that any new project that is proposed must have a right-of-way grant and is subject to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The BLM will determine which access routes will be closed and restored following construction. The construction for a transmission line would not disturb a broad corridor similar to a pipeline. There is typically continuous construction access between tower sites except where there are sensitive resources (e.g., wetlands, live streams, etc.).

LETTER #B-12
COMMENTS


Visual Impairment Analysis

Y The Club finds the classification criteria for evaluation of visual impacts of the SWIP to be unsatisfactory. Classifications criteria based on "high, medium and low" appear to be subjective and insufficient information has been provided to allow an independent analysis of the visual impacts in some particularly troublesome areas. Members of the Club have reviewed EISs for powerlines in which photographs from key viewpoints are altered to provide a representation of what the powerline may look like in the future. Why hasn't this type of analysis been provided particularly for WSAs and the Great Basin National Park?

Conclusion

The Sierra Club looks forward to the response to our comments. We believe our statement indicates major deficiencies in the EIS from the analysis of alternatives to the proposed project to the analysis of proposed routes. Critical data are missing for a thorough analysis of not only the need for the project as well as the visual impacts of the line on environmentally-sensitive areas, e.g. wilderness areas. New, different expertise needs to be devoted to an analysis of the environmental impacts. Interrelationships with other EISs and power projects throughout the west need to be examined and presented in order for anyone to understand the need, timing, and cumulative impacts of this proposed project. Secondary impacts, such as the possible construction of new powerplants to tie into the SWIP, are often ignored even though those impacts may be major. The economic and environmental costs associated with the construction of a powerline from a substation at Midpoint, Idaho to a substation at Apex, Nevada extend well beyond those relatively isolated points. Increased energy efficiency implemented by utilities throughout the region, the "no action alternative", offers the potential to increase our supply of energy for new uses at relatively low cost with increased reliability.

Sincerely,



Dennis Ghiglieri
Conservation Chairman, Toiyabe Chapter

RESPONSES

Y Please refer to Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report for a complete methodology for the visual analysis (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed). Photo simulations have been provided for Great Basin National Park (GBNP) and are found in the Map Volume accompanying the DEIS/DPA. Two in particular are the Lake Valley Summit simulation which looks from a proposed interpretive site for GBNP on Utah State Highway 21 and the Sacramento Pass simulation which looks at towers against Wheeler Peak from U.S. Highway 6/50. Also refer to Figures 3-13 through 3-19 for simulations of the alternative highway crossing studied in the Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute (refer to page 3-39 of this document).

In addition, there was also a computer terrain perspective prepared for a view from one of the proposed viewpoints within the park, a routine first step in preparing photo simulations. Because of the distance to the 230kV Corridor Route and the perceived size of the line at that distance, it was not possible to accurately depict the barely perceptible transmission line in a photo simulation.

You are correct that no photo simulations were prepared from viewpoints within WSAs because there are no specific management plans for and no specific viewpoints within these areas. The BLM was unable to find any designated viewpoints. The BLM did assume worst case for visual impacts, that views from within the WSA could occur from any location. Therefore, mitigation was applied universally for any alternative crossing near the boundary of a WSA (refer to page 3-26 of this document). In addition, the BLM also considered all access roads leading to a WSA to be a high sensitivity viewpoint.

LETTER #B-13
COMMENTS



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

CALIFORNIA/NEVADA REGIONAL OFFICE

September 18, 1992

Karl Simonson
BLM, Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

re: Comments on DEIS for Southwest Intertie Project

Dear Mr. Simonson;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Southwest Intertie Project DEIS.

The Wilderness Society is supportive of the "No Action" alternative for the following reasons:

- A [* The DEIS does not satisfactorily justify the need for the proposed construction of a 500kV power line.
- B [* The proposed 500kV power line structures threaten the visual quality of open - valleys that have not yet been spoiled by construction.
- C [* The proposed power line will contribute to the decline in the population of desert tortoise as power lines are used by ravens to perch while seeking young tortoises as prey. The power lines will also compete for space with desert tortoise habitat.

RESPONSES

- A Additional information on the purpose and need for the project is found in Chapter 3 of this document.
- B The BLM agrees that there will be impacts from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the SWIP. The BLM acknowledges that much of the mileage of the proposed action is through relatively undisturbed landscape.
- C The BLM agrees that there would be impacts to desert tortoise, although mitigation measures taken during construction should be very effective in reducing or eliminating these adverse effects. The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is a subject of ongoing study. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. The BLM believes it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

LETTER B-13

LETTER #B-13
COMMENTS

- D [* The proposed power line will run the same north-south route taken by one of the largest hawk migrations in North America. Considering that high voltage power is responsible for a large number of hawk and eagle deaths, the power line would pose a threat to these migrating birds.
- E [* There will be significant degradation to the visual quality of Great Basin National Park if the favored route for the power line is approved. The experience of 70,000 annual visitors to the National Park will be effected by the power line route that cuts over the Sacramento Pass just north of the glaciated Wheeler Peak in the Snake Range. Furthermore, the preferred route would use an existing 250kV route which was installed before the National Park was designated and was subject to far less environmental scrutiny. It is irresponsible to assume this route would be appropriate for the proposed 500kV based on its prior use.
- F [* Proposing to route the powerline adjacent to the borders of several WSAs is wholly inappropriate as the presence of the power line will degrade values of the wilderness study areas. For example, the power lines and towers will provide ravens and other predators roosts from which they may hurt tortoises and other animals within the WSAs. These indirect impacts of the powerline are not acceptable.

In summary, both the visual and the environmental quality of public resources will be subject to significant impacts if the 500kV line is constructed.

Thank you for considering our comments. Please keep us on your mailing list and continue to keep us informed.

Sincerely,

Norbert Riedy
Norbert Riedy
Senior Policy Analyst

RESPONSES

- D A specific raptor migration route has not been identified. It is well known that large numbers of migratory raptors are present in the Goshute Mountains during both spring and fall.
- Given the structural configuration of 500kV transmission lines, the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission systems proposed for the SWIP would use V-guyed steel lattice, self-supporting steel lattice tubular, and steel H-frame towers. The spacing between conductors and towers is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. Conductors are hung on the supporting structure in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart. Further, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (refer to pages 2-12 through 2-14 of the DEIS/DPA). Because of the distance between conductors and towers, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower.
- Refer to the discussion of Avian Collision Hazards on page 3-89 of this document.
- E There would not be significant visual impacts to visitors at Great Basin National Park. The assumed centerline of the SWIP Ely to Delta segment (230kV Corridor Route) is approximately seven miles north of Wheeler Peak, the casual observer would likely not notice the SWIP or the existing 230kV lines from any of the viewpoints within the park. The BLM agrees that there will be significant visual effects to park visitors driving on the travel routes approaching the park (e.g., U.S. Highway 6/50) and that there will be visual impacts to some of the proposed interpretive facilities outside of the park boundaries. These impacts are all documented in the DEIS/DPA and in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).
- It is true that the existing 230kV lines were constructed prior to establishment of Great Basin National Park. The BLM will consider your comments during its decision process.
- F The BLM agrees that routing of the transmission line near WSAs would cause some visual impacts. These impacts are further discussed on page 3-26 of this

LETTER #B-13
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

document. However, the Wilderness Act specifically states that the designation of Wilderness shall not preclude land uses from occurring adjacent to the boundary. The Wilderness Act of 1964, and subsequent legal decisions, led to the BLM Handbook, H-8560-1, Management of Designated Wilderness Areas, where Chapter 1, Section A.1.b, states that "Wilderness must be viewed in context with other public lands, recognizing that no buffer zones will be created. Construction of high standard roads, recreation facilities or other developments adjacent to a wilderness should consider the effect they will have on the wilderness." It further states that non-wilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from areas within the wilderness shall not, of itself, preclude such activities or uses up to the boundary of the wilderness area. The Interim Management Policy (IMP) for the BLM does not apply to activities (e.g., transmission lines) outside of the boundaries because the IMP applies only to actions within the WSA. However, since WSAs are being managed during the period until designation or release, visual impacts were also considered from these areas.

The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is evolving. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. The BLM believes it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area. Also, the impact of predatory ravens on hatchling desert tortoises appears to be a local problem; it has not been documented as occurring region wide.

**COMMENT LETTERS AND
RESPONSES FROM AGENCIES**

LETTER #C-1
COMMENTS



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF MINES
WESTERN FIELD OPERATIONS CENTER
EAST 360 3RD AVENUE
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99202-1413

SEP 8 9 49 AM '92



RESPONSES

Memorandum

To: Karl Simonson, Bureau of Land Management, Burley District Office, Burley, Idaho

From: Supervisor, Environmental and Regulatory Analysis Section

Subject: Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment

A

For a project of this size, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) provided a reasonably good inventory of areas where potential conflicts with current and future mineral resource development could occur. This inventory was acknowledged by our reviewers at both Intermountain Field Operations Center (IFOC) and Western Field Operations Center (WFOC). However, the document failed to take the next and most important step--assessing the likelihood that a significant conflict requiring mitigation will occur at any of these identified areas. It is difficult to understand why this was not done, particularly when statements were made such as, "issues of concern regarding the location of the proposed transmission line include . . . , conflicts with potential mineral development," and "specific resource features that were identified on maps include . . . areas with potential mineral resources" (p. 3-4, DEIS). We could not find any identification of potential conflict areas with mineral resources, including on the maps, for the miles of mining claims traversed by the proposed transmission line rights-of-way. This mineral resource potential should be given for specific areas and should not only identify the likely commodity but also its potential to be discovered and developed in the foreseeable future.

B

We object to two statements presented in the document. The first, on page 5-39 of Technical Report Volume III, states that "Potential impacts to mining claims were not assessed because the BLM has the authority to grant rights-of-way across mineral claims." If a right-of-way can only be granted across a claim if it does not interrupt the mineral development of the claim (p. 5-39,

Mining claims crossed were not incorporated in the map volume. The mileage that each alternative would cross was recorded in Table 2-4 and 2-5 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA under the Land Use Category. Also available are some of the land owners and/or names of the claims that can be cross referenced once a final right-of-way is determined.

Project maps with known mineral resources are available in the project files. Table ER-3 (Mineral Resources Inventory), Table ER-4 (Microwave Facilities - Earth Resources Inventory), and Table ER-1 (Substation and Series Compensation Station Siting Area Inventory) of the Technical Report, Volume II - Natural Environment identify locations of known mineral resources by commodity or the potential of mineral resources at a site. This information was used as a part of the assessment. Mineral resources are included in the overall route assessment as shown in Tables 2-4 and 2-5 (Route Comparison tables) in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Mitigation by avoidance is expected to result in no adverse impacts to mineral resources. It is beyond the scope of this EIS process to evaluate the potential of a commodity to be discovered and developed in the foreseeable future. Also refer to Appendix H in the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed.

B

Mineral potential is documented in Table ER-3, Volume II of the Technical Report.

LETTER #C-1
COMMENTS

B Technical Report Vol. III), then mineral resource potential must be determined before the right-of-way can be granted. This DEIS, however, chooses corridors for the transmission lines without the benefit of a mineral resource potential assessment of claims crossed. Therefore, as impacts to mining claims might occur, an attempt to identify this impact should be made.

C The other statement we disagree with is, "if a mining claim predates the right-of-way grant for the transmission line, and the claimant wants to reach what is believed to be a rich ore deposit, the right-of-way holder (the utility) would have to move the transmission line or negotiate an acceptable monetary payment for the mineral rights" (p. 4-29, DEIS). We do not support "payment for the mineral rights" as an acceptable mitigation alternative to poorly chosen rights-of-way. Purchase of mineral rights precludes adding the resource to our domestic mineral supply and prevents the boost to our economy that its development would generate. We prefer that Mitigation Measure 6, from table 4-2, be strictly adhered to and applied to areas of known mineral resources with foreseeable development potential as well as to areas of active mining. This form of mitigation would virtually eliminate the costly relocation of a poorly located transmission line.

If you have questions pertaining to these comments, please contact Michael Dunn at (509) 353-2664. Thank you.


Burton B. Gosling

RESPONSES

C The BLM agrees that monetary payment for mineral rights within a right-of-way is a less acceptable form of mitigation, not only for the reasons you stated, but also because it would be very expensive. This transmission line would have an average span of about 1/4 mile between towers and would effectively span quite large areas. Mitigation 6, as noted on Table 4-2 would be the preferred mitigation.

LETTER #C-2
COMMENTS



DISTRICT OFFICE
BURLEY, ID 83318

AUG 21 3 51 PM '92

Department of
Comprehensive Planning

RICHARD B. HOLMES
DIRECTOR

RICHARD T. BERFAS
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

CLARK COUNTY BRIDGER BUILDING
225 BRIDGER AVENUE, SEVENTH FLOOR
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89155
(702) 455-4181

RESPONSES

- A Although the future plans of the connections in the Dry Lake and McCullough areas are still in the planning stages, the SWIP will interconnect with existing lines in the county.
- B Yes, the Dry Lake Substation will be connected to the local grid. The BLM anticipates that Nevada Power will incorporate this into their 1993 Resource Plan.
- C Yes. The BLM anticipates that the SWIP will interconnect with the Marketplace-Allen Transmission Project. The cumulative effects of this project are discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

August 18, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley ID 83318

COMMENTS ON THE DEIS/DPA FOR THE SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Thank you for sending us a copy of the DEIS/DPA for the Southwest Intertie Project. After reviewing the documentation for this transmission line project, the Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning has the following comments:

1. The DEIS/DPA does not indicate what will happen to the power once it gets to the Dry Lake substation. This raises the following questions:

- A [Will the Dry Lake substation be connected to existing transmission lines within Clark County?
- B [Will the Dry Lake substation be connected to the local grid? If this is the case, has this project been incorporated into Nevada Power Company's Resource Plan?
- C [Will the Dry Lake substation be connected to another new project requiring construction of additional transmission lines, substations and microwave communication sites within Clark County? If so, the

LETTER C-2

LETTER #C-2 COMMENTS

- C [DEIS/DPA should cover the cumulative impact of the entire project rather than just this segment.
- D [• Are there any commitments between Idaho Power Company and Nevada Power Company to connect the substation to the proposed Marketplace Allen Transmission Project mentioned on page 4-81?
- E [2. The DEIS/DPA identifies numerous areas of the country where power is in short supply, but does not list any sources which would supply surplus power to the system. Is this project dependent solely on the season demand of different regions of the country for its power supplies?
- F [3. The DEIS/DPA should include more details relating to reclamation of the affected areas not used for the ongoing operations or maintenance of the project. This is of special concern because of the unique climatic conditions found in southern Nevada. The arid climate is not conducive to the natural re-establishment of native vegetation for the following reasons:
- Clark County generally receives about three to four inches of precipitation per year.
 - Weed species tend to invade disturbed areas, competing with native plants.
 - Windy conditions are common in the desert. This causes the surface disturbed soils to shift or blow away, further inhibiting the ability of vegetation to thrive.
- These conditions will discourage the re-establishment of disturbed areas even if they are re-vegetated with native plant species.
- G [4. The DEIS/DPA does not address the cumulative impacts to Clark County's population if the transmission line is connected to the local grid. The increased power supply could promote unexpected population growth pressure in the area, causing additional problems with other types of environmental or service supply factors within the County.

RESPONSES

- D Yes.
- E The SWIP is not solely dependent on seasonal demand from different regions of the West. Please refer to pages 1-5 through 1-13 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for additional information about the transfer capabilities of the SWIP and to the expanded discussion of purpose and need in Chapter 3 of this document.
- Sources of surplus power would also be available when utility systems connected to the SWIP would be operated in "off-peak" conditions. Further, in good water years, the hydroelectric systems of the Northwest could have substantial surplus power.
- F The BLM agrees that more is needed. The SWIP EIS process is intended to make decisions on whether or not the project should be built, and if so, which route will be selected. Additional work will need to be done during the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan phase to detail the rehabilitation methods and other aspects of the project (refer to page 1-34 of this document).
- G It is unlikely that the addition of a transmission line to the local grid would increase the population within Clark County. The SWIP is intended to transport bulk power between regions of the West. Because it will terminate in the Las Vegas area means that the local grid could be interconnected to it. AC transmission systems in the West are typically connected to local grids via substation interconnections.

LETTER #C-2
COMMENTS

- H [5. Table 3-8 notes the population for the City of Las Vegas, yet does not reference any of the unincorporated towns/areas within the Las Vegas Valley which represent about two-thirds of the Valley's population.

These comments are based on the information the Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning has received to date. At the present time there is not sufficient mitigative information available to fully review the overall environmental impacts associated with this project. Any additional information or understanding of this project may require further analysis and comment. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Gregory of my staff at (702) 455-4181.

Sincerely,



RICHARD B. HOLMES
DIRECTOR

RBH:RG:bh
L227

RESPONSES

- H Most cities for this table include incorporated cities or unincorporated cities through which the transmission line directly passes. Cities that were less distinct or outside of the three mile corridor were not listed in the inventory and/or table.

LETTER #C-3
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

COMMISSIONERS

ERNIE HALL
DALE PORTER
NORMAN THOMPSON
GEORGE R.E. BOUCHE
COUNTY MANAGER
(702) 738-5398

Board of County Commissioners

ELKO COUNTY COURTHOUSE
ELKO, NEVADA 89801

September 10, 1992

- A The Agency Preferred Alternative proposes to use Links 221 and 223 (refer to Impacts in the Oasis Area in Chapter 3 of this document). Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

U.S. Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

ATTN: Mr. Karl Simonson

RE: SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT
DEIS/DPA

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The Board of County Commissioners have been advised and oriented on the SWIP as it relates to Elko County, Nevada. Specific response and concern has been received by the Board relating to Link 211 as it relates to the community area of Oasis and the Big Springs Ranch that is headquartered at Johnson Springs.

With regard to Link 211, the preferred alternate is to shift the route to the East side of the Goshute Valley using Link 221 and a portion of Link 222 to gain a easterly bearing before going South.

An acceptable alternate route to Link 211 is to use Link 221 and 223 that will somewhat alleviate the encroachment and invasion that was believed present with Link 211 as proposed.

LETTER #C-4
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127



L7617 (774)
DES-92/0023

9 OCT 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The National Park Service (NPS) has actively participated as a cooperating agency in the development of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Draft Plan Amendment for the Southwest Intertie. Since the beginning of our involvement, we have consistently identified concerns regarding the potential effects that the proposal could have on Great Basin National Park. In addition, based upon the information we have received, we believe that other alternatives, including the Direct Route and the Cutoff Route, would be preferable to the 230 kV Corridor Route. We underscore our concerns as follows.

1. Summary: We are very concerned that, as required by 40 CFR 1502.12, major areas of controversy, including issues raised by the agencies and the public, are not identified. Additionally, as further stated in the regulation, issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives, also need to be clearly stated. We have consistently taken issue with the establishment of the transmission corridor within easy view of Great Basin National Park and have urged the choice of more preferable alternatives.

A The purpose of the Summary is to provide the reader with a relatively brief and cursory understanding of major components of the studies conducted. The BLM agrees that the Summary should also identify the major issues and concerns of the public and the agencies for the project. Refer to revised Summary on page 1 of this document.

LETTER #C-4 COMMENTS

- B 2. Purpose and Need: As currently written, this section does not describe the Federal action that has lead to this preparation of this DEIS. Moreover, it does not identify the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) plan that may be potentially amended. An explanation of the BLM right-of-way policies in this circumstance should be added.
- C 3. Planning Requirements, Environmental Review and Licensing: We are concerned with the identification of a potential need for a right-of-way listed for Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA) (1 of 1, Table 1-1). While the proposed Dry Lake substation is close to the park's boundary, it has been our understanding that nothing in the proposal would affect Lake Mead NRA. We reviewed both the proposal and the environmental consequences for a reference, but could find none. Since the document does not contain the requisite appendix, we may have missed the reference. If a transmission line right-of-way across Lake Mead National Recreation Area is contemplated, it should be noted that the NPS would be required to conduct a separate environmental impact statement process funded by the applicant. There would also have to be a demonstration of the lack of reasonable alternatives and non derogation to any of the values protected by this unit of the National Park System before a permit could be issued.
- In addition, any rights-of-way involving lands acquired or developed with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (L&WCF) will require compliance with Section 6(f) of that Act. Perhaps such review was intended to be identified on page 2 or 8, Table 1-1, but as currently stated it is unclear.
- D 4. Preferred Route Selection, Page 13, paragraph 2: The choice of an alternate sub-station site does not change the determination concerning the environmentally preferred route. The Cutoff Route is environmentally preferred, and can be served by a sub-station north of the Robinson Summit site. This reference should be corrected.
- This same conclusion is made in the sentence beginning at the bottom of page 2-53 and extending to page 2-54.
- E 5. Alternatives Studied in Detail, No Action, page 2-11: At the bottom of the page, disadvantages of the no-action alternative are listed. The second identified disadvantage is misleading. While an adverse impact may result from compensating actions taken to produce energy, it is also possible that compensating actions taken may result in fewer adverse impacts than those associated with the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP). Without knowing what those compensating actions might be, it is not

RESPONSES

- B Refer to the expanded Purpose and Need on page 3-1 of this document.
- C The SWIP proposes to terminate at a proposed substation in Dry Lake located northeast of Las Vegas. The project does not propose a right-of-way that would affect the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The reference in Table 1-1 and has been corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.
- D While it is true that the Cutoff Route could be served by a substation at the Robinson Summit site, the environmental effects of a transmission line from the North Steptoe area to the Robinson Summit substation site would have to be added to the Cutoff Route. By using the North Steptoe substation site, the Cutoff Route would be shorter and would result in slightly fewer adverse effects than the 230kV Corridor Route. If the Cutoff Route were to use the Robinson Summit substation site, it would likely not be the environmentally preferred route because of the additional transmission segments between North Steptoe and Robinson Summit.
- If the Cutoff Route connected to Robinson Summit the environmental preference for the Ely to Delta segment would likely change to the 230kV Corridor Route. Refer to Cumulative Effects on page 3-12 of this document for the future buildout scenarios and an explanation of the route and substation site preferences as well as the effects of the preferred alternatives.
- E It is not possible to state with any degree of certainty what the compensating action may be if the SWIP is not constructed. You are correct that it would be difficult to prove whether compensating actions would be more or less adverse than the SWIP. However, it is not difficult to surmise that the effects would have adverse environmental consequences. This is what is stated.

