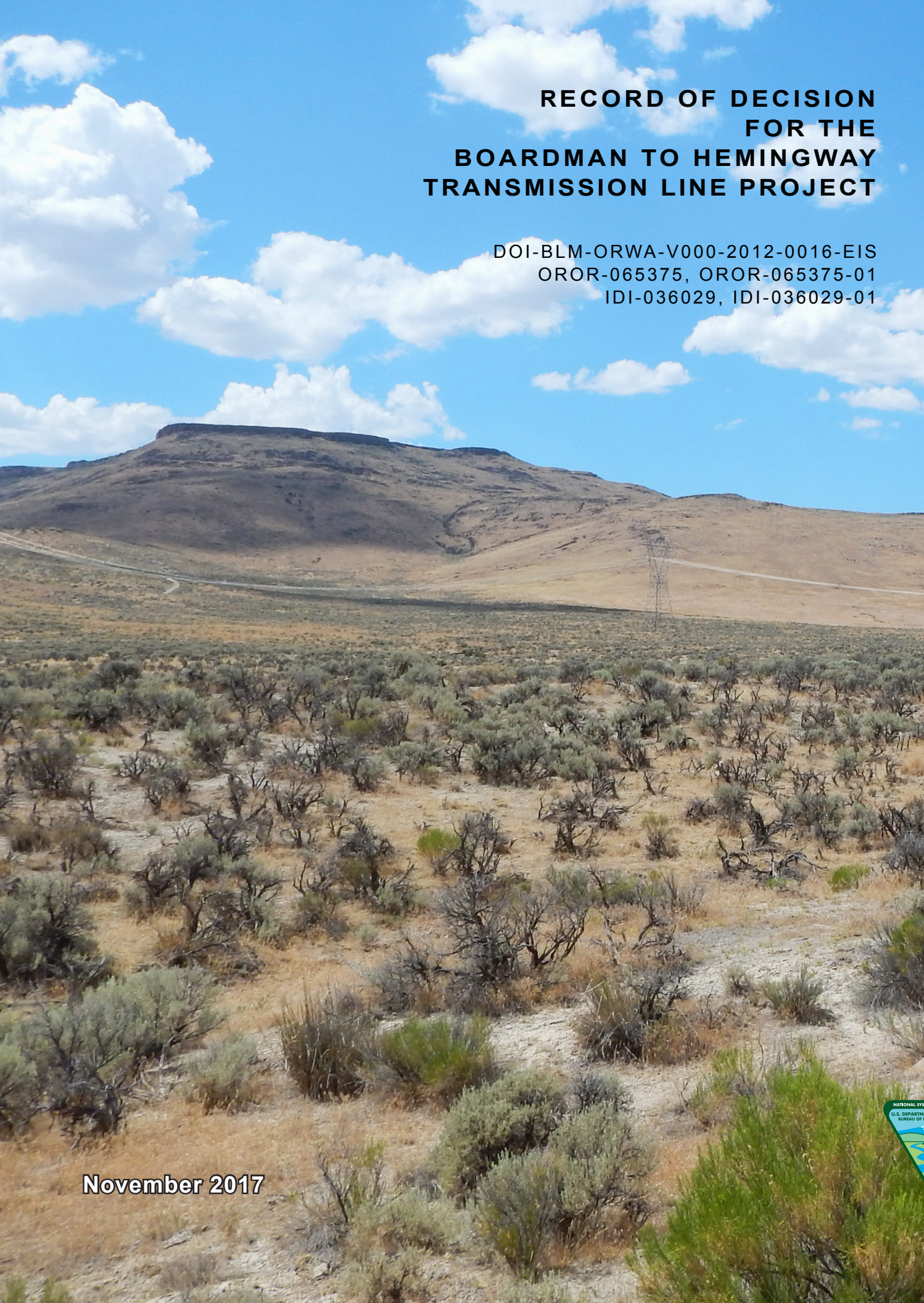


RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE BOARDMAN TO HEMINGWAY TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

DOI-BLM-ORWA-V000-2012-0016-EIS
OROR-065375, OROR-065375-01
IDI-036029, IDI-036029-01



November 2017



Final Agency Actions

Issuance of Right-of-Way Grants

Oregon/Washington State Director's Recommendation

I recommend approval of an electric transmission line Right-of-Way grant (OROR-065375 and OROR-065375-01) to Idaho Power Company, subject to terms, conditions, stipulations, and environmental protection measures developed by the U.S. Department of Interior and identified in this Record of Decision, including appendices, and the Plan of Development developed by Idaho Power Corporation that is appended to this Record of Decision.