LETTER #C-4 COMMENTS

possible to know if they would be adverse or beneficial. The additional actions being referenced should be clearly identified.

Similarly, the third listed disadvantage assumes that any locally generated power in urban areas would adversely impact clean air. Without knowing how that power would be generated, and to what extent, it is not possible to know if relying on locally generated power would create a greater or lesser impact than that created by SWIP. More specific analyses should be included.

6. Environmentally Preferred Alternatives, Ely to Delta, page 2-53: The first paragraph indicates that the "major concern" for the Direct Route has been expressed by Hill Air Force Base (AFB). They oppose construction of structures exceeding 35 feet high on lands under their restricted air space (a height of 30 feet is cited on page 2-56, paragraph 2, and the incorrect figure should be changed). Also the statement indicates that "serious concern for protecting the undisturbed landscape through which the route passes", has been expressed by the public and BLM. However, it should be noted that the area is currently impacted by noise from low-level military training flights.

In the narrative, it should be noted that no agreement exists between the Air Force and the BLM that limits BLM's actions regarding approval of transmission line with towers higher than 35 feet. Without this clarification, the environmental analysis of the Direct Route is not complete because it does not evaluate the impacts of placing the line under the military operating area.

The first paragraph states that concerns for the "not understood resources" of the Leland Harris Spring complex contribute to making the Direct Route "less preferred environmentally than the Cutoff Route." There is no indication of whether or not it is less environmentally preferred than the 230 kV Corridor Route. Many questions are left unanswered concerning the significance of the Leland Harris Spring Complex. Appropriate information needs to be incorporated into the DEIS in order to have a complete, comparative picture of environmental impacts across alternatives. The statement that the resources are "not understood" would seem to indicate that no conclusions can be drawn regarding environmental impacts.

The purpose of the environmental analysis is to gain the information needed to properly choose between alternatives. The reference to the "potentially unknown" cultural sites mentioned in the first paragraph is

RESPONSES

F Hill Air Force Base is opposed to towers over 30 feet high within the R-6405 Restricted Area. The Delta Direct Route would cross 55.1 miles of this Restricted Area. You are correct that the area currently is impacted by low-level flying operations. However, it is not possible to state that impacts from low-level flying would be noticeably different if the Ely to Delta segment were constructed on the Delta Direct Route. Refer to Military Air Space on page 3-22 of this document which addresses the military concerns and the concerns of neighboring land-administrating agencies.

G Refer to page 3-91 of this document for further information on the Leland-Harris Springs Complex. The BLM agrees that there are few impacts to sensitive resources at the Leland-Harris Spring Complex which cannot be effectively mitigated. One notable exception is the distinct possibility of impacting wetlands with at least one tower site. This would likely result in the need for a 404 Permit and 401 Certification under the Clean Water Act.

H You are correct that the reference to "potentially unknown" cultural sites is true on every alternative route and should not be justification for eliminating an alternative route. Refer to the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document for the correction.

LETTER #C-4 COMMENTS

H similarly problematic. The same possibility for presently unknown cultural sites to be discovered exists on every alternative route. If the Direct Route is eliminated from further consideration for this reason, every other alternative route should be similarly eliminated.

I The second paragraph refers to the Cutoff Route. The last two sentences of the paragraph indicate that Hill AFB has requested a maximum tower height of 105 feet above ground level. Their request appears to have been honored in the Cutoff Route, although it would also impact the other crosstie routes. It is misleading to emphasize the potential requirement for additional towers on the Cutoff Route while only stating, in reference to the 230 kV Corridor Route, that "this route also crosses through the military operating area (MOA) and the Utah Training and Testing Range (UTTR) of Hill AFB." The reader is unable to distinguish the potential difference between the two routes and may, in fact, be led to believe that one has a greater impact than the other when that actually may not be the case. This section of the document needs further clarification and analysis on this point.

J We also think that all requests made by cooperating agencies relative to their mandates for modifications should be listed, analyzed and justification given as to why they have or have not been included as mitigation in the proposal or other alternatives.

K The third paragraph on page 2-53, as well as throughout the document, mentions that "the 230 kV Corridor Route best satisfies the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) mandate to 'consolidate corridors' where possible." The designation of the 230 kV utility corridor in the Schell Resource Area Land Use Plan was done without prior review in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Two transmission lines currently exist within the corridor, each of which underwent NEPA compliance review. However, the corridor was simply placed over the existing lines.

K It is questionable to assume that the compliance completed for the existing lines would be identical to the compliance required to establish a corridor. Many more variables, including cumulative effects, typically would be analyzed in corridor establishment. When viewed from the perspective of the best location for a utility corridor, it is entirely possible that the existing lines were placed in the wrong location and it is conceivable that placing SWIP alongside the two existing power lines compounds an error. The conclusion that the 230 kV Corridor Route best satisfies the FLPMA mandate to consolidate corridors is unsubstantiated.

RESPONSES

I In reference to the areas where 105-foot tower requirements on the Ely to Delta routes, a narrative description has been provided on page 3-22 to clarify where and for how many miles the 105-foot towers would be required for each of the alternative routes (see also Figure 3-5).

J Clarification of this comment would be helpful. The BLM believes that the NPS comment relates to the concern/mandate to protect the viewshed outside of the boundary of the park vis-a-vis the legislation that established the park. The SWIP EIS process did respond to this concern by developing alternatives outside of this viewshed (i.e., the Cutoff and Direct Routes). This is discussed on page 2-30 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The BLM is not aware that mitigation requested by a cooperating agency was not considered or included for any of the alternatives.

K The BLM is in compliance with Section 503 of FLPMA with its designation of the utility corridor where the existing 230kV lines are located. Given the termination points for these existing 230kV lines, the BLM feels their present location is proper, and environmental impacts are minimal. The environmental preference for the Cutoff Route has been further evaluated under Cumulative Effects on page 3-12 of this document to consider the future possible utility "buildout" in the Ely area.

LETTER #C-4
COMMENTS

K | The present review of SWIP found the Cutoff Route to be Environmentally Preferred, not the 230 kV Corridor.

7. Environmental Consequences, Direct Route, page 4-22: The lack of information about the resources at the Leland Harris Spring complex is confusing and contradictory. Discrepancies exist between the information presented on pages 4-22 and 4-51 of the DEIS, and Volume II of the Technical Report. It is stated on pages 4-22 and 4-51 of the DEIS that there are four federal candidate species (least chub, spotted frog, desert dace, and Great Basin silver-spot butterfly) known to occur at Leland Harris Spring. Pages 4-42 and 4-43, Volume II of the Technical Report indicate that three of the four are classified as Category 2 species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The desert dace is not mentioned in the section titled "Wildlife Species of Concern in Utah." Either the DEIS or the Technical Report needs to be corrected.

L | The second paragraph on page 4-22 (DEIS) also states that "high residual impacts from increased public access to the Leland-Harris Spring Complex would remain, due to the potential long-term and cumulative effects of repeated public entry to this sensitive area." The summary of impacts to wildlife in Utah due to increased public access, which appears on page 4-83, Volume II of the Technical Report, states: "Although a number of federal candidate species, such as the least chub and spotted frog occupy springs and salt marshes of Snake Valley, these habitats are very localized and potential impacts to these areas should be easily mitigated (avoidance and restricted access)." These conclusions are in conflict.

In addition, the Technical Report listing, on pages 4-80 and 4-82, of species which would encounter residual high impacts following mitigation, indicates that none of the four species of concern falls within this category. In fact, only two of the species (least chub and spotted frog) are identified as being subject to high initial impacts before mitigation.

The analysis lacks consideration of the "avoidance and restricted access" opportunities. No information is made available concerning the distribution of the sensitive species at Leland Harris Spring. If the species are confined to a very limited area, the possibility of a minor relocation of the transmission line should be carefully examined. Perhaps the sensitive species could be completely avoided, with no increase in public access to the site. If the species are widespread throughout the wetlands found in the portion of Snake Valley that would be traversed by the Direct Route, the effect of the power line would be less significant due to the wide dispersal of the species. The DEIS does not provide enough information to draw either conclusion. It simply dismisses the

RESPONSES

L | There was an inadvertent omission of the desert dace from the technical report discussions of wildlife species of concern in Utah. The dace as well as the other three species, least chub, western spotted frog, and Great Basin silver-spot butterfly, are all federal candidate, Category 2, species for listing among the threatened or endangered wildlife of the United States.

The conflicting conclusions between the technical report and the SWIP DEIS/DPA regarding the Leland-Harris Spring Complex should have been corrected prior to release of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The conflict results from a problem with timing of events. The technical reports and maps of sensitive species distributions had been completed before Leland-Harris became an issue with the Direct Route. It was the BLM's belief at the time the technical report was prepared that the distribution of springs and wetlands in the Leland-Harris Spring Complex was sufficiently localized that the Direct Route could be constructed with minimal negative short- or long-term impacts to the resources. The BLM's position is that if the Direct Route is chosen they will request an emergency listing from the Fish and Wildlife Service for the least chub, desert dace, spotted frog, and/or Great Basin silver-spot butterfly. It was the BLM's contention at the time that construction could not occur in the area without significant deleterious impacts and that increased public access would represent long-term negative impacts. The BLM's position is represented in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Dames & Moore's initial position, as the third-party contractor for the EIS studies, is represented in the technical report.

This scenario is also reflected in the impact analysis in the technical report. Actually, the least chub, spotted frog, and desert dace are all listed as species with initial high impacts before mitigation. The Great Basin silver-spot butterfly was not included in this category for two reasons: 1) no life history information on this species was available other than the fact that it occupies wet springs and meadows where violets are present and, 2) it was assumed that with "red-flagging" the frog and two fish species, the essential habitat requirements of the butterfly (which appear to be poorly known at this time) would also be covered.

Little information on the distribution of the four Category 2 species within the Leland-Harris spring complex has been provided. The BLM has recently obtained some information on the least chub, but nothing specific on the dace, frog, or butterfly is available. The BLM agrees that it seems possible to construct on the Direct Route utilizing avoidance and restricted access

LETTER #C-4
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

route as less environmentally preferred, even though the Technical Report notes that potential impacts "should be easily mitigated."

Table BIO-21, entitled "Wildlife Species of Concern in Utah", at the end of Volume II of the Technical Report, lists only two of the four species earlier identified as being of concern at Leland Harris Spring. The desert dace (whose status is unclear, see above) and the Great Basin silver-spot butterfly, are not listed.

The third paragraph on page 4-22 states that "Residual impacts to sage grouse would be adverse, long term, and significant despite mitigative measures." As with the discussion on the Leland Harris Spring sensitive species, this conclusion is not supported by the information in the Technical Report, Volume II, page 4-73.

8. Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument: References to this unit of the National Park System are inconsistent throughout the document. The proper name should be used throughout.

9. Antelope Springs Trilobite Beds: In chapter three, the Affected Environment, the description of the Cutoff Route should reference Antelope Springs Trilobite Beds as a potential National Natural Landmark. We have attached a map that shows its location.

As a cooperating agency, the National Park Service continues to have disagreements with the information and conclusions drawn in this complex document. The BLM proposal that would select the 230 kV route is relatively unsupported. We strongly urge the BLM to reconsider the feasibility of the Direct Route and the selection of a more environmentally desirable alternative.

Please contact Kheryn Klubnikin, Environmental Quality Division, at (202) 208-5126 if you have any questions regarding these comments. We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Denis P. Galvin
Associate Director
Planning and Development

mitigation strategies. The BLM also agrees that if the species in question are distributed more or less throughout wetlands in the Snake Valley that the effects of the transmission line would be less significant.

When Table BIO-21 was prepared, information that the desert dace and Great Basin silver-spot butterfly were species of concern was not available.

Conflicts between the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the technical report are corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document. Also refer to page 3-91 of this document for further information on the Leland-Harris spring complex.

Refer to the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document for the appropriate corrections for Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument.

Refer to page 3-38 for a description of the Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds.

LETTER #C-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

STATE OF NEVADA



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
Fax (702) 687-3983
(702) 687-4065

September 22, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Re: SAI NV # 93300030 Project: EIS, Southwest Intertie
Project, Nevada

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Attached are additional State comments to those received from the Nevada Department of Wildlife concerning the above referenced project. These comments constitute the State Clearinghouse review of this proposal as per Executive Order 12372. Please address these comments or concerns in your final decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ron Sparks II".

Ron Sparks II
State Clearinghouse Coordinator

LETTER #C-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

BOB MILLER
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF NEVADA
REGULATORY OPERATIONS STAFF

Capitol Complex
727 Fairview Drive
Carson City, Nevada 89710
(702) 687-6001



TERRY PAGE
Director of Regulatory Operations

KELLY JACKSON
Staff Counsel

10 September 1992

Ron Sparks
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Department of Administration
Budget Division
Blasdel Building, Room 204
Carson City, Nevada 89710

Ref: EIS, Southwest Intertie Project, SAI # 93300030

Dear Mr. Sparks:

Table 1-1, Chapter 1 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment for the Southwest Intertie Project, properly identifies the Public Service Commission of Nevada as one agency which must issue approval before commencing construction. The Utility Environmental Protection Act (NRS 704.820-900) requires an approval from the Commission for transmission lines and substations of 200 kilovolts or more.

LETTER #C-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

In addition, two Nevada electric utilities, Nevada Power Company and Sierra Pacific Power Company, are subject to the provisions of NRS 704.741-751, which pertain to resource plan approval by the Commission. Participation by either of these utilities in this project would be subject to Commission review and approval of the triennial resource plans, or amendments thereto.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Henderson
Thomas H. Henderson
Senior Analyst



CONSUMER DIVISION:

Carson City/Reno—687-6000

• Las Vegas—486-6550

• Other Areas—800-992-0900, Ext. 87-6000

(11) 1249

LETTER C-5

LETTER #C-5
COMMENTS



BOB MILLER, Governor

STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1263 S. Stewart Street
Carson City, Nevada 89712

September 2, 1992

RESPONSES

GARTH F. DULL, Director

In Reply Refer to:

PSD 7.02

[Ron Sparks, Coordinator
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Department of Administration
Budget Division
Blasdel Building, Room 204
Carson City, Nevada 89710

Dear Mr.  Sparks:

The Nevada Department of Transportation has reviewed the project titled EIS, Southwest Intertie Project, Nevada SAI #93300030.

Based on the information submitted we have the following comments on the proposed project.

Permits will be required for crossing NDOT Right-of-Way.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project.

Sincerely,


D. Keith Maki
Assistant Director
Planning

DKM:JD:dg

LETTER #C-5
COMMENTS

BOB MILLER
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHEOLOGY
123 W. Nye Lane, Room 208
Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
(702) 687-5138

September 10, 1992

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Nevada State Clearinghouse
FROM: Eugene M. Hattori, Archaeologist *EMH*
SUBJECT: EIS, Southwest Intertie Project, Nevada.
DUE DATE: September 18, 1992
NEVADA SAI: #93300030

The Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology has reviewed the subject document and supporting technical reports. The Division supports the EIS as written and notes that the discussions regarding cultural resources for Nevada are comprehensive. We do have some minor comments concerning the technical supporting documentation:

- 1). The predicted sensitivity zone model may be biased against early-Holocene sites associated with dry lake basins and upland areas (eg. quarries) occupied prior to the invasion of pinyon during the mid-Holocene.

RESPONSES

- A Predicting the locations and types of archaeological and historical sites is an extremely complex challenge, and a relatively undeveloped science. The sensitivity model developed for the purposes of this EIS is based on environmental variables, but is quite simplistic and intended to provide only the grossest indications of major variations in the density of archaeological and historical sites as a tool for evaluating competing alternatives. If the project is approved for construction, intensive inventory data will be collected along the selected route. The State Historic Preservation Office will be consulted regarding inventory strategies, resource evaluations, and development of avoidance or mitigation measures as the design of the project proceeds. Consideration of how climatic changes affected human societies living in the region can be pursued as an aspect of any follow-up studies.

LETTER C-5

A

LETTER #C-5
COMMENTS

- A [Past climatic changes and historic invasion of pinyon into sagebrush-grasslands are also factors ignored by the model. These are by no means fatal flaws, but are unaddressed problems.
- B [2). Cultural resource agency contacts (SHPO, BLM, and Forest Service) for Nevada are dated and should be corrected. For example, Roland Westergard retired as Nevada SHPO in 1990. Ronald James - SHPO, Alice Baldrice - deputy SHPO, Eugene Hattori - archaeologist.
- C [3). Nevada does have a state historic preservation plan with a number of completed elements.

RESPONSES

- B Collection of data on which the regional study was based began in 1987. Thus the planning for this project has been a very long-term undertaking. There has been substantial turnover of personnel in many of the involved agencies. The contacts indicated in the Cultural Environment Technical Report were left as they were when that aspect of the study was undertaken. If the project is approved for construction, agency contact lists will be updated in conjunction with follow-up studies.
- C State Historic Preservation Plans will provide a primary basis for evaluating the significance of cultural resources that may be discovered if the project is approved for construction. In accordance with the programmatic agreement (appended to the Cultural Environment Technical Report), the State Historic Preservation Officers will be consulted in the course of follow-up studies for the latest information regarding preservation plans.

LETTER #C-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A No response is necessary.

PETER G. MORROS
Director

STATE OF NEVADA
BOB MILLER
Governor

L. H. DODGION
Administrator

Administration (702) 687-4670
Air Quality 687-5065
Mining Regulation and Reclamation 687-4670
Waste Management 687-5872
Federal Facilities 687-3880



Chemical Hazards Management
Water Pollution Control
Water Quality Planning
FAX

687-5872
687-4670
687-4670
885-0868

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

333 W. Nye Lane
Carson City, Nevada 89710

July 15, 1992

CLEARINGHOUSE COMMENTS

DUE DATE: September 18, 1992

TITLE: DEIS/DPA - Southwest Intertie Project

The Division of Environmental Protection has reviewed the subject Clearinghouse and has no comments at this time.

dl

LETTER C-6

LETTER #C-7
COMMENTS

STATE OF NEVADA

RESPONSES



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710
Fax (702) 687-3983
(702) 687-4065

September 22, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Re: SAI NV # 93300030 Project: EIS, Southwest Intertie
Project, Nevada

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Attached are the comments from the Nevada Department of
Wildlife concerning the above referenced project.

These comments constitute the State Clearinghouse review of
this proposal as per Executive Order 12372. We are requesting
that you address the comments either by direct contact with NDOW
or through this office.

If I can be of further assistance do not hesitate to contact
me at (702) 687-6367.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ron Sparks II".

Ron Sparks II
State Clearinghouse Coordinator

LETTER C-7

LETTER #C-7
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

1100 Valley Road
P.O. Box 10678
Reno, Nevada 89520-0022
(702) 688-1500
Fax (702) 688-1595

BOB MILLER
Governor

WILLIAM A. MOLINI
Director

Region III III-93-054
State Mailroom Complex
Las Vegas, Nevada 89158
September 18, 1992

Mr. Ron Sparks, Coordinator
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Department of Administration
Division of State Planning
Blasdel Building, Room 204
Carson City, NV 89710

RE: SAI NV#93300030

Dear Ron:

The Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Plan Amendment has been reviewed by Habitat and Game personnel in Las Vegas and Elko. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) seems to support the analysis of most environmental variables in the mid-to-northern portions of the project route considered in that the most environmentally conscious route was proposed.

The preferred route of the project has been identified with several alternatives proposed to address anticipated impacts along the route. Late in the planning process for SWIP (1990), the original route was found to be flawed and unable to transmit the desired amount of power beyond Delta, Utah. As a result, the preferred route was altered to parallel the course of the

LETTER #C-7 COMMENTS

transmission lines of the White Pine Power Project (WPPP) extending from Ely, Nevada to Dry Lake, Nevada. The WPPP route has been previously identified in an EIS and a Record of Decision (ROD) was made in 1985. While the WPPP power plant and transmission lines have not been constructed, it was felt that the SWIP project could "piggyback" its impacts on the WPPP route which is also the preferred path for designation as a utility corridor in the BLM's Draft Stateline Resource Management Plan (RMP).

A This DEIS is lacking in addressing the full range of impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitats south of Ely. Updates have been entered to cover the listing of the Mojave population of the desert tortoise and other subjects. The DEIS assumes that all other concerns and factors are unchanged since the WPPP EIS, however, the affected environment has not been static. The impacts of explosive growth in the Las Vegas Valley have extended beyond its geographic limits, with impacts to wildlife and associated habitat noted throughout Southern Nevada. The alternatives given in the SWIP DEIS do not address current concerns nor propose alternatives to address these concerns. In this document, only the preferred routes are addressed, leaving no room for a reevaluation of the routes or addition of any new alternatives such as a "No Action" Alternative.

B The preferred Route A contains the least adverse impacts to wildlife in Lincoln County. The route that follows Link 673 would be preferred since a key deer winter area in the Bailey Spring area would be missed and it would be just west of the West Range. Link 690 is preferred over Link 680 in this area due to high wildlife values in the Kane Springs Wash area.

C The Southern Route of the Crosstie, from Jakes Valley, south of Connors Pass and through South Spring and Hamlin Valley into Utah is the least preferred route. It traverses important sage grouse, ferruginous hawk and mule deer summer habitats and key antelope ranges and kidding grounds in Units 221, 222, and 115.

D The DEIS provides inadequate analysis of and consideration for biological resources as a whole, but particularly that portion illustrated by Panel 5 of the Map Volume, the more southerly portions of project route. Evidence for this is partly exhibited by the lack of inclusion of photo simulations found in the Map Volume of the DEIS. While the preparers recognized the obvious utility of the simulations for assessing visual impacts, there was no study on their use for assessing biological impacts in the

RESPONSES

A The resource investigations and impact assessment/mitigation planning were completed to an identical level of detail for all of the SWIP alternatives, including those from Ely to Dry Lake. We did not rely on the White Pine Power Project (WPPP) EIS data. Please note in Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA that several new alternatives were added because of sensitive resources discovered since the WPPP Record of Decision (1985). Also refer to page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion about how the studies for the SWIP expansion south of Ely were done to the "same level of detail" as the previous studies.

B The Agency Preferred Alternative includes Links 673 and 690.

C The least impact Ely to Delta segment route is the Cutoff Route, followed by the 230kV Corridor Route. However, with consideration of reasonably foreseeable future utility projects in the Ely area, the 230kV Corridor Route is environmentally preferred (refer to page 3-12 in this document for a discussion of cumulative effects).

D The analysis of biological resources in the SWIP DEIS/DPA is adequate and was conducted in accordance with NEPA guidelines for the purposes of selecting an alternative route. Detailed mitigation planning would occur during the development of the Construction, Operations, and Maintenance (COM) Plan. Photosimulations would be of particular value in the assessment of biological impacts in the more southerly corridors, or any of the other corridors. The biological resources sections for Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences have been clarified and expanded, and are reprinted in Chapter 3 of this document.

LETTER #C-7

COMMENTS

D southern reaches of the proposed project route. This is particularly relevant to desert tortoise and bighorn sheep habitat. E

E Several of the routes have significant impacts not identified. Preferred Route 672 crosses the Murphy Meadows south of the Kirch WMA. The area is a seasonally wet meadow which has high value to wildlife. Conflicts with bald eagle use of the area is minimally noted. Peregrine falcons, ospreys, ferruginous hawks, golden eagles, northern goshawks and 15 other raptor species recorded nearby on the Kirch Wildlife Management Area are not mentioned.

F Of equal or greater concern is the impact on waterfowl and shorebirds. Significant numbers of migratory birds are killed each year from collisions with towers and power lines. The preferred route would bisect the meadow, posing an unnecessary hazard to the thousands of birds attracted to Kirch WMA annually. There is no mention of whether a maintenance road will be constructed across the seasonal wetland area or if a crossing will be avoided. Either a bisecting road or a parallel road would greatly increase human intrusion on the area. In this instance, the southern fork (Link 671) would be environmentally preferred. While birds will likely have fatal collisions with lines and towers on this alternative, the impacts should be significantly less due to the crossing below the high use areas.

G Route 680 is an alternative which extends south-southeast from Delamar Valley, traversing the Delamar Mountains between Kane Springs and Boulder Canyon. This route is invasive to the Delamar Mountains and should receive no further consideration.

H Route 730 is an alternate which runs north of the Arrow Canyon Range and provides access to other alternatives north of Dry Lake Valley. This line crosses Arrow Canyon near the site of a proposed cultural and scenic Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This area was proposed for a state park or similar recreational facility. With these types of resource values, little consideration should be given to this alternative.

I Route 750 is an alternative branch off of Route 730. It poses problems, for as it skirts the Moapa Indian Reservation and its designated utility corridor, and it makes intrusions onto large portions of desert bighorn sheep habitat. From the Arrow Canyon crossing, this route extends south-southwest through the eastern foothills of the Arrow Canyon Range (Dry Lake Hills). From there it proceeds into the mouth of Ute Canyon and up the south fork into

RESPONSES

E The Murphy Meadows have been included in a revised SWIP FEIS/PPA. Conflicts between raptors and the SWIP have also been discussed in Chapter 3 of the SWIP FEIS/PPA. During inventory work for this project, no agency personnel expressed concern over Murphy Meadows or the Kirch WMA. The preferred link (Link 672) passes to the south of the southern boundary of the Wayne Kirch WMA. Table BIO-14 (Volume II - Natural Environment Technical Report) lists 17 species of raptors that are likely to occur within the SWIP corridors (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

F A discussion of avian mortality associated with high voltage transmission lines is included in Chapter 3 of the SWIP FEIS/PPA. Scientific literature does not support the statement that a high voltage transmission line poses a significant hazard to migratory birds. While thousands of migratory birds die each year as a result of collisions with man-made structures, high voltage transmission lines are not one of the significant sources of such mortality. The BLM will further examine placement of the preferred route with respect to the Kirch WMA and Murphy Meadows. The BLM appreciates your concern for this area and has attempted to minimize or avoid impacts in the area by placing alternatives outside the Kirch WMA. Adequate precautions will be taken to close access roads not required for maintenance or to leave them open as the BLM or the land manager/owner wish. The impacts of access disturbance are accounted for in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, including the visual impacts of the scars. Overland construction, ripping and supplemental seeding may be required for adequate road closure and rehabilitation. This detailed mitigation planning would be developed with the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance (COM) Plan.

G The BLM agrees that this route is less preferable environmentally and is not being considered in any of the routes compared in the SWIP DEIS/DPA or the SWIP FEIS/PPA.

H The BLM agrees. Link 730 was not considered further in any of the routes compared in the SWIP DEIS/DPA or the SWIP FEIS/PPA.

I The BLM agrees. Link 750 was not considered further in any of the routes compared in the SWIP DEIS/DPA or the SWIP FEIS/PPA.

LETTER #C-7
COMMENTS

I prime bighorn habitat. The line would cross a ridge into a canyon known locally as Island Canyon. Following the east fork, the route would cross the south ridge down precipitous cliff and into the third canyon, within one half mile of the Arrows #1 Water Development. From this point the line would head southeast into the Dry Lake substation across the bajada. The amount of desert bighorn habitat invaded is significant.

J The preferred route 720 parallels U.S. 93 to the east, crossing the Gunsight Pass area and veering southeast through a gap in the Arrow Canyon Range before running directly to the Dry Lake substation site. There are several problems with this route. First, there is a proposal for a 2,000 foot separation requested between the SWIP line and an existing UNTP line. While safety and reliability guidelines are cited for this separation, it is requested later that these lines form the outer boundaries of an identified utility corridor. The Nevada Department of Wildlife suggests a separation of no greater than 500 feet. The line could be located within 200 to 250 feet of U.S. 93 without unnecessarily extending human disturbance in desert tortoise habitat.

K Along a similar line, the narrow area, or "pinch-point" between Delamar Dry Lake and Pahrangat Wash the UNTP and SWIP lines will be placed on double-circuit towers. These towers are able to hold two separate transmission systems. The proposal is to construct two double circuit systems through the area, allowing the possible WPPP to hang its transmission lines to the "inside" of each tower at a later date. As noted previously, the WPPP is not a sure thing and in the interest of reducing impacts through this area of desert tortoise, chuckwalla and bighorn sheep migration, a single tower system of double circuit units should be able to transport both UNTP and SWIP lines through this area. In light of the listing of the desert tortoise, a system of double circuit towers (carrying UNTP and SWIP lines) should be considered through the length of tortoise habitat to minimize impacts.

L In the southern Arrow Canyon Range, Route 720 proposes to pass through a gap while maintaining the most direct route to the Dry Lake substation. When field work was done and the WPPP document submitted for public comment there was one bighorn water development north of the gap and there was no road bisecting the gap. There are now two bighorn sheep water developments which straddle the Arrow Canyon gap. The sites were selected for their location in excellent desert bighorn habitat, relationship to other bighorn habitat, accessibility for existent project designs and

RESPONSES

The 2000-foot separation between the SWIP and the UNTP rights-of-way requested by the IPCo is to meet reliability criteria established by the Western States Coordinating Council (WSCC), as explained on page 2-17 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Each right-of-way evaluation or request within the WSCC system should consider the specific line combinations to determine whether a specific separation is required. The issue is the credibility of a simultaneous loss of the circuits involved. The WSCC criteria say:

"..., the credibility of loss of a particular set of lines will depend upon the total distance of common corridor shared by the lines and upon the vulnerability of the circuits over that distance to a common mode failure. Considerations for this vulnerability assessment will include line design; length; location, whether forested, agricultural, mountainous, etc.; outage history; operational guides; and separation. For example, some utilities use separation by more than the span length as adequate to designate the circuits as being in separate corridors."

This issue is not new. For example, the Third Pacific 500kV AC Intertie requested and received miles of separation between it and the existing two 500kV interties in forested areas. This separation was required to allow adequate response time to adjust the system following the loss of the existing lines and a potential loss of the third 500kV line. Similar to the SWIP and the UNTP, the consequences of such an outage would be wide-spread outages in the WSCC system.

It is true that separation exceptions do exist in urban areas. If there is an outage, the disturbance is localized and does not have the system impact that requires the separation of lines. The reason for separating the SWIP and the UNTP lines is to meet the WSCC reliability criteria for regional transmission facilities. Placing these lines closer together could result in a considerably lower capacity rating that would render the project economically infeasible.

K The BLM believes that the desert tortoise can be protected through appropriate mitigation measures and still maintain the reliability criteria needed by the WSCC to make the SWIP viable (refer to Appendix C of this document for a copy of the Biological Opinion).

The capacity rating of the SWIP line would not be permitted if the IPCo does not comply with the WSCC separation requirement. Using double-circuit

LETTER #C-7
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

L construction techniques, and a low level of human disturbance. The developments have allowed bighorn sheep to expand summer use areas in the Arrow Canyon Range. Currently, bighorn use continues to increase, while human impacts remain relatively low. This bighorn critical summer use area was identified in the SWIP DEIS, but nowhere were adequate impacts and alternatives to invasion of this habitat discussed.

towers (through desert tortoise habitat for 53.2 miles) would render the SWIP economically infeasible because the WSCC would require a considerably reduced capacity rating.

M The "existing" road through the gap was constructed in late March of 1985, after submission of the WPPP EIS, under suspicious circumstances. Within a week of its appearance, the road was marked for inclusion as part of the Mint 400 ORV race course. On current U.S. Geological survey maps the road is shown to dead-end at the ridge line. The Department maintains that this road is not a legal road or trail and as such, should not be considered as a viable maintenance route for SWIP. Even a dead-end maintenance road would be a problem. There will be increased traffic into the area, with a chance for significant impact on bighorns during the critical summer period. Therefore, it is recommended that this route be eliminated from consideration as a route to the Dry Lake substation. It is suggested that a route be considered around the southern tip of the Arrow Canyon Range. The route could follow the UNTP line on the east side of U.S. 93 to the point where the highway turns southeast toward I-15. Some of the obvious concerns are a longer transit through Category 1 desert tortoise habitat and an extension of the route by 10 to 12 miles. The use of double-circuit towers would probably be necessary just south of the divergence from the existing route.

At the "pinch points" (e.g., Pahrnagat Wash), the transmission towers would have to be designed with a safety factor that is several times more redundant than would otherwise be necessary. The IPCo hopes that the WSCC will be willing to allow the 1200 MW rating with these design concessions for a short distance.

L See Response M below.

M There is an existing dirt road approximately 3/4 mile from the most southerly water development. This existing road runs for approximately 2 1/4 miles and dead-ends. This road was located on BLM's October 11, 1976 aerial photography, and was present when the second water development was constructed. This second catchment to the south of the existing road was constructed after the road was built. In the mid-1980s an extension of this road was illegally bladed for a distance of approximately 1/2 mile. However, it was not used as part of the Mint 400 ORV race course in 1985 or in any other event. The road does not tie into other roadways and the road is not held by a right-of-way.

N It is further recommended that any part of the route in desert tortoise habitat be restricted from competitive ORV events. It should be of primary importance to keep non-maintenance traffic to a minimum.

The road is not new, and it may be used for construction access before being closed and rehabilitated. Construction of the SWIP line during the critical periods for bighorn sheep can be avoided.

Other comments include:

O No reference was made to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Vegas District's Clark County Management Framework Plan (MFP) or Caliente Resource Management Plan (RMP). Even though personal communication was made with staff of the Las Vegas District, there was no apparent direct use of the Clark County MFP, Caliente RMP, or supporting documents relative to land-use considerations, decisions, or guidance in Southern Nevada. Even though the Stateline RMP in draft form, includes the SWIP route proposal, and will eventually replace the Clark County MFP, the Clark County MFP,

The BLM understands your concern for the impact of the road through the Arrow Canyon Range, and the impact of increased public access on desert bighorn sheep. However, the BLM does not agree that the transmission should be re-routed to accommodate this concern. The most appropriate means of reducing impact to bighorn sheep is to re-contour the road and eliminate public access after construction. Limiting construction to winter months would further reduce the impact to bighorn populations.

The BLM agrees that the road, if used for construction of the SWIP, will be closed and rehabilitated.

LETTER #C-7
COMMENTS

O is the current land use plan in effect. As a result, information applicable to the DEIS was omitted.

P Other documents important regarding information for the desert tortoise and which affect the SWIP proposal relative to restrictive or mitigative measures include the: Short-term Habitat Conservation Plan for the Desert Tortoise in Las Vegas Valley, Clark County, Nevada (RECON 1991) and the supporting Implementation Agreement; and, Compensation for the Desert Tortoise (Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group 1991).

Q The gila monster, Heloderma suspectum, has been classified since 1978 as a State protected reptile and provided additional status as rare (Nevada Administrative Code 503.080). Also, the gila monster is a BLM designated sensitive species. Gila monsters and their habitat occur throughout the area illustrated in Panel 5 of the Map Volume for the DEIS, yet mention or consideration of this rare lizard is completely lacking in the DEIS.

R Substantially more attention should be given to Special Status Species of wildlife identified on pages 3-24 through 3-26. Suggested species to include which are at least Federal Category 2 candidates (Federal Register, 21 November 1991, Vol. 56, No. 225, pages 58804-58835) for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, include:

Pahranagat Valley Montane Vole
Spotted Frog
all invertebrates found in the study area

S There is a need to provide more effective mitigation measures to control raven populations. Currently little is done to manage and control populations of this species. The SWIP should be designed to allow minimal perches. Additional raven access would allow perpetuation of scavenging of other passerine nests and predation upon desert tortoises. In addition, there is no mention of other state sensitive species, including the sandhill crane and golden eagle. Addressing the issue of predation upon several species of wildlife within the area should be of higher priority. The use of towers by various raptors and ravens has been shown to have significant impact upon several species of wildlife, particularly sage grouse and desert tortoise.

RESPONSES

O The BLM agrees that the Stateline RMP will replace the existing MFP for the Las Vegas District of the BLM. Page 2-28 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA lists the Management Framework Plan as the plan that was considered. The Caliente RMP was inadvertently left off of this list but is corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.

The SWIP EIS process will also be a plan amendment to the current land use plans. The two pertinent land use plans for the Las Vegas District are the Clark County MFP, which encompasses the area in the Stateline Resource Area for Clark County, and the Caliente MFP, which encompasses the area in the Caliente Resource Area for Lincoln County. Clarification of other land use plans is in Chapter 1 of this document.

P The BLM is aware of these documents and will consult them for assistance in the preparation of a formal Section 7 Biological Assessment that will focus strongly on tortoises and mitigation of impact to tortoises.

Q The BLM acknowledges this inadvertent omission. A discussion of Heloderma suspectum has been included in Chapter 3 of this document.

R Approximately 16 pages in the Technical Report (Volume II) were devoted to special status species. The SWIP DEIS/DPA is intended to be a brief summary of information, not an exhaustive analysis. The information included in Volume II of the Technical Report includes a discussion of the spotted frog (Rana pretiosa) and several species of invertebrates. A discussion of all invertebrates found in the study area seems inappropriate. In discussions and requests for data from land and wildlife management agency biologists in the study area, the Pahranagat Valley Montane Vole was not mentioned. The BLM acknowledges its presence on the Animal Species Review list published by the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service in November, 1991. This species will be considered for additional analysis in relation to preparation of the COM Plan for the project (refer to page 1-34 in this document). Also refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for locations where the technical reports can be reviewed.

S Control of raven populations does not fall under the purview of the project sponsors. Further, The BLM seriously doubts that available/suitable perch sites within the Great Basin and northern Mojave Desert represent limiting

LETTER #C-7
COMMENTS

Mitigation measures which may be instituted and which are deemed appropriate should be considered during the analysis of the project are listed as follows:

1. In addition to anticipated desert tortoise or other species of special status protocols, biologists will monitor and document site localities of wildlife observed along the affected project route. Site locality descriptions would include at least conditions under which wildlife were observed, habitat description, elevation, legal description of locality, date, and full name of observer(s). This information would be provided to all appropriate agencies and interests.

2. Rehabilitation of disturbed sites, including ripping and revegetating of temporary roads, at a level of intensity to avoid after-project conditions which leave significant scars upon the desert landscape.

Additional editorial and nomenclature comments include:

1. An illustration of Alternate Routes A through G as treated in the text throughout the DEIS should be included. Further, there is no reference to these routes in the Map Volume for the DEIS. If the legs of the routes (e.g. 690, 730, 820, etc.) represented these, it was not obvious.

2. Summary, page 8, 3rd paragraph; change last line to use more correct nomenclature and be consistent with that used later in chapter 3 (e.g. on page 3-24) or elsewhere:

change(antelope, mule deer, bighorn sheep). to read,
.....(pronghorn, mule deer, bighorn sheep, and elk).

3. Make sure all scientific nomenclature is current and correctly spelled. For example, on page 3-15 in the "Grassland" section, use of, "thistle (Salsola iberica)", is incorrect. The passage should read, "Russian thistle (Salsola kali)".

4. On page 3-24, technical reports are referred to and specifically in reference to Tables BIO-19 and BIO-20. Neither the technical reports nor the BIO Tables could be found in the DEIS package provided.

RESPONSES

factors to raven populations (i.e., more perch sites do not necessarily mean more ravens). The SWIP DEIS/DPA and Volume II - Natural Environment Technical Report devotes considerable attention to the issue of providing hunting perches for avian predators. Several links within the study area were eliminated from serious consideration in the route selection process because they were in locations that would provide new hunting perches for eagles and other raptors in sage grouse areas.

The impact of predatory ravens on hatchling desert tortoises appears to be a local problem. It has not been documented as occurring region wide.

The BLM will address the issue of preconstruction clearance surveys for a number of species of sensitive plants and wildlife in the COM Plan for the project (refer to page 1-34 in this document). The BLM assumes your discussion of biological monitoring and documentation of site localities and site locality descriptions relate to the construction phase of the project. It is unclear, however, if your recommendation relates to all species of wildlife at all sites along the affected route.