In addition, it is my decision to amend the Baker and Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plans in Oregon to bring the Selected Alternative into conformance with management objectives in these Resource Management Plans.



Jamie E. Connell
State Director, Oregon/Washington

Idaho State Director's Recommendation

I recommend approval of an electric transmission line Right-of-Way grant (IDI-036029 and IDI-036029-01) to Idaho Power Company, subject to terms, conditions, stipulations, and environmental protection measures developed by the U.S. Department of Interior and identified in this Record of Decision, including appendices, and the Plan of Development developed by Idaho Power Corporation that is appended to this Record of Decision.



Timothy Murphy
Idaho State Director

Approval by the Assistant Secretary

I hereby approve the decisions recommended by the State Directors, subject to the conditions identified in this Record of Decision. My approval of these decisions constitutes the final decision of the Department of Interior and, in accordance with the regulations at 43 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) § 4.410(a)(3), is not subject to appeal under Departmental regulations at 43 C.F.R. 4. Any challenge to this decision must be brought in Federal district court and is subject to 42 United States Code § 4370m-6.

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katharine S. MacGregor". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Katharine S. MacGregor
Deputy Assistant Secretary -- Land and Minerals Management, Exercising the Authority of the
Assistant Secretary -- Land and Minerals Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

NOV 17 2017

Executive Summary

This Record of Decision (ROD) reflects the decision of the United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to approve a Right-of-Way (ROW) grant and associated Resource Management Plan (RMP) amendments for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project (B2H Project). This ROD is issued consistent with the requirements of Title II and Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 43 United States Code (U.S.C.) §§ 1712-1723 (Title II) and 1761-1771 (Title V), other applicable laws, and associated implementing regulations.

The issuance of a ROW for the B2H Project for a specific route and other decisions in this ROD apply only to BLM-administered lands. Other jurisdictional agencies will make decisions or issue authorizations in accordance with their respective authorities. Further, prior to construction, Oregon's Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) must find that the route for the B2H Project ultimately identified in the Application for Site Certificate, on all lands in Oregon, complies with applicable EFSC siting standards and issue a site certificate for the B2H Project. The EFSC will consider county plans in its evaluation of the Applicant's application for a site certificate. In making the decision, EFSC considers not only its own standards but also the applicable rules and ordinances of State and local agencies. EFSC's decision is binding on all State and local agencies whose permits are addressed in EFSC's review.

After extensive environmental analysis, consideration of public comments, and compliance with all Federal laws and policies, it is the decision of the BLM to approve the B2H Project and the associated RMP amendments as explained below. Specifically, this ROD authorizes a ROW grant for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line and associated facilities proposed by Idaho Power Company. It also approves land use plan amendments to the BLM Baker and Southeastern Oregon RMPs.

The B2H Project includes the construction of a 293-mile, single circuit 500-kilovolt (kV) alternating current transmission system. The B2H Project will connect the northern terminus, the Longhorn Substation proposed by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), approximately 4 miles east of the city of Boardman in Morrow County, Oregon, to the existing Hemingway Substation, near the city of Melba in Owyhee County, Idaho. The impacts of this action were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the B2H Project (published in the *Federal Register* on November 28, 2016).

The BLM's approval will take the form of a 30-year ROW grant, issued in conformance with Title V of FLPMA and the BLM's implementing regulations found at 43 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 2800. The BLM will also issue a temporary (i.e., short-term) ROW grant for areas to be used only during construction for a period of 10 years. Activities associated with completion of the Notice to Proceed (NTP) requirements for construction of the B2H Project must commence within 5 years after the effective date of the ROW. The BLM has the discretion to renew a ROW grant if doing so is in the public interest, subject to applicable legal requirements.

The route alignment approved by this ROD (referred to as the Selected Alternative) follows the Agency Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS. The permanent facilities authorized by the ROW grant include:

- A single-circuit 500-kV electric transmission line (including structures and conductors, and other associated facilities) between the proposed Longhorn Substation and the existing Hemingway Substation;
- Access roads and access control gates;
- Communication regeneration site every 40 miles;
- Removal of approximately 7 miles of the existing Boardman to Tap 69-kV transmission line; and
- Re-routing of 0.9 miles of the existing Quartz to Tap 230-kV transmission line

The ROW grant is conditioned on the Applicant's satisfaction of the mitigation plans and monitoring requirements and all the commitments and requirements outlined in this ROD (refer to Appendix B). The ROW grant also requires the Applicant to comply with all applicable Tribal, Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