The BLM agrees that the construction of the SWIP will leave scars to the landscape. The rehabilitation plan that will be developed with the COM Plan is intended to heal those scars over time (refer to page 1-34 in this document). Adequate precautions will be taken to close access roads not required for maintenance or that the BLM or the land manager/owner wish to have closed. The impacts of access disturbance is accounted for in the SWIP DEIS/DPA, including the visual impacts of the scars. For overland construction ripping and supplemental seeding may be required for adequate road closure and rehabilitation.

The Alternative Routes map in the SWIP DEIS/DPA Map Volume indicated all routes, including Routes A through G. Routes A through G shared a number of common links. For example, all of Routes A through G used Link 720. None of the alternative routes used Links 730, 740, 750, 760, 770, 780, or 790. The environmental planning process eliminated links with the highest environmental impacts from further consideration as the alternative routes were assembled (from the links) for comparison in the SWIP DEIS/DPA (also refer to Appendix D of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for additional information on the subroute comparison). A complete link list for each of the alternative routes compared is found on pages 2-37, 2-38, and 2-47 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.

LETTER #C-7
COMMENTS

In summary, the Department finds the SWIP EIS lacking in adequate environmental analysis concerning the proposed transmission routes south of Ely. It is recommended that further analysis of impacts to wildlife habitat be done on this route with adequate alternatives and mitigative measures to address wildlife concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon this proposed action on the public lands of Nevada. If you have any questions or require additional input, please advise.

Sincerely,



Mike Wickersham
Manager, Region III

COP:jlh

cc: Habitat Division Chief
Game - Las Vegas, Nongame, Herpetology, Panaca
Region II - Habitat

RESPONSES

- W Your comment is noted.
- X The BLM has made every effort to assure that scientific nomenclature is current and correct. The BLM agrees that "thistle" is incorrect and should be "Russian thistle". However, the BLM has deferred to a recent publication by J.H. Lehr for the specific epithet *iberica* instead of *kali* (Lehr provides *Salsola kali* as a synonym for *Salsola iberica*).
- Y Technical reports were prepared as backup documents for the biological resource portions of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA explains where the Technical Reports can be reviewed. Refer to Appendix H in the Errata of Chapter 4 for locations of where additional copies of the Technical Reports can be reviewed.

LETTER #C-8
COMMENTS



Norman H. Bangerter
Governor
Max J. Evans
Director

Department of Community & Economic Development
Division of State History
Utah State Historical Society

300 Rio Grande
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101-1182
(801) 533-5755
FAX: (801) 364-6436

June 22, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

RE: Southwest Intertie Project DEIS/DPA

In Reply Please Refer to Case No. L037

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The Utah State Historic Preservation Office received the above referenced DEIS/DPA on June 12, 1992. After review of the draft statement, the Utah Preservation Office offers the following technical comments for consideration.

- A [1. On 3-82,83 the references on these two pages cover the federal law thoroughly. Although this is a federal process and document, the appropriate antiquities' laws of each of the three states would be of use in this section.
- B [2. On 3-86 it appears that the separation of ethnohistoric sites and numic sites overlap. Is there a need for a ethnohistoric category in this section?
- C [3. On 3-87,88 when categories of classification are first mentioned, they need to be defined, what criterion was used to set up avoidance level one and two for example?
- D [4. On 3-89 the five sensitivity categories need to be defined also when first mentioned.
- E [5. The Utah Preservation Office would like to request a copy of the technical report, (Rogge and Wood, 1992).

RESPONSES

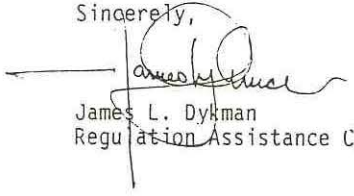
- A If the project is approved for construction, subsequent cultural resource studies will be pursued in consultation with State Historic Preservation Officers. This will be an opportunity to review the requirements of state antiquities laws to ensure that state requirements are met in any situations where they might apply rather than federal law.
- B How far ethnohistoric data can be extended back into prehistory is, of course, an active area for research, particularly with regard to the antiquity of Numic speaking groups in the region. The distinction between prehistory and ethnohistory is somewhat arbitrary. Separate categories were used in recognition of the different types of data (historical documents) available to reconstruct the cultural history of the ethnohistoric era. Ethnohistoric resources often have special values for contemporary Native American groups.
- C Page 2-26 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA defines these planning criteria. This has been corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.
- D The types of cultural resources assigned to the five defined sensitivity categories are listed on pages 3-89 and 3-90 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA. The sensitivity classifications are further discussed on pages 9-74 through 9-76 of the Volume IV - Cultural Environment Technical Report. Refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for locations where the technical reports can be reviewed.
- E This has been corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.

LETTER #C-8
COMMENTS

- F [6. Graphics or tables would have been of use when explaining the models used for the site prediction models and effect. They would help in following how each was constructed.
- G [7. One key item is the review of the results of the models and their representation on the cultural resource maps with the DEIS. In Utah, Panel 4 used site information to outline impact levels, known resources and predicted sensitive zones. In discussion with the State Archaeologist, the model does not outline what would be several high sensitive zones. One example is where lines cross to the northeast of Sevier Lake; an area containing very complex sites with little known about what information they contain. These are only models and as stated are intended to provide some assistance in picking alternatives. The models on Panel 4, however, appear not to provide a good prediction of sensitive zones. Models could use more environmental data to develop better predictions.

This information is provided on request to assist the Bureau of Land Management with its Section 106 responsibilities as specified in 36CFR800. If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact me at (801) 533-7039.

Sincerely,


James L. Dykman
Regulation Assistance Coordinator

JLD:L037 BLM/EIS

RESPONSES

- F Graphics and tables are used in the Cultural Environment Technical Report to describe the sensitivity and impact models.
- G The areas north and east of Sevier Lake are projected to have several segments of moderate impact and do stand in contrast to most of the other alternative segments in Utah where only low impacts or no impacts are projected. Predicting the locations and types of archaeological and historical sites is an extremely complex challenge. The sensitivity model developed for the purposes of this EIS is quite simplistic and is intended to provide only indications of major variations in the density and complexity of archaeological and historical sites as a tool for evaluating alternative routes. If the project is approved for construction, intensive inventory data will be collected along the selected route. The State Historic Preservation Office will be consulted regarding inventory strategies, resource evaluations, and development of avoidance or mitigation measures as the design of the project proceeds.

LETTER #C-9
COMMENTS



Charles E. Johnson, CPA
Office Director
Brad T. Barber
Office Deputy Director
Rod D. Millar
Committee Chairman
John A. Harja
Executive Director

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND BUDGET
Resource Development Coordinating Committee

116 State Capitol
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114
(801) 538-1027

September 23, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

SUBJECT: Southwest Intertie Project DEIS
State Identifier Number: UT920615-020

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The Resource Development Coordinating Committee, representing the State of Utah, has reviewed this proposal. The Division of Wildlife Resources comments:

The line corridors could impact raptors migrating along the Deep Creek Range and south during the fall and spring. We would like to see this mentioned in the EIS. We discussed this with the BLM on August 6, 1992, at a meeting in Delta. Because these birds normally migrate at high elevation, the 230 kV line may not pose much of a threat. However, corridors such as the 230 kV route that follow existing lines and go through canyon bottoms (such as near Great Basin National Park) should create the least hazard. There should be some discussion of this point in the EIS.

RESPONSES

- A Refer to the discussion under Avian Collision Hazard in the re-printed Biological Resources section in Chapter 3 of this document.

LETTER #C-9
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

The agency-preferred route for the Ely to Delta portion of the SWIP is the 230 kV corridor route. We strongly support this approach. Following existing corridors does not open up any new areas to impacts associated with the corridor route itself, or the associated roaded access it would create.

We support the following statements indicating the BLM's stance in the EIS: "Because the 230 kV corridor route parallels two existing 230 kV transmission lines for its entire length, this route best meets the agency criteria and Section 503 of FLPMA of utilizing existing utility corridors to the degree possible" (Page 2-57). Further, the EIS states on page 2-25, "The BLM favors the placement of new lines in existing utility corridors to minimize adverse impacts and to maintain open space values in previously undeveloped areas."

We strongly support the 230 kV corridor alternative. The following is a ranking of our support for the alternative routes in the Ely to Delta route in descending order (1 most support) and a comment on potential impacts.

- (1) 230 kV Corridor - Some pronghorn antelope and mule deer winter range impacts. Least impacts to migrating raptors.
- (2) Cutoff Route - Similar impacts to the 230 kV route, but with added impacts of opening new habitats and added vehicle/human disturbance from newly created access along the "cutoff" section.
- (3) Direct Route - Pronghorn antelope and mule deer winter range impacts. Mostly newly created corridor with associated impacts. Additional impacts to Leland-Harris Spring Complex-wetlands.
- (4) Southern Route - Potentially the most damaging to pronghorn antelope habitat, mule deer winter range, ferruginous hawk nests and other raptor nesting. This route is the longest and would be expected to create the largest amount of disturbance to all of the above habitats.

LETTER #C-9
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

The Committee appreciates the opportunity to review this proposal. Please direct any other written questions regarding this correspondence to the Utah State Clearinghouse at the above address or call Carolyn Wright at (801) 538-1535 or John Harja at (801) 538-1559.

Sincerely,



Brad T. Barber
State Planning Coordinator

BTB/rpj

LETTER C-9

LETTER #C-10
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94105-3901

September 16, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS), Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. Our comments on this DEIS are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and EPA's authorities under §309 of the Clean Air Act.

The DEIS evaluates alternatives for granting a right-of-way for a 500kV transmission line through Southern Idaho, Nevada, and western Utah. The project would include new substations, series compensation stations, and microwave facilities.

We have rated this DEIS as EC-2 -- Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information (see enclosed "Summary of Rating Definitions and Follow-Up Actions"). Our EC rating reflects our concerns regarding the project's potential impacts to water quality, wetlands, and biodiversity. Our 2 rating reflects the need for additional information in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) regarding minimization, mitigation, and monitoring of impacts to these resources. Our specific comments are enclosed.

LETTER C-10

LETTER #C-10
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. Please send a copy of the FEIS to this office at the same time it is officially filed with our Washington, D.C., office. If you have any questions, please call me at (415) 744-1015 or Jeanne Dunn Geselbracht at (415) 744-1576.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Wieman', followed by a date '1/17'.

Deanna M. Wieman, Director
Office of External Affairs

LETTER #C-10
COMMENTS

Southwest Intertie Project DEIS
EPA Comments: September, 1992

RESPONSES

Water Quality

- A [1. In May, 1991, EPA published the Proposed Guidance Specifying Management Measures for Sources of Nonpoint Pollution in Coastal Waters ("Guidance") pursuant to Section 6217(g) of the Coastal Zone Reauthorization Amendments of 1990. Although the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) is not in the coastal zone, the best management practices discussed in the Guidance are equally applicable to nonpoint source pollution control of inland waters as well. We recommend that the project sponsors consider this Guidance during construction and operation/maintenance of the SWIP. For your information, EPA expects to publish a final guidance for nonpoint source pollution in October, 1992. You may wish to contact Jovita Pajarillo of EPA Region 9's Water Quality Branch at (415) 744-2011 to obtain a copy of the guidance at that time.
- B [2. According to the DEIS, batch plants would be located every 20 to 30 miles along the right-of-way (ROW). The FEIS should ensure that batch plants would not be sited near streams, springs, or other sensitive areas, whether on public or private land. Best management practices (BMPs) for operations at batch plants should be provided in the FEIS.
- C [3. Material stockpiles, borrow areas, access roads, and other land-disturbing activities should be located away from critical areas such as steep slopes, highly erodible soils, and areas that drain directly into water bodies. Siting criteria for stockpiles should be included in the FEIS.
- D [4. The FEIS should discuss requirements for stream crossings by transmission lines. For example, is there a minimum setback objective for tower placement near streams?

Wetlands

- E [It appears that the SWIP would require the discharge of fill material into waters of the United States. This discharge would require the issuance of a Clean Water Act §404 permit and compliance with EPA's §404(b)(1) Guidelines ("Guidelines") (40 CFR 230). It is unclear from the DEIS whether the SWIP would fully comply with these regulations.
- F [1. The goal of the Clean Water Act is to maintain and restore the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the nation's

- A Your suggestion is noted and the BLM will consider these guidelines during the preparation of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance (COM) Plan. For more information regarding the COM Plan refer to page 1-34 of this document.
- B The BLM agrees that a list of Best Management Practices is a good idea for the batch plants. This will be done once the specific needs are better defined in the COM Plan. The construction methods will be evaluated in the COM Plan (refer to page 1-34 of this document).
- C The BLM agrees that material stockpiles and other disturbed areas be located away from sensitive resources. When the engineering design is in progress (during the COM Plan) the specific needs of the project will become more clear and the construction methods will be addressed. The siting criteria will be outlined in this document.
- D The BLM agrees that the SWIP FEIS/PPA should describe a minimum distance for a tower site from a stream crossing. The minimum distance is 200 feet. This correction to Table 4-1 (of the SWIP DEIS/DPA) is corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.
- E Since the SWIP would be capable of spanning 1/4 mile between tower sites, the BLM does not believe that any wetlands would be impacted on the Agency Preferred Alternative. The SWIP, if approved, will fully comply with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230) of the Clean Water Act as indicated in Table 1-1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA.
- F The BLM agrees that the preferred SWIP alternative would be the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative available to achieve the project purpose and need. The BLM anticipates that no acres of wetlands or other waters of the U.S. will be filled as a result of the SWIP. Existing roads will be used to the degree possible for construction access. No roads will be permitted to cross riparian areas, live streams, or wetlands unless there is absolutely no good alternative, and a 404 Permit is obtained.

LETTER C-10

LETTER #C-10
COMMENTS

F [waters. This goal is implemented by requiring that any permitted discharge into waters of the U.S. be the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative available to achieve the project purpose. In determining whether or not an alternative is practicable, the Guidelines view the project "in light of overall project purposes" which include consideration of cost, logistics, and technical feasibility. The DEIS does not present adequate information to determine whether the preferred alternative meets this objective as required by the Guidelines [40 CFR 230.12(a)(3)(iv)]. According to the DEIS, SWIP transmission lines and access roads would cross numerous perennial streams and washes. The FEIS should indicate how many acres of wetlands and other waters of the U.S. would be filled as a result of the SWIP.

G [2. The Guidelines prohibit the placement of fill unless appropriate steps have been taken to minimize potential adverse impacts on the aquatic ecosystem. Mitigation is required to offset any unavoidable losses. The FEIS should include the wetland mitigation plan, which demonstrates how wetland acreages, functions, and values would be fully replaced, and include specific commitments by the project applicant to carry out the mitigation. The FEIS should specify: (a) the exact location and size of mitigation areas; (b) sources, needed quantities, and distribution methods for water to maintain the mitigation areas, (c) revegetation plans, (d) maintenance and monitoring for mitigation areas, including criteria by which to measure mitigation success; and (e) contingency plans should the mitigation efforts fail.

H [3. The Guidelines require that cumulative effects (impacts that are attributable to the collective effect of a number of individual discharges of dredge or fill material) be predicted to the extent reasonable and practical. The DEIS briefly discusses other projects in the vicinities of the SWIP, but does not mention their cumulative effects on wetlands. The FEIS should specifically address this issue.

I [4. The Guidelines require that the proposed project not violate State water quality standards. Under the Clean Water Act, any federal agency applying for a §404 permit must receive §401 certification from the State.

RESPONSES

G Again, the BLM does not anticipate any filling in wetlands, riparian areas, or waters of the U.S. If any wetlands are encountered and unavoidable during construction, the project would pursue 401 and/or 404 permitting. The SWIP would have the capability of spanning these features. Access routes and ancillary facilities will also not be permitted within these areas.

H The BLM does not anticipate any cumulative impacts to wetlands.

I The BLM understands that 401 Certification must also be complied with if a 404 Permit is needed. The BLM does not anticipate this, however, if the detailed planning does reveal such impacts, these regulations will be complied with.

LETTER #C-10
COMMENTS

Vegetation and Biodiversity

- J [1. The FEIS should indicate how many acres of riparian vegetation would be permanently and temporarily lost as a result of the SWIP and discuss mitigation requirements for these losses. The FEIS should discuss the revegetation procedures required in areas temporarily disturbed during construction. For riparian habitat permanently lost, we recommend full in-kind replacement of habitat.
- K [2. We recommend that additional measures to ensure protection of existing sensitive vegetation and/or habitats be required during construction, such as fencing and tree armoring.
- K [Since topsoil is essential to establish new vegetation, it should be stockpiled and then reapplied to the site for revegetation where possible. Stockpiles should be stabilized to prevent water and wind erosion. Although topsoil salvaged from the existing site can often be used, it must meet certain standards and topsoil may need to be brought onto the site if the existing topsoil is not adequate for establishing new vegetation.
- L [3. Mitigation measure #4 in Table 4-1 provides for reseeding if required. Under what conditions would reseeding not be required? Would reseeding be required on all public lands temporarily disturbed by the project? The FEIS should include detailed procedures for revegetation as well as the monitoring plan and success criteria that would be used to ensure successful revegetation of all land temporarily disturbed by the project. The FEIS should indicate who would be responsible for such monitoring and any necessary subsequent mitigation.
- M [4. The FEIS should discuss how hardpan soils, desert pavement, and other soils that are habitat for specialized plant species would be excavated and reclaimed. Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation of impacts to these communities should be addressed.
- N [5. The DEIS indicates that public use of access roads could adversely affect sensitive biological resources. The FEIS should provide for mitigation of these impacts by restricting public access where necessary to protect sensitive populations and watersheds and highly erodible soils.

RESPONSES

- J The BLM does not anticipate any loss of riparian vegetation or habitat as a result of the construction or operation of the SWIP.
- K The BLM agrees that more is needed. The SWIP EIS process is intended to facilitate decision making on whether or not the project should be built, and if so, which route will be selected. Additional work will need to be done during the COM Plan to detail the rehabilitation methods and many other aspects of the project (refer to page 1-34 of this document). In all cases the BLM will monitor the success of the restoration efforts.
- L In some cases in desert restoration the natural seed sources within the stockpiled topsoil provide the necessary revegetation. Additional seeding will likely be required by the BLM in all cases except where there is no vegetation currently (e.g., playa areas). Refer to Response K above.
- M The BLM agrees that additional work would need to be done for the specific methods to construct, operate, and maintain the SWIP. Along with rare plant surveys, cultural clearance, etc. that will be done following selection of the final route, the rehabilitation plans will be detailed and specific. The engineering of a final centerline will continue to have some siting flexibility, as stated in the SWIP DEIS/DPA. This detailed engineering will be done in conjunction with the surveys mentioned above in order to minimize disturbance to resources (e.g., wetlands, riparian areas, live streams, cultural resources, rare plant populations, etc.).
- N This has been recommended as mitigation and will be done (refer to Table 4-2, #4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA).

LETTER #C-10
COMMENTS

Jurisdiction

- O It is unclear whether each affected federal agency jurisdiction would assign an environmental inspector to oversee construction and maintenance of the proposed project. The FEIS should identify which federal agency and jurisdiction thereof would be responsible for ensuring resource protection by performing such tasks as carrying out plans, monitoring and enforcing best management practices, and monitoring environmental impacts of the SWIP.

Hazardous Materials

- P The FEIS should identify enforcement mechanisms for prevention of hazardous materials spills (e.g., bonding) as well as the agency or person responsible for enforcement. The FEIS should also identify the types and amounts of hazardous materials that would likely be used in the ROWs and staging areas.

SUMMARY OF RATING DEFINITIONS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTION

Environmental Impact of the Action

LO-Lack of Objections

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC-Environmental Concerns

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EO-Environmental Objections

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU-Environmentally Unsatisfactory

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality, public health or welfare. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommend for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

RESPONSES

- O The BLM will monitor the construction, operation and maintenance of the SWIP. The BLM performs periodic compliance checks after the lines are in operation to assure continued compliance to the terms and conditions of the Right-of-Way Grant and to monitor environmental impacts associated with the project. If the selected route crosses lands administered by other agencies (e.g., Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation), these agencies would assign their personnel to the project (refer to page 1-34 of this document). A COM plan will be developed as a condition of the Right-of-Way Grant prior to any Notice to Proceed with construction (refer to page 1-34 of this document). This plan will lay out specific stipulations, including management of any hazardous materials, and responsibilities of the BLM, utility companies, and contractors.

The above information will be included in the Construction discussion found in Chapter 1 in this document.

- P The COM Plan will detail how hazardous substances will be handled, treated, disposed of, etc. The purpose of the NEPA document was not specifically for the method of construction. The specifics will be laid out in the COM Plan (refer to page 1-34 of this document).

LETTER #C-10
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1-Adequate

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2-Insufficient Information

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3-Inadequate

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

*From: EPA Manual 1640, "Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment."