Pursuant to 43 C.F.R. § 2805.10, the Applicant may not use the ROW until the BLM accepts a Plan of Development (POD) that addresses all the requirements in the ROD and issues a NTP, except that the BLM may issue NTPs for certain pre-construction activities, such as geotechnical testing, prior to receiving the final POD from the Applicant (as explained in more detail in the Decision section of this ROD). As explained in this ROD, the BLM will not issue a NTP for construction until the Applicant prepares an updated POD (called the final POD) that incorporates the draft POD (Appendix D) and all of the information and requirements in this ROD, including all appendices. In the interim, and as explained below, the BLM may issue NTPs for certain pre-construction activities, such as geotechnical testing, before the final POD is completed and the overall NTP for construction is issued.

The Final EIS and Proposed Land-use Plan Amendments was released for a 30-day protest period and a 60-day Governors' Consistency Review commencing on November 25, 2016.

In accordance with 43 C.F.R. § 1610.3-2(e), the Governor of Oregon conducted a consistency review for the proposed plan amendments following the publication of the Final EIS to identify any inconsistencies with State or local plans, policies, or programs. No inconsistencies were identified.

All protesting parties received response letters from the BLM Director conveying the Director's decision regarding the concerns raised in the protests. As explained in this ROD, the Director concluded that BLM followed applicable laws, regulations, and policies and considered all relevant resource information and public input in developing the Final EIS and Proposed Land-use Plan Amendments. Therefore, all protests were denied, and no changes were made to the BLM land use planning decision as a result of the protests. Although there was no formal comment period on the Final EIS, after its publication the BLM received one comment letter, which was considered to the extent practicable (refer to Appendix A of this ROD).

This ROD constitutes the Department's and BLM's final decision for the B2H Project, including mitigation and monitoring requirements.

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Background

Idaho Power Company (Applicant) submitted its initial Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands (Standard Form 299) and a preliminary POD for B2H Project to the BLM Vale District Office on December 19, 2007 (Idaho Power Company 2007a, 2007b).

This ROD addresses the B2H Project and explains the decisions of the BLM to authorize Project-related actions affecting lands administered by the BLM and to amend portions of BLM RMPs. Consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the BLM has integrated its land use planning process with its evaluation of the proposed B2H Project. With approval of these plan amendments, the B2H Project will conform to the approved RMPs (43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-3).

The issuance of a ROW for the B2H Project for a specific route and other decisions in this ROD apply only to BLM-administered lands. Other jurisdictional agencies will make decisions or issue authorizations in accordance with their respective authorities. Further, prior to construction, Oregon's EFSC must find that the route for the B2H Project ultimately identified in the Application for Site Certificate, on all lands in Oregon, complies with applicable EFSC siting standards and issue a site certificate for the B2H Project. The EFSC will consider county plans in its evaluation of the Applicant's application for a site certificate. In making the decision, EFSC considers not only its own standards but also the applicable rules and ordinances of State and local agencies. EFSC's decision is binding on all State and local agencies whose permits are addressed in EFSC's review.

As part of the B2H Project, as approved, the Applicant will construct, operate, and maintain a 500-kV, overhead, single-circuit, alternating-current electric transmission line and ancillary facilities. The transmission line would be constructed within a 250-foot-wide ROW to connect the northern terminus, the Longhorn Substation, a substation planned by BPA approximately 4 miles east of the city of Boardman in Morrow County, Oregon, to the existing Hemingway Substation, west of the city of Melba in Owyhee County, Idaho.

The BLM has prepared this ROD based on consideration of the information in the Final EIS and related documents. This decision in this ROD pertains only to those lands in the B2H Project area administered by the BLM. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will issue a separate decision regarding authorizations for lands under their jurisdiction. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will issue a separate ROD regarding request to use lands managed by Reclamation, which will describe the decisions and terms, conditions, and stipulations subject the implementing regulations under 43 C.F.R. Part 429. The Department of the Navy (Navy) will issue a use authorization after it is determined that the B2H Project is compatible with environmental compliance requirements and the mission, operation, safety, and security of military training assets. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will authorize the B2H Project after determining the type of authorization, and whether compensation is required, in accordance with 33 C.F.R. §§ 320-332.

Purpose and Need for the BLM Action

The purpose of this Federal action is to respond to the Applicant's ROW application for construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed transmission line and associated facilities on Federal land.

The purpose and need of the BLM stems from the overarching policy and direction in the FLPMA, as amended, and the BLM's mission, which is multiple-use and sustained-yield management of the National System of Public Lands. FLPMA also provides the BLM with discretionary authority to grant use (i.e., ROW) of land it administers, taking into consideration impacts on natural and cultural resources (including historical resources). In doing so, the BLM must endeavor "to minimize damage to scenic and esthetic values and fish and wildlife habitat and otherwise protect the environment" through avoidance or mitigation (FLPMA Title V).

The BLM's purpose and need is further guided by the President's Climate Action Plan (President of the United States 2013), which is a broad-based plan to cut carbon pollution. Part of the plan focuses on expanding and modernizing the electric grid to promote clean energy sources. To this end, the BLM is charged with analyzing applications for utility and transportation systems on Federal land it administers. When analyzing applications, the BLM also must consider the 2011 Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) 10-Year Regional Transmission Plan recommendations regarding future transmission needs (WECC 2011).

Statutory and Regulatory Background

Under FLPMA and the BLM's implementing regulations, the BLM is responsible for managing the public lands for multiple uses, including transmission of electric energy (43 C.F.R. § 2806). Title V of FLPMA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to "grant, issue, or renew rights-of-way for generation, transmission, and distribution of electric energy" (43 U.S.C. § 1761(a)(4); 43 C.F.R. Part 2800). Under 43 C.F.R. § 2801.2, the BLM's objective is to grant rights-of-way and to control their use on public lands in a manner that: "(a) protects the natural resources associated with public lands and adjacent lands, whether private or administered by a government entity; (b) prevents unnecessary and undue degradation to public lands; (c) promotes the use of rights-of-way in common, considering engineering and technological compatibility, national security, and land use plans; and (d) coordinates, to the fullest extent possible, all BLM actions under regulations in this part with state and local governments, interested individuals, and appropriate quasi-public entities." In addition to FLPMA, the BLM is obligated to ensure that the actions it authorizes comply with other applicable laws, including NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (see Other Laws section of this ROD below).

In addition to these authorities, the BLM also considers the direction and objectives established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAAct), which directs the Secretary to both designate energy corridors and seek to expedite applications to construct transmission lines within such corridors in order "to take into account the need for upgraded and new transmission and distribution facilities to (1) improve reliability; (2) relieve congestion; and (3) enhance the capability of the national grid to deliver electricity" (42 U.S.C. § 15926). The BLM recognizes the need for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities to improve reliability, relieve congestion, and enhance the capability of the national grid to deliver electricity, as directed in

the EAct. Approval of issuance of a ROW for the B2H Project on BLM-managed by this ROD assists the BLM in meeting the purpose of the EAct.

Approval of this B2H Project also advances the following Executive policies. In October 2009, nine Federal entities—the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ); the DOI; the U.S. Department of Agriculture; the U.S. Department of Energy; the U.S. Department of Commerce; the U.S. Department of Defense; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)—signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing each of the signatories to increase their coordination to expedite and simplify the process for analyzing, permitting, and building transmission lines on Federal lands.

On October 5, 2011, the Administration announced the formation of a Rapid Response Team for Transmission composed of the nine agencies that signed the MOU. This team was formed to more quickly advance the permitting for seven pilot transmission projects, including this B2H Project. The Rapid Response Team for Transmission mission is to “accelerate responsible and informed deployment of these seven key transmission facilities by:

- Coordinating statutory permitting, review, and consultation schedules and processes among involved Federal and state agencies as appropriate through Integrated Federal Planning;
- Applying a uniform and consistent approach to consultations with Tribal governments; and
- Expeditiously resolving interagency conflicts and ensuring that all involved agencies are fully engaged and meeting schedules.” (CEQ 2011)

On March 22, 2012, President Obama issued Executive Order 13604, which acknowledged the critical need to invest in and improve infrastructure, including transmission, to maintain the Nation’s competitiveness.

On June 7, 2013, a Presidential Memorandum was issued by President Obama that requires modernization of our Nation’s electric grid through improved siting, permitting, and review, as critical to, among other things, our efforts to make electricity more reliable and economic, promote clean energy sources and enhance energy security. Finally, the President’s Climate Action Plan sets a goal of developing 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy on public lands by 2020 (Executive Office of the President, 2013).

In December 2015, Congress passed the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Title 41 of the FAST Act (“FAST-41”) creates a new entity—the Federal Permitting Improvement Council—to oversee the cross-agency Federal permitting and review process. It also expands the scope of projects for which reviews will be accelerated by adding new agencies (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Nuclear Regulatory Commission) and infrastructure sectors (conventional energy generation and manufacturing), and establishes new procedures that standardize interagency consultation and coordination practices. Other FAST Act provisions addressing the project delivery process and tracking environmental review and permitting milestones are set out in Title I and Title IX. The B2H Project is covered by the FAST Act. The approval of the B2H Project also would help meet these objectives.