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/DHC/BFA EC 92/0050

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management (Bureau) Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Plan Amendment (DEIS) for the Southwest Intertie Project.

Specific technical comments on the DEIS have been prepared to assist preparation of the final document (Enclosure A). In general, we have concluded that additional information should be provided to adequately address threatened and endangered species, wetlands, and riparian areas. Areas of shallow ground water need to be identified to determine whether they are wetlands subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction. Mitigation measures should adequately protect wetland resources and ensure adequate restoration of disturbed areas. Additional endangered and threatened species issues, including surveys along the proposed route, should be addressed through the consultation process pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

We have also identified discrepancies among information provided in the DEIS, Technical Reports, and Data Tables. Further clarification is needed on why some sections of the Bureau's environmentally preferred alternative are less damaging than equivalent sections of other alternatives.

Based on the above concerns, the Service recommends that a revised DEIS be prepared, and circulated for agency review.

LETTER C-11

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

The opportunity to provide these comments on the DEIS is appreciated.

Sincerely,


DIRECTOR

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT

- A [Page 2-18, Right-of-Way Acquisition: Right-of-Way Separation: This section and other sections on pages 1-2 and 1-9 discuss the 2000-foot separation between the SWIP and adjacent high capacity lines to comply with the Western System Coordinating Council reliability and outage criteria. However, a separation of less than 1000 feet is proposed in isolated areas along the route due to terrain or land use conflicts, and reliability would be maintained in these areas by using a higher safety factor on tower design. The Service recommends including a discussion on an alternative of a lesser separation between lines using upgraded facilities to minimize environmental impacts from habitat fragmentation.
- B [Page 2-22, Construction: Hazardous Materials Within Corridor: This section states that petroleum products would be present in the transmission line corridor from the fueling, lubricating, and cleaning of vehicles and equipment. It further states that hazardous materials would not be drained onto the ground or into streams or drainage areas, and this is listed as a generic mitigation measure. However, we recommend the mitigation measure be expanded to eliminate storing of hazardous materials in designated flood zone areas as suggested in the mitigation section on page 3-33 (Volume II of the Technical Report on Natural Environment).
- C [Page 2-23, Construction: Site Reclamation: The DEIS states that all practical measures would be taken to increase the chances of vegetation reestablishment in disturbed areas. Other sections of the document refer to reseeding of disturbed areas if required by the managing agency. The Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan, which would be prepared during the engineering and preconstruction phase of the project, would address site reclamation. Adequate assurance should be provided that reclamation measures would restore plant communities or reduce ground disturbance impacts to insignificant levels as described in many sections of Chapter 4, Environmental

RESPONSES

- A This alternative is not considered reasonable since the WSCC would not give the rating for the line that is necessary for the SWIP to be viable if there are long distances with no separation. Even the short distances where there is no alternative but to have the lines closer together is of great concern for the 1200 MW rating.

A discussion about the feasibility of upgrading all facilities to meet WSCC reliability and outage criteria in an effort to reduce the need for a 2,000-foot separation is included in the Errata of Chapter 4 in this document.

The 2,000-foot separation request was specifically between the SWIP and the UNTP. Each right-of-way evaluation or request within the WSCC system should consider the specific line combinations and their outage histories to determine whether a specific separation is required. The issue is the credibility of a simultaneous loss of the circuits involved. The WSCC Criteria say:

"..., the credibility of loss of a particular set of lines will depend upon the total distance of common corridor shared by the lines and upon the vulnerability of the circuits over that distance to a common mode failure. Considerations for this vulnerability assessment will include line design; length; location, whether forested, agricultural, mountainous, etc.; outage history; operational guides; and separation. For example, some utilities use separation by more than the span length as adequate to designate the circuits as being in separate corridors."

This issue is not new. For example, the Third Pacific 500kV AC Intertie requested and received miles of separation between it and the existing two 500kV interties in forested areas. This separation was required to allow adequate response time to adjust the system following the loss of the existing lines and a potential loss of the third 500kV line. Similar to the SWIP and the UNTP, the consequences of such an outage would be wide spread outages in the WSCC system. Without this separation, that project probably would not have been feasible.

It is true that separation exceptions do exist in urban areas. If there is an outage, the disturbance is localized and does not have the system impact that requires the separation of lines.

LETTER #C-11 COMMENTS

Consequences. At a minimum, we recommend that standards for reclamation success be established and that native plants indigenous to the area and local seed collection be used in the restoration plan.

C The Service recommends measures to reduce vegetation disturbance such as crushing of vegetation to leave root systems in place, rather than bulldozing, be incorporated into the reclamation proposal. Also, livestock grazing and off-highway vehicle use on disturbed areas along the rights-of-way and ancillary facility sites during the revegetation period should be minimized. The DEIS should include habitat restoration goals and objectives as part of Table OBI-5, Generic Mitigation Measures Included in the Project Description, Volume I: Objectives, Procedures, and Results.

D Page 2-44, Substation and Series Compensation Sites: The first paragraph of this section states that the Thousand Springs Power Project was canceled in 1991. However, the Sierra Pacific Power Company has expressed interest in a transmission interconnection at this site. This interest may influence alternatives selection. The rationale for including the interconnection at Thousand Springs, even though the power project was cancelled, should be discussed.

E Pages 2-50 to 2-52, Identification of Preferred Alternatives. Environmentally Preferred Alternatives: Midpoint to Dry Lake: The Service analyzed subsections of the preferred routes for potential impacts to biological resources using the data available in the DEIS. However, the document contains inadequate information for the Service to recommend a route. Route A (Environmentally Preferred Alternative)-- Links 250, 259, 260, and 261-- appears to have more miles of high impacts to biological resources (10.7 miles) than its alternative, Route G-- links 241, 242, and 244 (5.3 miles). Route A has more miles of potential impacts to areas with high wind and water erosion potential, to ferruginous hawks, and to the endangered bald eagle. Route G, however, has more miles of potential impact to areas with shallow ground water, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse leks, long-billed curlew, and sandhill crane. Route A has a slightly lower number of miles of potential impacts to areas with shallow ground water than Route G. Some areas with shallow ground water may qualify as wetlands (see comments below). Further analysis of areas of shallow ground water that may be wetlands, and their values to wildlife, may be important in determining which route is preferable from a biological standpoint. This information should be provided in the final document.

F Alternative routes A (environmentally preferred route), G (utility preferred route), and the agency preferred route are identical through Idaho, and seem to pose few impacts to wildlife in Idaho. However, Alternative Route F and link number 81 through Idaho run through numerous springs and streams, and

RESPONSES

B The BLM agrees that hazardous materials should not be stored in designated flood zone areas. Please refer to Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.

C The BLM agrees with all of your suggestions for rehabilitation. These suggestions, including goals for habitat restoration, will be completed as part of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan (COM) Plan (refer to page 1-34 in this document).

D Potential interconnections have been identified in the Wells and Ely areas which could provide significant load or interconnection service to the local utilities. The SWIP requires series compensation sites located at quarter points along the line for voltage support. Due to the nature of series compensation stations, these sites would also be a good location for interconnections that may be desired by other utilities. The SWIP is not dependent upon any specific power plant integration. Also refer to Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 in this document.

E The Environmentally Preferred Alternative is not necessarily the alternative with the least potential impact to biological resources. It is very common in the transmission line planning/siting process for the "biologically preferred alternative" to be different from the Environmentally Preferred Alternative. Links 250, 259, 260, and 261, for example, have a total of 33.6 miles of increased public access in the 0-20% range. This represents 82% of the total length of these links. Links 241, 242, and 244 have 17.1 miles in the 0-20% range or 48% of the total length. Clearly, from the standpoint of public access, Links 250, 259, 260, and 261 are preferable, despite 5.4 miles of higher impact to biological resources. Other factors including visual resources, cultural resources, land use, and socioeconomics enter into the selection of the Environmentally Preferred Alternative. Biological resources is only one factor, albeit an important one, that contributes to the selection of the preferred alternative.

F Your preferences are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

F would have high impacts to biological resources, primarily sage grouse leks. The Service recommends that those impacts be avoided.

G We also note that Route A (Environmentally Preferable Alternative), Links 291 and 293, appears to have more miles of potentially high impacts to biological resources (7 miles) than its alternative, Route G, Link 280 (3.8 miles). In this section, Route A has higher potential impacts to areas with high wind and water erosion potential, possible impacts to a greater number of intermittent streams, and potential impacts to a greater number of miles of sage grouse leks and habitat for the long-billed curlew, sandhill crane, and antelope. Route G has more miles of potential impacts to habitat for the ferruginous hawk, bald eagle, and sage grouse winter range. Route A has more acres of possible impacts to areas with shallow ground water, and has 3.8 miles of potentially high impacts to shallow ground water areas compared to 1.1 miles for Route G. Again, we believe further review may be appropriate for this segment, including analysis of potential impacts to shallow ground water areas that may be wetlands.

H Page 2-51, Identification of Preferred Alternatives. Environmentally Preferred Alternatives: Midpoint to Dry Lake: Paragraph 4 states that the Bureau of Land Management has expressed concern for Route D near Wells, Nevada and the potential for wet soils and standing water occurring at certain times of the year in the Independence Valley. Information is needed on the precise location of this area. However, the sections on Earth Resources: Ground Disturbance Impacts to Water Resources in the volume on Data Tables for Natural Environment provide information that likely is applicable to this statement. We reviewed the applicable map (Panel 2) from the Map Volume, identified the links which apply to the Independence Valley (Links 170 and 190), and note from the Data Tables for the Natural Environment that portions of these links include shallow ground water as a resource feature. The Technical Report, Volume II: Natural Environment, discusses shallow ground water on pages 3-7 under the section on Water Resources in Chapter 3. Shallow ground water is defined as areas where shallow ground water is consumed by evaporation. These areas were identified in the DEIS on a one to one million scale U.S. Geological Survey hydrologic atlas.

Piecing together information reported throughout the document and technical reports, we believe that many areas identified in the Data Tables for Natural Environment as having shallow ground water may be wetlands. We found information on wetlands to be lacking specificity. The extent to which the shallow ground water areas meet the Service's definition of wetlands as discussed in Cowardin (1979), or meet the criteria for jurisdictional wetlands found in the 1987 Corps of Engineers (Corps) Wetlands Delineation Manual is unknown, since the areas were identified from a one to one million scale hydrologic atlas and not from field surveys.

RESPONSES

G In comparing Link 280 with Links 291 and 293, it is noted that Links 291 and 293 have more miles of soils with high wind and/or water erosion potential than the alternative Link 280. However, in assessing the impact level which incorporates the soil erosion potential, construction disturbance level, and applied mitigation, the result is more miles of alternative corridor of no or low level impact for Links 291 and 293 than for Link 280.

As with comment E, biological resources were not the only factor driving the selection of Links 291 and 293 versus Link 280.

Available mapping for jurisdictional wetlands and satellite imagery were reviewed to identify shallow ground water areas and potential wetlands. If any wetlands are encountered and unavoidable during construction, the project proponent will pursue 401 and/or 404 permits.

H Available mapping for jurisdictional wetlands and satellite imagery were reviewed to identify shallow ground water areas and potential wetlands. Many shallow ground water areas in this area occur as unvegetated playas and salt flats. Therefore, such areas do not meet the COE (1987) definition of wetlands that states " ...under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." The two links referenced contain primarily grass and sage (i.e. sagebrush) vegetation types. Shallow groundwater types can usually be avoided or spanned by transmission line construction activities.

LETTER #C-11 COMMENTS

H The criteria for identifying wetlands along the route and the rationale for not including any areas of shallow ground water as wetlands should be discussed in the final document. We recommend that field surveys be conducted to identify wetlands along all routes. Results of such surveys may affect the designation of the environmentally preferred alternative and selection of the final route. Discharges of fill material into jurisdictional wetlands are regulated by the Corps pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

I Page 3-2, Issues: The DEIS lists soil loss as a result of increased wind and water erosion as an issue of concern. Wind and water erosion can reduce the ability of disturbed areas to revegetate. We recommend that, in areas with moderate to high potential for wind and water erosion, specific mitigation measures be developed for revegetation of these sites to reduce or eliminate this impact.

J Page 3-15, Biological Resources: Vegetative Communities: This section states that the spectral qualities of some vegetative communities were similar on satellite images used in the analysis, and, therefore, the eleven identified plant communities were mapped as seven vegetation types. Information provided by the Service's Cooperative Research Unit at Utah State University, which is using satellite imagery to map vegetation in Nevada as part of their ongoing Gap Analysis effort, indicates that some of the vegetative communities that were combined by Dames and Moore should be readily distinguishable from Landsat imagery. The category of greatest interest is limber/bristlecone pine and quaking aspen. The pine and aspen communities should be readily distinguishable on satellite imagery. We believe it is important to distinguish them because of their different values for wildlife and the importance of bristlecone pine as a unique forest type. The section on plants on page 4-78 of Volume II of the Technical Report, Natural Environment, indicates that samples of bristlecone pine encountered along the selected alternative route would be sent to the dendrochronology lab in Tucson, Arizona. We recommend that all areas of bristlecone pine be avoided. Loss of quaking aspen groves should be compensated by planting or protecting other aspen areas. Such areas should be specifically identified to facilitate selection of the environmentally preferable alternative, and measures to mitigate for impacts to these resources specified.

An additional plant community that may be prevalent along the route but is not identified in the DEIS is mountain shrub community dominated by mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus* spp.). This plant community type should be discussed.

K Table 4-1, Environmental Consequences: Generic mitigation measure number 4 should include references to reseeding/revegetation with "native" plant species from local seed sources. Use of local, native sources will help limit

RESPONSES

I The BLM agrees. These detailed rehabilitation plans will be developed during the COM Plan (refer to page 1-34 in this document).

J Specific forest types (i.e., individual species) were not distinguishable from the computer classification of thematic mapper satellite imagery used for mapping vegetation types for the SWIP alternatives.

Forests along ridge tops and along bedrock outcroppings above 9000 feet in elevation will be avoided by the line (or spanned) to reduce the potential for bristlecone pine to be affected. Disturbance of aspen will be mitigated by use of seedling-sapling transplants from nearby areas. Shallow blading will allow for natural regeneration from rootstocks, and transplanting would be required as necessary to supplement natural restocking to attain required stand densities. The transition from shrub-dominated plateaus and lower mountain slopes is often marked by a zone of broad-leaved scrub that is dominated by mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*) and evergreen oaks (*Quercus turbinella*, *Q. emory*, *Q. dumosa*) which replace deciduous shrub oak species in southern Utah (West, 1988).¹

Mountain mahogany scrub vegetation usually occurs in patchy but dense clumps in association with grassland or low shrub steppe vegetation. Mountain brush vegetation also occurs at the upper elevation zone on some lower mountain ranges in the Great Basin, and grazing and fire suppression have increased its distribution.

Other characteristic species include antelope bitterbrush (*Purulia tridentata*), sumac (*Rhus trilobata*), buckbrush (*Rhamnus crocea*), Apache plume, (*Gallugia paradoxa*), cliffrose (*Cowania mexicana*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), and serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)

K The BLM agrees that indigenous plant species should be utilized. These plans, incorporating your suggestions, will be developed during the COM Plan (refer to page 1-34 in this document).

¹ West, N.E., 1988, "Intermountain Deserts, Shrub Steppes, and Woodlands". In M.G. Barbara and W.D. Billings (eds.) North American Terrestrial Vegetation. Cambridge University Press. New York, NY.

LETTER #C-11 COMMENTS

- K | invasion by nonindigenous species and competition with threatened, endangered, rare, or sensitive plant species.
- L | Pages 4-3 and 4-4, Biological Resource Issues: A significant issue that should be addressed is the likelihood that areas with high ground water or willow riparian plant communities may qualify as wetlands and/or provide important nesting, foraging and cover habitats for migratory birds. Such areas should be identified in the data tables.
- M | Page 4-10, Mitigation Planning: This section refers to the Generic and Selectively Recommended Mitigation Measures listed in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 of the DEIS and in Volume I of the Technical Report. Subsequent sections of the document state that mitigation measures would reduce many impacts to insignificant levels. The mitigation measures are very general, and the Service recommends that monitoring and contingency plans be provided so that impacts would indeed be avoided and reduced. The following comments concern mitigation measures of interest to the Service:
- Generic Mitigation Measures Included in the Project Description:
4. "In construction areas ... where ground disturbance is significant or where recontouring is required, surface restoration would occur as required by the landowner or land management agency. The method of restoration would normally consist of returning disturbed areas back to their natural contour, reseeding (if required)"
- N | We are concerned that where disturbance is moderate, no restoration would occur. As stated above, restoration of the natural ecosystems should be the overall goal for the entire length of the right-of-way if this measure is to reduce impacts to a level of insignificance. Only native plants indigenous to the area should be used in revegetation. Seeding may not be adequate to restore some areas, particularly in times of drought, and active state-of-the-art revegetation techniques with supplemental watering may be required. The document should provide more specific information on restoration of ecosystems within the right-of-way. Information should also be provided on requirements for mitigation/revegetation plans that would be developed, mitigation monitoring, and the monitoring reports that would be provided to land management agencies.
5. "Watering facilities ... would be repaired or replaced if they are damaged or destroyed by construction activities to their predisturbed condition as required by the landowner or land management agency."

RESPONSES

- L | Areas with high groundwater that support vegetation and riparian communities containing wetlands, and that also provide important nesting, foraging and cover for migratory birds, songbirds and other wildlife species will be avoided by construction activities, or will be spanned whenever possible by transmission tower spacing.
- M | Detailed mitigation will be developed as part of the COM Plan (refer to page 1-34 in this document). In most cases impacts would be reduced to insignificant levels even with mitigation. However, there may instances where this may not be possible.
- N | There will be areas where no blading is done but may be used for access. These areas would not need to be restored by ripping, seeding, etc. All disturbed areas will be monitored for their rehabilitation success and measured by a performance specification. In other words, all areas will be restored within a reasonable timeframe or supplemental restoration work will have to be done. This may include supplemental watering. These detailed plans and specifications (including performance specifications) will be developed during the COM Plan (refer to page 1-34 in this document).
- Natural springs will be included under watering facilities in mitigation measure #5 (refer to Table 4-1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA) as you suggested. This correction is in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.
- Because EMF research is inconclusive, and sometimes contradictory, definitive answers are still years away. The project sponsor attempts to site facilities in areas that avoid or minimize human exposure. This policy also minimizes visual impacts.
- The project sponsor will take measurements of magnetic field levels at customers' homes at their request. The project sponsor provides this service to assist customers in gaining as much information as possible. For those customers with concerns specific to the SWIP facilities, company representatives will communicate directly with the customer and provide requested on-site measurements of the EMF levels associated with the facilities.

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

Our comments under measure number 4 above apply to this measure as well. Natural springs are not among the watering facilities addressed in this measure, and we recommend they be included.

- N 12. "The Project Sponsors would continue to monitor studies performed to determine the effects of audible noise and electrostatic and electromagnetic fields in order to ascertain whether these effects are significant."

We recommend that the monitoring plan identify remedial actions to be pursued if significant effects are discovered.

- O 13. "Roads would be built as near as possible at right angles to the streams and washes. Culverts would be installed where necessary. All construction and maintenance activities shall be conducted in a manner that would minimize disturbance to vegetation, drainage channels, and intermittent or perennial streambanks. In addition, road construction would include dust-control measures during construction in sensitive areas. All existing roads would be left in a condition equal to or better than their condition prior to the construction of the transmission line."

In order to mitigate impacts, we recommend this measure include the full restoration of stream, wash, and riparian plant communities temporarily disturbed by project construction. It should also include full compensation for any permanent losses to these plant communities that would occur.

Selectively Committed Mitigation Measures:

- P 2. "Existing crossings would be utilized at perennial streams..."
We recommend that intermittent streams with riparian vegetation important to migratory birds, such as willows (*Salix* spp.), desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), catclaw acacia (*Acacia greggii*), and mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.), be included in this measure where feasible.

- Q 4. "All new access roads not required for maintenance would be permanently closed using the most effective and least environmentally damaging methods appropriate to that area.... This would limit new or improved accessibility into the area."

In order to mitigate impacts, closed access roads should be revegetated and livestock excluded from these areas until new vegetation is well established.

RESPONSES

O The BLM does not anticipate any loss of riparian vegetation or habitat as a result of the construction or operation of the SWIP. If during the COM Plan it is proposed to cross or disturb any of these areas the BLM will require the compensation that you suggest. Although the BLM does not anticipate any loss, disturbance to, or filling in wetland areas, the BLM would also require full compliance with Sections 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 401 Certification. For more information regarding the COM Plan refer to page 1-34 in this document).

P Permanent and intermittent streams containing riparian scrub vegetation (willows, desert willow, catclaw acacia, mesquite) will be avoided. Mitigation measure #6 (refer to Table 4-2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA) has been corrected in the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.

Q The COM Plan will address specific road segments where livestock exclusion will be required for successful vegetation establishment. The requirement for reseeding is a generic mitigation measure (refer to page 1-34 in this document).

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

5. "Modified tower design or alternate tower type would be utilized to minimize ground disturbance, operational conflicts, visual contrast and/or avian conflicts."

R We were unable to find any information in the DEIS or Technical Report on modified tower designs to minimize avian conflicts. This information should be provided. One design we recommend in areas where predation could significantly impact sensitive wildlife species such as candidate birds and sage grouse is the use of steel wire or hard plastic fabrics attached to tower components to discourage perching by predatory birds.

11. "With the exception of emergency repair situations, right-of way construction, restoration, maintenance, and termination activities in designated areas would be modified or discontinued during sensitive periods (e.g., nesting and breeding periods) for candidate, proposed threatened and endangered, or other sensitive animal species. Sensitive periods, species affected, and areas of concern would be approved in advance of construction or maintenance by the authorized officer."

S We recommend that this measure include the provision for field surveys to be conducted on those portions of the route with habitat for candidate plant species prior to any ground disturbing activities. No proposed species are located in the project area that we are aware of at this time.

We also recommend that a mitigation measure be added to address areas where there would be permanent or long-term impacts to habitat for sensitive wildlife species. We recommend that disturbed habitat in other areas be restored or enhanced to compensate for this impact.

T Page 4-11 to 4-21, Alternative Routes: Midpoint to Dry Lake: Several portions of this section state that if access to the right-of-way is adequately controlled, impacts to candidate or sensitive plant species would not occur. However, no information is provided on how access will be controlled in these areas. This information should be provided.

Page 4-15, Environmental Consequences: Since surveys for threatened, endangered or sensitive plant species have not been conducted over much of the area, the Service recommends that the project proponent fund and conduct a detailed vegetation survey over the proposed route.

U Degradation of water quality of streams during construction is listed as an issue. This should be expanded to include wetlands, which as discussed previously may include those areas with near surface ground water. Mitigation measures to prevent degradation of water quality should be applied to these areas.

RESPONSES

R The BLM has not specifically researched possible means of deterring perching by predatory birds on support structures. The BLM anticipates that the COM Plan that will be developed for the project following a Record of Decision will address such issues in detail (refer to page 1-34 in this document). As a means of reducing impacts from predators using towers as hunting perches, the biologists have generally argued that new transmission lines should be placed as close as possible to existing ones in areas where increased predation may be a problem.

The BLM will confer further with raptor experts and the Fish and Wildlife Service during the preparation of the COM Plan for this project (refer to page 1-34 in this document). It may be possible to discourage use of towers by predators in some areas where there are currently no existing structures associated with other transmission lines. In those areas where the SWIP would follow existing electrical transmission systems, the BLM doubts that "raptor-proofing" the new lines would yield benefits commensurate with costs.

S The COM Plan for the SWIP will address preconstruction surveys for sensitive plant and wildlife species (refer to page 1-34 in this document). The BLM is aware that there are many areas within the SWIP's corridors that have not been surveyed for rare plants, and the probability of finding populations of such species is fairly high. The BLM will consider inclusion of survey work for species on the Federal Revised List of Migratory Birds.

T Means of controlling access will be addressed in the COM Plan (refer to page 1-34 in this document).

U On-the-ground surveys will be stipulated in the COM Plan in accordance with land management agencies policies (refer to page 1-34 in this document).

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

V [Figure ER-4. Initial Impact Levels for Water Resource Categories: This table lists alkali flats as a water resource category. Playas are also addressed briefly on page 4-11. Such areas may be used for nesting by a category 2 candidate for Federal listing as threatened or endangered, the snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*). We recommend that surveys be conducted in these areas prior to any ground disturbance activities to ensure that nesting habitat for this species is not affected by the project. This should be included as a generic mitigation measure. Playas may also provide important habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds during wet years. Such sites should be identified in the document and Technical Report and evaluated in the impact assessment.

W [Table ER-8. Summary of Water Resource Inventory: This table lists shallow ground water and wetland areas as two separate categories. As discussed above, shallow ground water areas may qualify as wetlands. The document should discuss the technical differences between these two categories. The table specifies that one spring is found along Link 92, but the document states that many springs are found along this link. This discrepancy should be clarified.

X [Page 4-41, Mammals: Pygmy Rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*): This species, a category 2 candidate for Federal listing, prefers areas with dense tall sagebrush. Pre-construction surveys should be conducted to identify sites used by pygmy rabbits and these areas avoided to the extent possible. If such habitat cannot be avoided, active revegetation should be considered.

Y [Page 4-46, Sensitive Features: Floodplains, Riparian, and Wetlands: A discussion of wetlands along the proposed routes under Corps jurisdiction should be provided in this section.

Z [Page 4-48 to 4-50, Habitats of Special Concern: Nevada: This section discusses the major raptor migration corridor along the west side of the Goshute Mountains, and bald eagle winter range in Elko and White Pine Counties. Although raptor power line collisions may not be a serious problem overall, collisions may be more likely in strong winds or poor light conditions in areas with high raptor concentrations. Specific mitigation measures to reduce the potential for such collisions in these areas could include prohibition of construction of transmission lines within 1 mile of communal raptor roosts or high use areas.

AA [Pages 4-58 to 4-67, Impact Assessment and Mitigation Planning: Our review indicates that the impact assessment did not consider areas important to migratory birds, important riparian areas, and areas of shallow ground water that may qualify as wetlands and provide important habitat for wildlife. Such areas should be evaluated in determining the environmentally preferable alternative.

RESPONSES

V The BLM acknowledges the potential presence of *Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus* as a nesting species on alkali flats within the SWIP study corridors. Your recommendation of preconstruction surveys for this species are well taken and will be included in the COM Plan for the project (refer to page 1-34 in this document). The BLM has also expanded its discussion of this type under Other Natural Land Cover, in Chapter 3 of the SWIP FEIS/PPA.

W Shallow ground water areas such as playas and salt flats do not qualify as jurisdictional wetlands if not vegetated (COE, 1987, Wetland Delineation Manual). In any case, such areas will be avoided whenever possible or spanned by proper tower placement (see item 6, Table 4-2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA). Smaller springs which occur along this link are neither indicated on maps nor are evident on Landsat imagery, but are mentioned in the text, and will need to be considered during the COM Plan. Refer to Earth Resources in Volume II of the technical reports (refer to Appendix H for locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

X As with *Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus* above, recommendations for field surveys for potential habitat of *Brachylagus idahoensis* along the Agency Preferred Alternative will be included in the COM Plan for this project (refer to page 1-34 in this document). The BLM will also consult with range experts regarding the potential for revegetation of dense, tall sagebrush areas that are preferred habitat for the species.

Y The page number cited references the Natural Environment (Volume II) of the Technical Report. Wetlands are defined by the Corps of Engineers (1987) as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." This definition will apply to areas that are included as riparian, and in some cases, shallow ground water. This definition will be added to the Errata in Chapter 4 of this document.

Z Refer to the discussion of Avian Collision Hazard in the biological resource sections in Chapter 3 of this document.

Collisions (and electrocution) involving high voltage lines are very infrequent, highly random events that are unlikely to affect the long term probability of

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- AA The section on ground disturbance impacts on page 4-61 states that nests of some ground-nesting species of songbirds would be affected by construction activities. Mitigation measures should be developed to ensure avoidance of this impact.
- AA The section on ground disturbance impacts on page 4-72 states that sensitive plants near construction sites may be trampled, but they may recover depending on the extent of disturbance. This impact is fully preventable through pre-construction surveys and implementation of protective measures such as temporary fencing during construction. Such techniques should be included under mitigation measures.
- BB Technical Report: Data Tables for Natural Environment: The Service identified several discrepancies between the Data Tables and the text of the DEIS. They are as follows:
- Ground Disturbance Impacts to Sensitive Plant Species: Page 4-15 of the text identifies the sensitive plant, Arabis falcifructa, as being found along link 162; Penstemon bicolor, P. b. roseus, and Astragalus triquetrus could occur along links 690, 700, and 720; and Mentzelia mollis occurs along link 700. However, this information needs to be included in the table.
- Public Access Impacts to Sensitive Plant Species: Page 4-15 of the text states that Castilleja salsuginosa is found near Monte Neva Hot Springs and could be affected by future public access to this area. This factor is not reflected in the table.
- CC Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination, Page 5-15:
- The most recent threatened and endangered species list for the proposed project in Idaho is dated July 18, 1991. This species list is no longer valid and, according to Federal Regulations, should be updated within 180 days of project construction. Species lists should be current for project proposals in Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. A list of Service field office contacts for updating and obtaining species lists follows.

survival of any species of raptor within the SWIP corridors. There may be some raptor mortality associated with the presence of new transmission lines in the SWIP system. The BLM's professional opinion, which is supported by the scientific literature, however, is that the level of increased mortality likely to occur will not be measurable and will not adversely affect the population status of any raptor species. The annual mortality of raptors from illegal shooting in western Utah and eastern Nevada is probably far higher than would be experienced in a decade or two of presence of the SWIP transmission lines.

- AA The BLM will discuss compliance with the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act as it applies to songbirds during preparation of the COM Plan for this project (refer to page 1-34 in this document). Consultation will take place with the Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife management agencies regarding this issue.

Preconstruction surveys for individuals and populations of sensitive plant species will be included in the COM Plan for the project (refer to page 1-34 in this document). The BLM agrees that impacts to such species are almost fully avoidable. The BLM believes that preconstruction surveys coupled with construction period compliance monitoring can serve this end.

- BB There is one population of Arabis falcifructa known within the one-mile corridor for Link 162 which should be on the Table. The population of Mentzelia mollis was incorrectly identified. Astragalus triquetrus is the only species which occurs within the one-mile corridors of Links 790, 800, 830, and 840. The two species of Penstemon are known to occur within the vicinity of the proposed Dry Lake substation, but not within the mapped one-mile corridor.

Information provided to use stated that Castilleja salsuginosa occurred in the vicinity of Monte Neva Hotsprings, but did not have an exact location. Therefore, this was not mapped although its existence was noted in the text.

- CC The Boise, Reno, and Salt Lake offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service were contacted on the 14th and 15th of October 1992 with regard to updated lists for threatened and endangered species, as well as species proposed for listing as threatened or endangered.

LETTER #C-11
COMMENTS

Contacts for Updating Species Lists

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Boise Field Office
4696 Overland Road, Room 576
Boise, ID 83705
(208) 334-1931

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Reno Field Office
4600 Kietzke Lane, Bldg. C-125
Reno, NV 89502
(702) 784-5227

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Salt Lake City Field Office
1745 W. 1700 S., 2060 Admin. Bldg
Salt Lake City, UT 84105-5110
(801) 524-5630

Literature Cited

Army Corps of Engineers, 1987. Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual. Technical Report Y-87-1.

Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States. Report FWS/OBS-79/31. Office of Biological Services, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington

RESPONSES

The list of threatened and endangered species for this project will be updated prior to construction. Our contacts with the Fish and Wildlife Service indicate that no new species, except a plant, Ute Lady's Tresses (believed extirpated from Nevada), have been listed in the study area since the original letters and species lists were provided for this project. The Fish and Wildlife Service has rendered a favorable Biological Opinion for the project (refer to Appendix C of this document).

LETTER #C-12
COMMENTS

John A. Chachas
Julio C. Costello
Bunny Hill
John S. Lampros
Barlow N. White

RESPONSES

P.O. Box 1002
Ely, Nevada 89301
(702) 289-8841

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

White Pine County
Board of County Commissioners

September 14, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

On behalf of the White Pine County Commission, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Plan Amendment for the Southwest Intertie Project. The Commission endorses the proposed project because we feel it will be beneficial to White Pine County and its residents. The Southwest Intertie Project will provide jobs and encourage business activity during construction, it will generate tax revenue, and it will contribute to the transmission system needed for the White Pine Power Project.

The White Pine Power Project is a significant element in the county's efforts to diversify its economy and provide jobs for its residents. The Southwest Intertie Project will result in construction of transmission lines as well as a sub-station near Ely, both of which will enhance the future development of the White Pine Power Project.

LETTER #C-12
COMMENTS

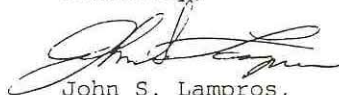
RESPONSES

At our September 9 County Commission meeting, we reviewed concerns raised by some residents of Baker who feel that the Agency Preferred Cross Tie Route to Delta, Utah, negatively impacts the

Great Basin National Park and residents of the Snake Valley area. The Commission would like to ask these concerns be taken into account in the final selection of the cross tie route as well as mitigation of the visual impacts of the transmission line and the placement of the individual towers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John S. Lampros,
Chairman

**COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED AFTER
THE SWIP DEIS/DPA COMMENT PERIOD**

LETTER #D-1
COMMENTS



January 7, 1993

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Southwest Intertie Project
Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Deseret Generation & Transmission Co-operative (Deseret) supports the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP). Currently, Deseret's generation export capabilities are at their limit. Due to this constraint we are not able to sell electricity to potential purchasers to meet their load growth.

As a participant in the Utah-Nevada Transmission Project, the SWIP will interconnect and provide a valuable additional path to potential customers.

RESPONSES

A No response is necessary.


LETTER D-1

LETTER #D-1
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

If you have any questions or would like further comments, please contact me at (801) 566-1238.

Sincerely,


Merrill J. Millett
General Manager and CEO

dph

cc: Dennis B. Whitney
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Room 1149
P.O. Box 111
Los Angeles, California 90051-0100

Jan Packwood
Idaho Power Company
P.O. Box 70
Boise, Idaho 83707

"Creating Power Through Cooperation"

LETTER #D-2
COMMENTS

Dear Sir:

8 October 1992

I am writing in support of the "No Action" alternative for the Southwest Intertie Project.

A [The project will hideously bespoil extensive areas and vistas without a definite need to do so. The negative impacts to wildlife and Great Basin National park, a favorite
B [of mine, cannot be justified for this project.

Please put me on your mailing list for information on the project.

Sincerely,
Frank B. Guros

RESPONSES

A There would be significant visual impacts to the scenic natural landscapes of public lands. Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to the project study area. The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in their decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model refer to the methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

B The proposed 230kV Corridor Route is approximately 2 miles north of Great Basin National Park and 4-5 miles north of Wheeler Peak. To further minimize visual impacts to travel routes leading into the park, several mitigation reroutes through Sacramento Pass have been evaluated (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document).

No significant visual impacts to viewpoints in Great Basin National Park would occur because of the distance of the alternative routes from these viewpoints. Non-specular conductors and steel H-frame towers across the highway would minimize other adverse visual effects of the SWIP.

LETTER #D-3
COMMENTS

Sacred Datura, Zion National Park, Utah.

Dear Mr. Simmon,

A I ask you to please re-consider the need for the Idaho to L.A. powerline project. If indeed a justification exists, then please use the existing powerline right-of-way in Utah.

B A new, major power line through an unspoiled area will have devastating impact on raptor migration, tortoise populations, visual appeal, archaeological sites, etc, etc. Thank you for your consideration.

Mark Lindberg
8 Eden Lane
Larkspur, CA 94939

From The Sierra Club Nature in Close-Up Postcard Collection.
Photograph copyright © 1988 Kevin Hass.



RESPONSES

- A Please refer to Chapter 3 of this document for an expanded discussion of the purpose and need.
- B Given the structural configuration of 500kV transmission lines, the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission line proposed for the SWIP would utilize V-guyed steel lattice, self-supporting steel lattice, and tubular steel H-frame towers. The spacing between conductors on towers is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground contact. Conductors are hung on towers in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart. Further, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (refer to the SWIP DEIS/DPA pages 2-12 through 2-14). Because of the distance between conductors and the tower, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the tower.

The BLM acknowledges that numbers of raptors are killed each year in the United States as a result of electrocution. Most such incidents occur, however, on lower voltage distribution lines.

Refer to Avian Collision Hazard on page 3-89 of this document.

There would be impacts to desert tortoise, although mitigation measures taken during construction should be very effective in reducing or eliminating these adverse effects. The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is a subject of ongoing study. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. It is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

There would be significant visual impacts to the scenic natural landscapes of public lands. Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although

LETTER #D-3
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to the project study area. The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in their decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model refer to the methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

If one of the routes is approved by the BLM, there will be a cultural survey completed for any potentially disturbed areas, (e.g., rights-of-way, access routes, assembly yards) prior to any ground disturbing activities. Refer to mitigation measure #9 in Table 1-6 of this document. All Cultural resource impacts will be mitigated.

LETTER #D-4

COMMENTS

October 7, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

RESPONSES

cc: Manuel Lujan
Ly-Jamison A

The proposed 230kV Corridor Route is approximately 2 miles north of Great Basin National Park and 4-5 miles north of Wheeler Peak. To further minimize visual impacts to travel routes leading into the park, several mitigation reroutes through Sacramento Pass have been evaluated (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document).

No significant visual impacts to viewpoints in Great Basin National Park would occur because of the distance of the alternative routes from these viewpoints. Non-specular conductors and steel H-frame towers across the highway would minimize other adverse visual effects of the SWIP.

Dear Mr. Simonson,

Please add these comments as part of the final E.I.S. for the Southwest Intertie Project.

A [If the SWIP is allowed as proposed, it would require giant steel towers every 1,500 feet, which would be visible from many viewpoints within Great Basin National Park. The area is beautiful views on the scenic views and habitat for tortoise, antelope and sage grouse.

I urge you to oppose the BLM proposed action and support the "no action" alternative.

This alternative would have no adverse environmental impacts and would include eliminating financial costs.

LETTER D-4

LETTER #D-4
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

It has come a time, where Americans need to use
conservation as a means of meeting our needs,
and stop depleting our natural beauties - our
public lands. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Martinez

3980 Fraxton Court

Simi Valley, California 93063

LETTER #D-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES



IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7617(774)
DES-92/0023

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
P.O. BOX 137127
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127



30 MAR 1993

Mr. Karl Simonson
Burley District Office
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

This is a follow-up to our comments, contained in our letter of October 9, 1992, on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan Amendment for the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP). These follow-up comments respond to issues raised at your project steering committee meeting, held in Salt Lake City, Utah, December 9-10, 1993, and attended by Superintendent Al Hendricks of Great Basin National Park and Western Regional Office Environmental Coordinator Jim Huddleston, and your request for comments on the preliminary final environmental statement and subsequent redraft of the Purpose and Need section of that document. In addition, we are responding to your more recent consideration of an alternative alignment to the 230 kilovolt (kv) route in the vicinity of Great Basin National Park.

We appreciate the fact that the Bureau of Land Management and the involved power companies are willing to consider a modification of the 230 kv corridor that would move the proposed transmission line northward in the vicinity of the park. While we continue to have serious reservations over selection of the 230 kv corridor as the preferred routing, we are hopeful that this potential modification would result in the reduction of visual impact to the park. We will withhold further comment and any endorsement of this modification pending availability and our review of more detailed plans for the modification.

LETTER #D-5
COMMENTS

During the aforementioned steering committee meeting, our attendees mentioned the fact that our comment letter of October 9, 1992, did not appear in the preliminary final document. It was their understanding that you did not plan to publish letters of comment from cooperating agencies. We believe this would be a procedural error in violation of the Council of Environmental Quality Guidelines at 40 CFR Part 1503.4(b). Even though you informally provided us responses to our comments and made some modifications in the draft final environmental statement in response to those comments, we believe it necessary and proper to include the comments and associated responses in the final document.

Our review of the January 15, 1993, revision of the Purpose and Need section indicates that while there is some improvement over that presented in the draft environmental statement, the revision primarily involves the reorganization of earlier material, with certain key words being changed, and large portions which remain substantially unchanged. Our primary objection is that a tone of justification for the SWIP project remains. For example, statements frequently appear that indicate what the SWIP would do to fill needs identified in this section. The function of this section should be an impartial description of circumstances that cause the proposed action and alternatives to be considered. How well the SWIP, specifically, will meet the identified needs, is more appropriately discussed in the alternatives section. If this guideline were to be followed, the content of the Purpose and Need could be greatly reduced.

Other comments on specific sections of the Purpose and Need redraft are as follows:

- A [1. On page 3-1, Line 4, we believe that the information printed here is an expansion of the Purpose and Need described in the Summary, not Chapter 1.
- B [2. On page 3-3, under Diversity Benefits from Interconnections, paragraph 2, second sentence, the "1992 National Energy Policy Legislation" is cited as specifically addressing transmission and transmission access. This implies that the legislation relates in some way to the Purpose and Need of SWIP. If there is some specific relationship between the legislation and SWIP, it should be stated. If there is not, the reference should be omitted.
- C [3. On page 3-5, under Environmental and Consumer Benefit Tests paragraph 1, final sentence, NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act.
- D [4. On Page 3-9, the entire Regional Economic Benefits of SWIP section is an example of material more appropriately covered under the alternatives and/or environmental consequences sections than in this section.

RESPONSES

- A The document correctly states that the information on Purpose and Need presented in the FEIS/PPA is an expansion of the Purpose and Need in Chapter 1 of the DEIS/DPA.
- B There is no specific relationship between the SWIP and the "1992 National Energy Policy Legislation". The sentence in paragraph 3 and other references to it have been removed from the SWIP FEIS/PPA.
- C This has been corrected in the SWIP FEIS/PPA
- D The BLM believes that the information presented on economic benefits of the SWIP is appropriate information for the Purpose and Need.

LETTER #D-5 COMMENTS

E 5. On page 3-11, under Bonanza Generating Station, second paragraph, it is implied that the SWIP needs to be constructed in order to make the Bonanza Generating Station profitable. The fact that all 400 megawatts (MW) of Bonanza's generating capacity must be sold to meet operating costs is the concern of Deseret Generation and Transmission Cooperative, and not SWIP. Further, it is implied that a second 400 MW generation unit could be built at Bonanza if transmission links could be developed. This would be an additional impact of the SWIP project that has not been covered in the environmental analysis.

The following specific comments are directed to the December 1992 preliminary draft of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

F 1. We continue to be concerned with and question the rationale behind the contention, on page 3-54 of the document under Leland Harris Spring Complex, that "The presence of this spring complex near the Direct Route was a factor in not considering the Direct Route as a preferred crosstie route of the SWIP." During the December 1992 steering committee meeting, the consulting firm of Dames & Moore's biologist stated that their review of the situation indicated that transmission towers could be sited in a way that completely avoids the riparian areas in the vicinity of Leland-Harris Spring. Furthermore, their review, substantiated with color slides taken at the spring complex, revealed an area which had been heavily used by livestock with most available forage consumed up to the edge of the springs and ponds. Accordingly, we question potential biological impact of the powerline on this complex as being a significant factor in either rejecting the Direct Route as the preferred alternative or at least not designating it as the environmentally preferred alternative.

G 2. Based on concerns expressed throughout the review process on this project, we have concluded that there has not been sufficient information or supportable conclusions to select the 230 kv route as the project proposal. Therefore, we recommend its rejection in favor of either more intensive study of the Direct Route or selection of the no action alternative. Accordingly, we recommend that the last sentence on pages 1-5 of the preliminary final document be revised to read: "Because of concern for visual impacts to the park and to visitors driving to the park, the National Park Service recommends rejection of the 230 kv route."

H 3. Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument is incorrectly identified on Figures 1-1, and 1-2, as well as in Appendix C, page 2.

I 4. On page 3-56, first paragraph the superintendent of Great Basin National Park is mentioned specifically as the source of a particular proposal. Personal sources are not identified elsewhere throughout the document and agency sources are rarely noted. If this specific attribution is believed significant in this instance, then the National Park Service, not the superintendent, should be cited as the source.

RESPONSES

E The section describing the Bonanza Generating Station has been rewritten, refer to this section in the Purpose and Need in Chapter 3.

F The impacts to Leland-Harris Spring Complex have been lowered to moderate reflect findings of Dr. Linwood Smith. The direct impacts of the SWIP through this area could be largely mitigated. However, the BLM remains concerned that even a small impact could cause the species of concern to "go over the edge". For this reason, the cumulative effect remains significant. Refer to the Leland Harris Spring Complex section under Biological Resources in Chapter 3 on page 3-91 describing the potential impacts to the Leland-Harris Spring Complex.

Although the Leland-Harris Spring Complex was considered it was not the determining factor in the selection of the environmentally preferred route. The impacts to the military flight operations in the R-6405 Restricted Area are what made the Direct Route less environmentally favorable. Although moderate, these impacts would be extensive (approx. 65 miles) and were considered significant.

G Your comments relative to rejection of the 230kV Corridor Route will be considered by BLM in their final decision. The wording you have suggested has been incorporated into this document.

H This has been corrected in the FEIS/PPA.

I This has been corrected in the FEIS/PPA.

LETTER #D-5 COMMENTS

RESPONSES

J This has been corrected in the FEIS/PPA.

K This has been corrected in the FEIS/PPA.

L The cultural resources for each alternative are at best predicted, since no "on-the-ground" surveys were conducted to compare alternatives for the EIS process. Surveys will be conducted on the selected alternative.

The cultural scoring model for each alternative used an index which was unique for cultural resources and was not used to determine route preferences for the other disciplines. It is based on the study team's concerns about the unknowns of cultural resources and the potential for mitigation.

The basis of comparison for each of the disciplines was the miles of high, moderate, and low impacts, which represents the level of impact significance for each of the resources potentially affected. This information is presented in detailed comparative form for the five resource disciplines in Tables 1-1 and 1-2 of the FEIS/PPA for all of the alternative routes as you suggested.

M Refer to the Antelope Spring Trilobite Beds section in Chapter 3 of this document.

J 5. On page 4-8, this errata section relating to page 3-3 of the AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT remains inaccurate. Only those national parks and wilderness areas which were in existence in 1977 were designated Class I. Neither Great Basin National Park, nor Mount Moriah Wilderness Area fall into this category. The Jabidge Wilderness area did exist in 1977, and is Class I. Areas initially designated as Class II, can be redesignated as Class I, either by Congress through additional action, or by the State legislatures in the affected States. In addition, the correct size of Great Basin National Park is 77,100 acres.

K 6. In Figure 4-4, the California National Study Trail is now designated as the California National Historic Trail. In Figure 4-12, the diagram showing the inset location on panel 3 is improperly located.

L 7. It is our understanding that the Final EIS/PA is in an abbreviated format, which therefore references the information included in the draft document. As such, we request an addition to the information which was presented in the draft, which will address the matter of relative impacts anticipated on each of the alternative routes. Specifically, on page 4-70 and 4-71 of the June 1992 draft, a summary of anticipated cultural resource impacts for each of the routes was presented, along with an explanation of how these figures were derived. We find these figures to be most illustrative and revealing, and request that the figures developed for each of the five resource categories evaluated (Cultural, Biology, Land Use, Earth, and Visual), be presented in a single chart showing the various alternatives.

M 8. By letter of February 11, 1993, to Jake Hoogland, Chief, Environmental Quality Division, Dames & Moore requested clarification on the status of the Antelope Springs Trilobite Beds. By Memorandum of Understanding dated May 8, 1988, the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service set forth procedures for evaluating potential impacts on designated or potential National Natural Landmarks (NNL). The Antelope Springs Trilobite Beds are a potential NNL. Our review of the draft environmental statement indicated that the 230 kv route would pass through the central to southeast portion of the potential NNL. Therefore, we requested that this potential impact be addressed along with any needed avoidance or mitigation measures in the final document. For further information on this specific concern, please contact Cheryl A. Schreier, the NNL coordinator for our Rocky Mountain Region, at (303) 969-2850 or National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 12795 West Alameda Parkway, Box 25287, Denver, Colorado 80225.

LETTER #D-5
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

In summary, we believe that the preliminary final document continues to fail to provide factual information to support the selection of the 230 kv corridor. Also, the Purpose and Need section sets an improper tone for an objective analysis. In addition, the late introduction of a possible modification in the 230 kv corridor near Great Basin National Park now becomes a critically needed addition to the document in order to demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives have been considered.

For any questions on the above comments, please contact Jake Hoogland, Chief, Division of Environmental Quality, at (202) 208-5214; Superintendent Al Hendricks at (702) 234-7331; or Jim Huddlestun, Western Regional Office, at (415) 744-3968.

Sincerely,



Denis P. Galvin
Associate Director,
Planning and Development

LETTER #D-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Burling Mastert Office
BLM

Mt. 3, Box 1

Burling, Idaho, 83318

Re: SWIP Corridor Route

Nov. 5, 1982

A The proposed 230kV Corridor Route is approximately 2 miles north of Great Basin National Park and 4-5 miles north of Wheeler Peak. To further minimize visual impacts to travel routes leading into the park, several mitigation reroutes through Sacramento Pass have been evaluated (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document).

No significant visual impacts to viewpoints in Great Basin National Park would occur because of the distance of the alternative routes from these viewpoints. Non-specular conductors and steel H-frame towers across the highway would minimize other adverse visual effects of the SWIP.

A [The preferred alternative for the corridor route near Great Basin National Park would degrade the vistas of Mount Wheeler and the Snake Range from outside the park and spoil views of the valleys from the park's mountainsides.

LETTER #D-6
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Besides it is a great waste of
Taxpayers money adding to the deficit.

Sincerely
John Savarone
74 Mohide Ave.
Staten Island
NY 10306

LETTER #D-7
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Sierra Pacific Power Company

Your Energy People

Thomas D. Parker
Vice President
Electric System
Planning & Engineering

January 15, 1993

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

**RE: Southwest Intertie Project
Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Mr. Simonson:

We understand that it is beyond the comment period for the draft EIS. However, we at Sierra Pacific Power Company (Sierra) feel it necessary to apprise you of the electrical transmission situation into Northern Nevada.

Currently, Sierra's bulk electric transmission capabilities are nearing capacity. Due to this constraint, without additional transmission facilities (such as SWIP), potential suppliers of capacity and energy to meet our current and growing customers needs for electric power must be internal to Sierra's control area.

Participation agreements for SWIP have not been finalized and it is uncertain whether Sierra will have any ownership in SWIP. However, SWIP will be using an important State of Nevada transmission corridor. SWIP's utilization must be evaluated for the optimum use of this corridor. Sierra is interested in interconnecting with SWIP in two locations. One is with an open market 230 kV interconnection in the Ely, Nevada area, the other is a future site at 345 kV identified as the substation/series compensation siting area located Northeast of the Wells, Nevada area. This will allow Sierra to conduct economical energy transactions that would benefit our customers.

A No response is necessary.

LETTER #D-7
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

If you have any questions or would like further comments, please contact me at 702-689-4569.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael R. Smart".

Michael R. Smart, Director
Electric Planning

MRS:lj

cc: Dennis B. Whitney
Jan Packwood

6100 Neil Road P.O. Box 10100 Reno, Nevada 89520-0026 Telephone 702/689-4609

LETTER #D-8
COMMENTS

SHILOAH COMMUNITIES, INC.
1100 Circle Dr., Eskdale, UT 84728-9702

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
RECEIVED

JUN 10 1993

June 10, 1993

Nancy DeMille
BLM
Pillmore, UT 87776
FAX (801)743-5112
Office: (801)743-6811

Dear Ms. DeMille,

We've discussed our concerns about the impact that the ~~proposed~~ construction of the new power lines for the Intertie project will have on our lives, homes, and business. Basically the concerns can be summarized into three areas.

A [Our first concern is the increased limitation of future land development in the proposed corridor for the power line. The proposed corridor separates our properties and the expanded use of the corridor restricts any further utilization of the land connecting our properties.

B [Secondly, there are many concerns about the health hazards surrounding high tension power lines and while these lines do not pass over any of our homes or buildings, our daily activities have us passing under them frequently. We understand that adverse health effects are not yet proven but should they be substantiated then we would be better off to not increase our risk when other options are available and viable.

C [Our third concern is about the congestion of power lines in our back yard. Again, when other options are feasible for the line our preference is to select those other options rather than to fill our country side with visually offensive power lines.

No one here favors the proposed construction of the Intertie project, but especially not in the proposed area adjacent to our property. Our recommendation is that the BLM show adverse impact from the construction of the power line in our area.

Sincerely,

Dean G. Hayward

Dean G. Hayward

RESPONSES

- A Impacts have been assessed for all developments and planned developments in the SWIP project area, however, impacts on future developments cannot be assessed in an area which does not have a plan for development. Your comments have been noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.
- B The many studies that have been conducted on EMF demonstrate that we are all affected in everyday life. Electromagnetic fields exist from microwaves, florescent lights, waterbed heaters, hair dryers, etc. The right-of-way width of 200 feet is intended to minimize these effects. Outside of the right-of-way the field levels are expected to be no higher than normally occur in household appliances. Please refer to pages 3-72 through 3-82 in the DEIS/DPA and page 3-19 in this document for additional information on EMF.
- C Your comments have been noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

**FORMAL PUBLIC MEETING
COMMENTS AND RESPONSES**

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Issue/Concern</u>	<u>Response</u>
Bill Chrisholm	Twin Falls	A. Alternative energy sources need to be evaluated.	A. Alternative sources of energy have been evaluated as alternatives to the SWIP in Chapter 2 of the DEIS/DPA. IPCo is pursuing many alternative energy sources to further diversity resources. However, alternative energy sources do not meet the purpose and need for the SWIP and do not replace the need for the SWIP.
		B. The DEIS/DPA lacks analysis of true energy conservation	B. Refer to Conservation and Demand Side Management on page 3-4 of this document.
Brenda Herrmann	Twin Falls	A. Favors alternative route for health reasons and land depreciation if the transmission line is placed on their land.	A. Your comments are noted and will be considered in BLM's decision process.
John Herrmann	Twin Falls	A. The DEIS/DPA does not analyze impacts on people, their health and loss of private property.	A. These impacts were addressed in the DEIS/DPA on pages 4-51 through 4-68 and pages 4-46 through 4-51 of Chapter 4.
		B. Concerned about the depreciation of the land. With a transmission line currently running through his property, SWIP would further depreciate the value of his land.	B. IPCo would compensate for the fair market value of lands used for transmission easement. There is no conclusive research that suggests that transmission lines depreciate the value of adjacent lands.
Bob Molyneux	Twin Falls	A. Recommended the preferred route	A. Your comments are noted and will be considered in BLM's decision process.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

Janet OCrowley	Twin Falls	A. What agency will govern, regulate and set rates for the transmission line?	A. The Public Service Commission in each state regulates utilities that provide service to customers in that state.
William Johnson	Wells	A. If the intertie were moved to some degree, it would avoid going through our land and certainly benefit our planned development.	A. Please refer to the Agency Preferred plan in Chapter 1 of this document. The Agency Preferred Alternative is to move the route as you suggest.
Dawn King	Wells	A. To preserve visual quality, the line should be placed across the valley, not through Oasis.	A. The Agency Preferred Alternative has been modified in the Oasis area in response to public comments. Also, please refer to Impacts in the Oasis Area on page 3-17 of Chapter 3 and the Agency Preferred Alternative in Chapter 1 of this document.
		B. Concerned that the power line would affect the wetlands, wildlife, and waterfowl.	B. These resources have been identified and impacts to them assessed. The analysis can be found beginning on pages 3-14 and 4-9 of this document, as well as the Biological Resources section in Chapter 3.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

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| C. Concerned about the health effects of being around the lines. | C. The many studies that have been conducted on EMF demonstrate that we are all affected in everyday life. Electromagnetic fields exist from microwaves, florescent lights, waterbed heaters, hair dryers, etc. The right-of-way width of 200 feet is intended to minimize these effects. Outside of the right-of-way the field levels are expected to be no higher than normally occur in household appliances. Please refer to pages 3-72 through 3-82 of the DEIS/DPA for additional information on EMF. |
| D. Need to address alternative energy. | D. Alternative sources of energy have been evaluated as alternatives to the SWIP in Chapter 2 of the DEIS/DPA. IPCo is pursuing many alternative energy sources to further diversity resources. However, alternative energy sources do not meet the purpose and need for the SWIP and do not replace the need for the SWIP. |
| E. Since the document did not mention the communities of Oasis and Wendover, the DEIS/DPA is inadequate. | E. Oasis was considered in the DEIS/DPA process, refer to the page 5-20 of the Technical Reports, Volume III - Human Environment. Also, Oasis has been added to the list of communities in Nevada (refer to Chapter 4 of this document). Wendover is 8 miles outside of the study corridor. |

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

		F. Public notification was inadequate.	F. The BLM believes that the public notification was adequate. The planning process occurred over a several year period. Numerous news releases were sent communities in the area and newsletters were sent to a mailing list of over 3000 individuals, agencies, and organizations in order to gain public input.
		G. Expressed concern about global warming.	G. Please refer to page 4-90 of the DEIS/DPA.
William Fisher	Wells	A. Concerned about health issues.	A. The many studies that have been conducted on EMF demonstrate that we are all affected in everyday life. Electromagnetic fields exist from microwaves, florescent lights, waterbed heaters, hair dryers, etc. The right-of-way width of 200 feet is intended to minimize these effects. Outside of the right-of-way the field levels are expected to be no higher than normally occur in household appliances. Please refer to pages 3-72 through 3-82 of the DEIS/DPA for additional information on EMF.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

Hiko Wirtz	Wells	A. The power line affects health, property value, and the scenic qualities of the Oasis area.	A. The BLM agrees that the SWIP will affect the scenic quality of the landscape in the Oasis area. These impacts are documented in the DEIS/DPA, in Volume III of the Technical Report, and further in Chapter 3 of this document. The potential health effects are documented in the DEIS/DPA. There is no conclusive research that indicates that transmission lines affect human health or land values of adjacent properties. Also, the Agency Preferred Alternative has been moved so as not to affect the planned developments of Northern Holdings.
		B. Weren't adequately notified of the project	B. The planning process occurred over a several year period. Numerous news releases were sent communities in the area and newsletters were sent to a mailing list of over 3000 individuals, agencies, and organizations in order to gain public input.
Jack Ekker	Wells	A. Prefer the line bypass Oasis for health and quality of life reasons.	A. Your comment has been noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.
Scott Brooke	Wells	A. Received no legal or actual notice of the project until recently.	A. The BLM believes there was adequate notification about the project, the release of the DEIS/DPA, and the public meetings. The public meetings were announced in the DEIS/DPA which was released in June. There also were press releases published in local newspapers and a series of 12 newsletters mailed to over 3000 recipients over more than three years during the project.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

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| | | B. The powerline would depreciate the value of the Oasis area property itself and visually depreciate the surrounding properties. | B. Although there has been much research on the effects of transmission lines on property values there is no conclusive evidence that there is such an effect. With the Agency Preferred Alternative (refer to Chapter 1 of this document) we do not believe that the visual impacts to the planned developments at Oasis or to the residents of Oasis will be significant. All visual impacts are documented in the DEIS/DPA, the Technical Report, and in this document. |
| | | C. How were the various routes selected? | C. The various routes were selected based on the criteria located on page 2-50 of the DEIS/DPA. Also refer to page 1-6 of this document. |
| Alfred King | Wells | A. The visual beauty of the Oasis area will be destroyed if the power line goes through this area. | A. The BLM agrees that there will be visual impacts as a result of constructing the SWIP. Visual impacts were assessed from Big Springs Ranch, Oasis, all other residences, and many other sensitive viewpoints along the alternative routes. Volume III of the Technical Report documents in more detail the potential visual impacts to this area (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for locations of these reports for public review). |
| | | B. The power line will cause a direct loss of property, making it difficult to develop. | B. The Agency Preferred Alternative (refer to Chapter 1 of this document) will not affect the planned development of Northern Holdings in Sections 2 and 3. |

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

		C. The electromagnetic fields would cause a reduction in the potential for future residents and land owner.	C. Refer to response B above.
George Thiel	Wells	A. The potential power line through the Oasis would impact the proposed land use plans.	A. The Agency Preferred Alternative (refer to Chapter 1 of this document) will no affect the planned development of Northern Holdings in Sections 2 and 3.
Bob Barton	Wells	A. There was not enough notice to land owners to inform them of SWIP.	A. The BLM believes that there was adequate notification. Press releases were sent to 17 newspapers serving the communities in the area to announce the meetings. Newsletters announcing the meetings were also sent to all individuals and organizations on the mailing list. You have been on our mailing list since the beginning of the project and have also received a copy of the DEIS/DPA.
		B. Concerned about the visual impacts to the local people in the Oasis area rather than impacts to those who travel along Interstate 80.	B. Visual impacts were assessed from Big Springs Ranch and all other residences along the alternative routes. Our methodology states that residences are more visually sensitive than travellers on I-80, and this was used to assess visual impacts. In Table VR-7 of Volume III of the Technical Report documents that all residences have a high visual sensitivity and Interstate highways received a visual sensitivity rating of moderate.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

Fredd Dunham	Wells	A. The close proximity of high-voltage power lines to the proposed subdivisions greatly reduces the viability of the proposed land use plans.	A. The Agency Preferred Alternative (refer to Chapter 1 of this document) will not affect the planned development of Northern Holdings in Sections 2 and 3.
		B. Suggests having an alternative that bypasses around Oasis and the Big Springs Ranch.	B. Note that the Agency Preferred Alternative has been changed from links 221 and 223 to 211. Refer to response A above.
Patricia Dunham	Wells	A. The local communities needs have not been addressed in the DEIS/DPA.	A. The BLM believes that local impacts are addressed. Visual impacts, land use, and socioeconomic impacts are all documented in the DEIS/DPA. We were not made aware of the planned developments by Northern Holdings, nor have they been filed with Elko County. We have now considered this planned development as a future land use (refer to Chapter 3 of this document).
Joanne Garrett	Ely	A. The Ely to Delta segment is a violation of the Great Basin National Park.	A. Alternative highway crossings to mitigate potential visual impacts to the park are evaluated under the Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute in Chapter 3 of this document.
		B. Object to the military concerns having preference over the national park concerns.	B. The military concerns have been evaluated with similar criteria to other impacts. These different impacts are being carefully weighed in determining the environmental preferences. BLM will consider your concerns when it makes its decision.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

Rod McKenzie	Ely	C. Although the DEIS/DPA addresses the health issues, still believes there is a health issue.	C. The evidence is still inconclusive on health effects. Your comments are noted.
		D. The simulations did not portray the visual impacts adequately.	D. The simulations were done to create the best likeness to the real situation as current technology allows.
		E. Could not locate the tax revenue comparison tables for the various routes.	E. Refer to Table 4-4 in the DEIS/DPA. Note, an updated table including the Agency Preferred and Utility Routes were added. Refer to page 4-16 in Chapter 4 of this document.
Joseph Reilly	Delta	A. Panel 4 does not include highway 318.	A. That is correct. Highway 318 is not on the Panel 4 map. The highway is contained within the boundary of Panel 3 and 5 maps and does not occur in the area that Panel 4 map covers.
		B. Boundaries from the Humboldt National Forest are missing near Ely on Ward Mountain.	B. This error has been corrected in the Errata of this document.
Joseph Reilly	Delta	A. What is the purpose of the public hearing if the DEIS/DPA hasn't been circulated for more than one month?	A. The DEIS/DPA had been in circulation for over two months prior to the public meeting in Delta.
Rex Stanworth	Delta	A. Who will own the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP, Idaho Power or Los Angeles Department of Water & Power?	A. The right-of-way for the Ely to Delta Segment would be assigned to IPCo who would request that BLM assign it to LADWP. The LADWP on behalf of the UNTP participants would construct, operate, and maintain this portion of the line.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

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| B. Doesn't feel SWIP will be a benefit to the intermountain area, other than a small source of tax revenue. | B. There are potential benefits to the intermountain region from power transfers, reliability, and power sales from the various generation stations located within this region. |
| C. If LADWP gets the right-of-way granted, will they have to meet Millard County's environmental criteria and regulations that go along with having a right-of-way? | C. Yes. |
| D. Can part of an unbuilt IPP corridor be used for this project? | D. There is no unbuilt IPP corridor along the Ely to Delta segment of the SWIP. |
| E. Recommends using existing corridors for environmental reasons. | E. It is not possible to route the SWIP parallel to existing utilities for its entire length although BLM agrees in principal to your comment and the mandate of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (1976) to consolidate corridors. The selected routes are based on planning methodology to identify and minimize impacts. Subsequent evaluation and comparison was done to select an alternative that minimizes impacts to the degree possible. Your comments will be taken into consideration during BLM's decision process. |
| F. Would like to have an additional public meeting. | F. The BLM does not believe that an additional public meeting is warranted. |

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

Jeff Van Ee

Las Vegas

A. No-Action alternative needs further evaluation

A. The BLM believes that an adequate range of alternatives to the SWIP was evaluated and that the SWIP DEIS/DPA discussion of the no-action alternative is adequate. The no-action alternative would result in other actions being taken, which is discussed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 2-10 and 2-11.

The no-action alternative could lead to construction of new generation resources in various parts of the West because existing electrical resources would not be able to utilize the SWIP for regional exchanges.

Environmental impacts associated with generation (e.g., air quality) and transmission (e.g., similar types of impacts to the SWIP) would occur if generation is constructed.

A second possible result of the no-action is that electrical rates in various parts of the West may be impacted if the SWIP is not constructed and more expensive generation options are exercised. Finally, the stability and reliability of the electrical system in the West would not be enhanced without the SWIP.

The BLM believes that the SWIP is a desirable action for the utility industry to most efficiently utilize electrical conservation and availability and minimize environmental impacts in the western United States.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

- B. There is not sufficient data in the DEIS/DPA to judge the economic feasibility of the proposed line.
- C. The DEIS/DPA does not discuss getting the power from Dry Lake Substation through to California. The transmission line would have to go through the Sunrise Mountain WSA and other critical areas.
- D. Suggest expanding the scope to look at impacts in the future, where the power is ultimately going and when it is scheduled to arrive in some markets. Also should look at connecting and routing future power lines through critical areas.
- E. In some of the areas that SWIP will be serving there will be an excess of power at certain times of the year. Would like to see further regional analysis done to study where the power is, where it is going, and which areas are deficient.
- B. Please refer to the expanded discussion of Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document.
- C. This is addressed in the discussion of the Marketplace-Allen Transmission (MAT) Project through the Sunrise Mountain area in the DEIS/DPA on pages 2-52 and 4-81. Also refer to the Cumulative Effects discussion on the MAT in Chapter 3 of this document.
- D. It is not possible without contracts in place to discuss precisely where the power will be scheduled to flow. However, the expanded purpose and need in Chapter 3 of this document has an illustration showing the potential seasonal diversity between regions of the west. We believe that the planning studies during the SWIP EIS process has analyzed all reasonable and feasible routing alternatives, and corridors have been consolidated where possible.
- E. Refer to response D above.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

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| <p>F. Doesn't feel the DEIS/DPA adequately address the impacts the transmission line will have on adjacent WSAs.</p> <p>G. There is insufficient economic data to show why this is the least costly alternative to provide electricity both north and south</p> | <p>F. This discussion has been expanded in Chapter 3 of this document.</p> <p>G. The revised Purpose and Need section in Chapter 3 of this document contains information about comparative costs of different resource options. To meet the future electrical needs of the region, transmission is shown to be the least cost alternative as compared to demand-side management (i.e., conservation) or new generation.</p> |
|---|---|

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

Bob Maichle

Las Vegas

A. No-Action alternative not adequately analyzed.

A. The BLM believes that an adequate range of alternatives to the SWIP was evaluated and that the SWIP DEIS/DPA discussion of the no-action alternative is adequate. The no-action alternative would result in other actions being taken, which is discussed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 2-10 and 2-11.

The no-action alternative could lead to construction of new generation resources in various parts of the West because existing electrical resources would not be able to utilize the SWIP for regional exchanges. Environmental impacts associated with generation (e.g., air quality) and transmission (e.g., similar types of impacts to the SWIP) would occur if generation is constructed.

A second possible result of the no-action is that electrical rates in various parts of the West may be impacted if the SWIP is not constructed and more expensive generation options are exercised. Finally, the stability and reliability of the electrical system in the West would not be enhanced without the SWIP.

The BLM believes that the SWIP is a desirable action for the utility industry to most efficiently utilize electrical conservation and availability and minimize environmental impacts in the western United States.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|--|--|
| David Breekey | Las Vegas | B. Will the utility corridors be able to be used for things other than transmission lines (e.g. water lines, access)? | B. IPCo and LADWP are concerned about vandalism and potential liability issues associated with sanctioned use of these rights-of-way. Especially if the liability concerns can be adequately addressed by user groups it is possible that they would be open to discussion. |
| | | C. Would like more detail concerning the banking of energy. | <p>The BLM can allow joint occupancy of a right-of-way by compatible uses.</p> <p>C. The utilities are not aware of banking of energy, although reserve margins are planned by every utility to handle unexpected occurrences.</p> |
| | | A. Concerned about the ability of the right-of-way to be used by other utilities. | A. The BLM reserves the right to require the common use of a right-of-way (ROW) and the right to authorize use of the ROW for other compatible uses. Any additional use of the ROW is subject to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. |
| | | B. What does Nevada Power have to say concerning the availability of power in extra by 1997 (when SWIP is in operation) or power in extra anywhere in the southwest. | B. Please refer to the discussion in the DEIS/DPA about Nevada Power on pages 1-7 and 1-8. |

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

C. The no-Action alternative needs further evaluation.

C. The BLM believes that an adequate range of alternatives to the SWIP was evaluated and that the SWIP DEIS/DPA discussion of the no-action alternative is adequate. The no-action alternative would result in other actions being taken, which is discussed in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 2-10 and 2-11.

The no-action alternative could lead to construction of new generation resources in various parts of the West because existing electrical resources would not be able to utilize the SWIP for regional exchanges. Environmental impacts associated with generation (e.g., air quality) and transmission (e.g., similar types of impacts to the SWIP) would occur if generation is constructed.

A second possible result of the no-action is that electrical rates in various parts of the West may be impacted if the SWIP is not constructed and more expensive generation options are exercised. Finally, the stability and reliability of the electrical system in the West would not be enhanced without the SWIP.

The BLM believes that the SWIP is a desirable action for the utility industry to most efficiently utilize electrical conservation and availability and minimize environmental impacts in the western United States.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

- D. Need to address alternative energy.
- E. If LADWP gets the Ely to Delta power, how does the power get to Los Angeles? To get the power to LA. a corridor will need to go through the Sunrise Mountain WSA. How will this be done?
- F. A one mile wind power corridor that goes through the Sunrise Mountain WSA is being proposed to Congress, how does this tie in with SWIP?
- D. Alternative sources of energy have been evaluated as alternatives to the SWIP in Chapter 2 of the DEIS/DPA. IPCo is pursuing many alternative energy sources to further diversity resources. However, alternative energy sources do not meet the purpose and need for the SWIP and do not replace the need for the SWIP.
- E. There are two 500kV lines currently through the Sunrise Mountain ISA. The Navajo-McCullough line and the IPP #1 500kV DC transmission line. The Utah-Nevada Transmission Project already has a third right-of-way grant from Delta through the Sunrise Mountain ISA, but cannot proceed until the WSA issue is resolved. The SWIP DEIS/DPA discusses the Marketplace-Allen Transmission (MAT) Project in the Cumulative Effects on page 4-81 of the DEIS/DPA. This project was conceived to attempt to minimize the number of total lines through the Sunrise corridor.
- F. The BLM is not aware of this proposal or any of its details.

Formal Public Meeting Comments and Responses (Continued)

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|--|---|
| G. It is said that the Northwest power generation will be affected by the salmon being listed. How will this affect the ability to transfer power if it is not in the Northwest to bring it to Nevada? | G. It is not clear how the listing of the salmon will impact the operation of the SWIP. The utilities believe that there may be benefits to the salmon by operating the SWIP. |
| H. The DEIS/DPA did not adequately address why SWIP is needed. | H. Refer to the expanded Purpose and Need in Chapter 3 of this document. |

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INDEX

INDEX

PAGE NUMBERS

AC	1-2, 1-4, 1-28, 3-2, 3-20, 4-2, 4-5
Access Roads	1-6, 1-9, 1-32, 3-17, 3-28, 3-35, 3-39, 3-53, 3-74, 3-80, 4-12, 4-19
Affected Environment	1-2, 1-3, 1-5, 1-11, 1-17, 1-27, 1-32, 1-33 2-1, 3-16, 3-22, 3-29, 3-46, 3-54, 3-62, 3-83, 4-3, 4-8
Agency Preferred Alternative	1-2, 1-3, 1-5, 1-6, 1-9, 1-10, 1-11, 1-12, 1-17 1-20, 1-21, 1-22, 1-24, 1-25, 1-26, 1-27, 1-28, 1-29, 1-30 1-31, 1-32, 1-33, 1-34, 3-38, 3-39
Air Quality	3-4
Ancillary Facilities	3-16
Biological Assessment	3-64, 3-65, 3-77
Biological Opinion	3-64, 3-77
Biological Resources	1-7, 1-8, 1-14, 1-21, 1-26, 3-16, 3-39 3-41, 3-49, 3-54, 3-58, 3-74, 4-19, 4-24
Buildout Scenarios	1-5, 1-22, 3-13
committed mitigation	1-22, 3-27, 3-85, 4-19
Conservation	1-19, 1-23, 2-3, 3-1, 3-3, 3-59, 3-77, 4-4
Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan	1-15, 1-34
Crosstie	1-1, 3-7, 3-13, 4-1, 4-21, 4-23
Cultural Resources	1-6, 1-7, 1-8, 1-10, 1-11, 1-14, 1-15, 1-17, 1-20, 1-21 1-27, 1-32, 1-33, 1-34, 3-17, 3-37, 3-45, 3-52, 4-8, 4-10, 4-12, 4-20
Cumulative Effects	1-4, 1-5, 1-9, 1-10, 1-11, 1-22, 2-3 3-12, 3-21, 3-38, 3-66, 3-74, 3-82, 4-19
DC	3-2, 3-10, 3-14, 4-2, 4-3, 4-5
desert tortoise	1-15, 1-19, 2-3, 3-16, 3-59, 3-64, 3-74, 4-2, 4-16, 4-24
Dry Lake Valley	1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-8, 1-9, 1-10, 1-12, 1-13, 1-22 1-23, 1-24, 1-25, 1-26, 1-27, 1-28, 1-29, 1-30, 1-31, 2-3 3-12, 3-21, 3-23, 3-29, 3-57, 3-62, 3-66, 3-75, 4-1, 4-14, 4-23
Earth Resources	1-7, 1-8, 1-21, 3-39, 3-40, 4-19
economic benefits	1-13, 1-21, 1-23, 3-1, 3-4, 3-8, 3-9, 4-3
Electrical Effects	1-17
Ely to Delta segment	1-1, 1-2, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 1-8, 1-10, 1-11, 1-12 1-13, 1-16, 1-19, 1-20, 1-23, 1-24, 1-25, 1-26, 1-27, 1-29, 1-30, 1-31
Ely to Delta segment	3-7, 3-8, 3-10, 3-12, 3-13, 3-23, 3-34, 3-35, 3-36, 3-71, 3-85
EMF	1-15, 1-16, 1-27, 1-28, 3-19
Environmental Consequences	1-11, 1-20, 3-36, 3-48, 3-73, 4-11
Environmentally Preferred Route	1-5, 1-8, 1-9, 1-10, 1-11
Floodplain	3-54
generic mitigation	3-74
Geology	1-17, 3-18, 3-39, 3-40
Great Basin National Park	1-6, 1-11, 1-14, 1-16, 1-19, 2-2, 2-3, 3-34, 4-7, 4-9
grounding	1-16, 1-28, 3-19, 3-20
Historical Resources	1-6
Hydrology	3-39
Impact Assessment/Mitigation	1-7, 2-2
Issue Comparison	1-22
Jurisdictions	1-21

LADWP	1-1, 1-2, 1-5, 1-23, 2-2, 2-4, 3-10, 4-21
Land Use	1-3, 1-8, 1-11, 1-16, 1-18, 1-21, 1-29, 1-30, 1-32, 2-4 3-21, 3-24, 3-37, 3-43, 3-50, 3-55, 4-18, 4-24
Leland-Harris spring complex	3-59, 3-60, 3-71, 3-85
Marketplace substation	1-4, 1-22, 3-12, 3-14, 4-2
MAT	1-3, 1-4, 1-22, 3-14
microwave communication facilities	1-2, 1-4, 1-8, 1-32, 4-7
Midpoint to Dry Lake segment	1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-8, 1-9, 1-10, 1-12, 1-13 1-22, 1-23, 1-24, 1-25, 1-26, 1-27, 1-28, 1-29, 1-30, 1-31 3-12, 3-23, 3-32, 3-66, 3-75, 3-81, 4-1, 4-5, 4-7, 4-14, 4-23
military operating area (MOA)	1-6, 1-16, 1-19, 1-20, 3-22, 4-24
Mitigation	1-5, 1-7, 1-8, 1-11, 1-20, 1-21, 1-22, 1-23, 2-2, 2-3 3-4, 3-25, 3-36, 3-48, 3-73, 4-1, 4-19
Native American	1-17, 1-27
NEPA	1-7, 1-34, 2-1, 3-5, 3-15, 3-54, 4-5
No-Action Alternative	1-11, 1-17, 1-23, 1-28, 3-16, 3-17, 3-18
Oasis	1-9, 1-19, 3-33, 3-76, 3-82, 4-1, 4-8, 4-16
Paleontology	3-18, 3-39, 3-40
photo simulations	1-11, 3-51
Plan Amendment	1-1, 1-5, 1-17, 1-32, 2-1, 3-12, 3-19, 3-38, 4-13
Planning Process	1-2, 1-6, 1-7, 1-9, 1-10, 1-15, 1-16, 1-23, 1-30, 1-31 1-32, 1-33, 1-34, 2-1, 2-2, 2-4, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 3-7, 3-9 3-10, 3-17, 3-18, 3-26, 3-38, 3-46, 3-74, 4-3, 4-12, 4-21
Preferred Alternative	1-2, 1-3, 1-5, 1-6, 1-9, 1-10, 1-11, 1-12, 1-17 1-20, 1-21, 1-22, 1-24, 1-25, 1-26, 1-27, 1-28 1-29, 1-30, 1-31, 1-32, 1-33, 1-34, 3-12, 3-38, 3-39
Prehistoric Resources	3-52
private lands	1-11, 1-14, 3-39, 3-53
Proposed Plan	1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 1-7, 1-8, 1-10, 1-11 1-12, 1-13, 1-14, 1-17, 1-20, 1-21, 1-22, 1-23, 1-32, 1-33, 1-34, 2-1 3-4, 3-10, 3-17, 3-20, 3-25, 3-31, 3-40, 3-60, 3-77, 3-91, 4-2, 4-11, 4-18, 4-21
Public Comment	1-5
Public Meeting	3-36
Purpose and Need	1-1, 1-2, 1-9, 1-14, 1-23, 2-3, 2-4, 3-1, 3-14, 3-20, 4-2
R-6405 Restricted Area	3-24, 3-25, 4-9, 4-11, 4-18
raptors	1-15, 3-49, 3-73, 3-89
reliability	1-4, 1-6, 1-13, 1-23, 3-1, 3-7, 3-20
Right-of-Way	1-1, 1-2, 1-4, 1-17, 1-21, 1-23, 1-28, 1-31, 1-32 1-33, 1-34, 2-2, 2-3, 3-15, 3-19, 3-36, 3-85, 3-89, 4-5, 4-21
right-of-way grant	1-1, 1-2, 1-17, 1-23, 1-33, 1-34
Right-of-Way Separation	3-20
riparian	1-15, 1-18, 1-21, 1-26, 1-32, 3-39, 3-50, 3-55, 3-67, 4-2, 4-13, 4-19
RMP	1-5, 1-10, 1-21, 1-31, 1-33, 2-3, 3-77
Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute	1-5, 1-11, 3-28, 3-39
sage grouse	1-9, 1-15, 1-19, 1-21, 3-16, 3-38, 3-59, 3-64, 4-2, 4-19
Scoping Process	1-13, 2-1
Seasonal Load diversity	1-13, 3-1, 3-8, 4-4
Series Compensation station	1-2, 1-3, 1-8
Soils	1-17, 1-18, 3-18, 3-39, 3-48, 3-56, 3-60, 3-66, 4-16, 4-19
Springs	1-3, 1-5, 1-10, 1-12, 1-15, 1-18, 1-20, 1-32, 3-17, 3-25, 3-29, 3-37 3-40, 3-48, 3-56, 3-76, 3-84, 3-92, 4-1, 4-13, 4-18

Stateline Resource Area	1-21, 1-33, 2-3, 3-77
Substations	1-2, 1-8, 1-12, 1-13, 1-23, 3-10, 3-14, 4-5, 4-8
Tax Revenues	3-18, 4-14
Vegetation	1-14, 1-18, 1-21, 3-39, 3-49, 3-54, 3-62, 3-66, 3-79, 4-13, 4-19
Visual Resources	1-7, 1-8, 1-10, 1-11, 1-14, 1-17, 1-20 3-17, 3-26, 3-27, 3-37, 3-44, 3-51, 4-18, 4-24
VRM	1-10, 1-25, 3-37, 3-44, 3-51, 4-18
Water Resources	3-40
Wetlands	1-15, 1-18, 1-21, 1-32, 3-17, 3-39, 3-54, 3-57, 3-65, 3-92, 4-19
wild horses and burros	3-35, 3-58
Wilderness	1-16, 1-20, 1-21, 1-28, 1-29, 1-33, 2-3 3-18, 3-21, 3-26, 3-32, 3-43, 3-51, 4-8
Wildlife	1-6, 1-15, 1-17, 1-20, 1-21, 1-32, 1-34, 2-2 3-17, 3-25, 3-29, 3-41, 3-49, 3-54, 3-64, 3-79, 4-15, 4-19
WSA	1-19, 1-33, 2-3, 3-27, 3-31, 4-9, 4-18

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