As part of its decision to authorize issuance of a ROW grant, in accordance with 43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-3, the BLM must not only consider its transmission-related objectives, but also whether the proposed B2H Project conforms with existing RMPs in Oregon and Idaho. These plans

identify management objectives for various public land resources, appropriate use on restricted areas, and expected practices to be followed by surface-disturbing and use activities.

Portions of the proposed transmission line alternatives would not conform to certain RMP management objectives in Oregon. Therefore, the BLM considered whether to amend the RMPs to ensure that the B2H Project is in conformance with the RMPs; the amendments were analyzed in the Draft and Final EISs pursuant to 43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-5.

Project Overview

The B2H Project involves the construction, operation, and maintenance of a single-circuit 500-kV transmission line to connect the northern terminus, the Longhorn Substation, a substation planned by BPA approximately 4 miles east of the city of Boardman in Morrow County, Oregon, to the existing Hemingway Substation, west of the city of Melba in Owyhee County, Idaho. Permanent facilities would include:

- A single-circuit 500-kV electric transmission line (including structures and conductors, and other associated facilities) between the proposed Longhorn Substation and the existing Hemingway Substation;
- Access roads and access control gates;
- Communication regeneration site every 40 miles;
- Removal of approximately 7 miles of the existing Boardman to Tap 69-kV transmission line;
- Re-routing of 0.9 miles of the existing Quartz to Tap 230-kV transmission line; and
- Developing access roads.

Construction of the B2H Project is planned to begin in 2020, placing the B2H Project in-service between 2023 and 2025. The B2H Project will be constructed in two geographic segments. Both construction segments are planned to occur simultaneously and are anticipated to take approximately 3 years to complete followed by revegetation and reclamation activities. Construction of the project could add an estimated 494 temporary jobs during the planned 3-year construction phase for construction workers as well as supervisory, management and support personnel.

Additionally, it is estimated that sales and use taxes within the six counties affected by the project would increase (assuming the Owyhee County sales and use tax rate of 6 percent for the 2014-2015 year, this could generate tax revenue of between \$3.2 and \$6.5 million.)

Decisions to be Made

The decisions to be made by the BLM are whether to: (1) authorize issuance of a grant, grant with modifications, or deny a ROW to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed facilities on land it administers, including applicable terms and conditions of any such authorization and temporary use authorization(s); and (2) amend portions of the BLM RMPs to provide consistency with the BLM's authorization.

The BLM, as lead agency, in coordination with cooperating agencies, prepared an EIS analyzing the Applicant's plan for and the potential environmental impacts of constructing, operating, and maintaining the B2H Project.

In accordance with 43 C.F.R. § 1610.0-5(b), actions that occur on Federal lands administered by the BLM, including a decision to grant a ROW under Title V of FLPMA, are guided by decisions specified in the approved BLM RMPs. The applicable RMPs for BLM-administered lands crossed by the proposed transmission line and associated facilities on the selected route are listed in this ROD. The BLM evaluated the proposed route for the B2H Project and alternative routes to determine if they conform to the approved RMPs governing the public lands where the B2H Project would be sited. The BLM has determined that, for the selected route, the Proposed Action would not conform to certain aspects of its approved land use plans in Oregon, identified later in this document. That is, in some cases, the proposed transmission line and associated facilities require the BLM to amend certain approved land use plans.

Therefore, through this decision, the BLM is approving issuance of a ROW for the B2H Project and amending the Baker RMP and the Southeastern Oregon RMP at site specific locations. The amendments are designed to allow for a ROW for the proposed transmission line and associated facilities. The land use plan amendments are described in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS, which also includes a description of the planning process and the environmental analysis relating to the proposed land use plan amendments.

Use of any public land authorized under the ROW grant for the B2H Project would be contingent on the BLM receiving and approving final engineering and design construction plans as part of the final POD for construction. Until the BLM issues NTP (refer to Appendix B for explanation of the process), no surface-disturbing activities associated with construction can occur. Prior to the completion of the POD for construction and issuance of the overall NTP for the B2H Project, the Applicant may request NTP for geotechnical investigation and other site surveys prior to the completion of the POD for construction. Such a NTP will be conditioned on the completion of all necessary site survey work associated with the geotechnical investigation or surveys, and review and approval of those surveys by the relevant agencies.

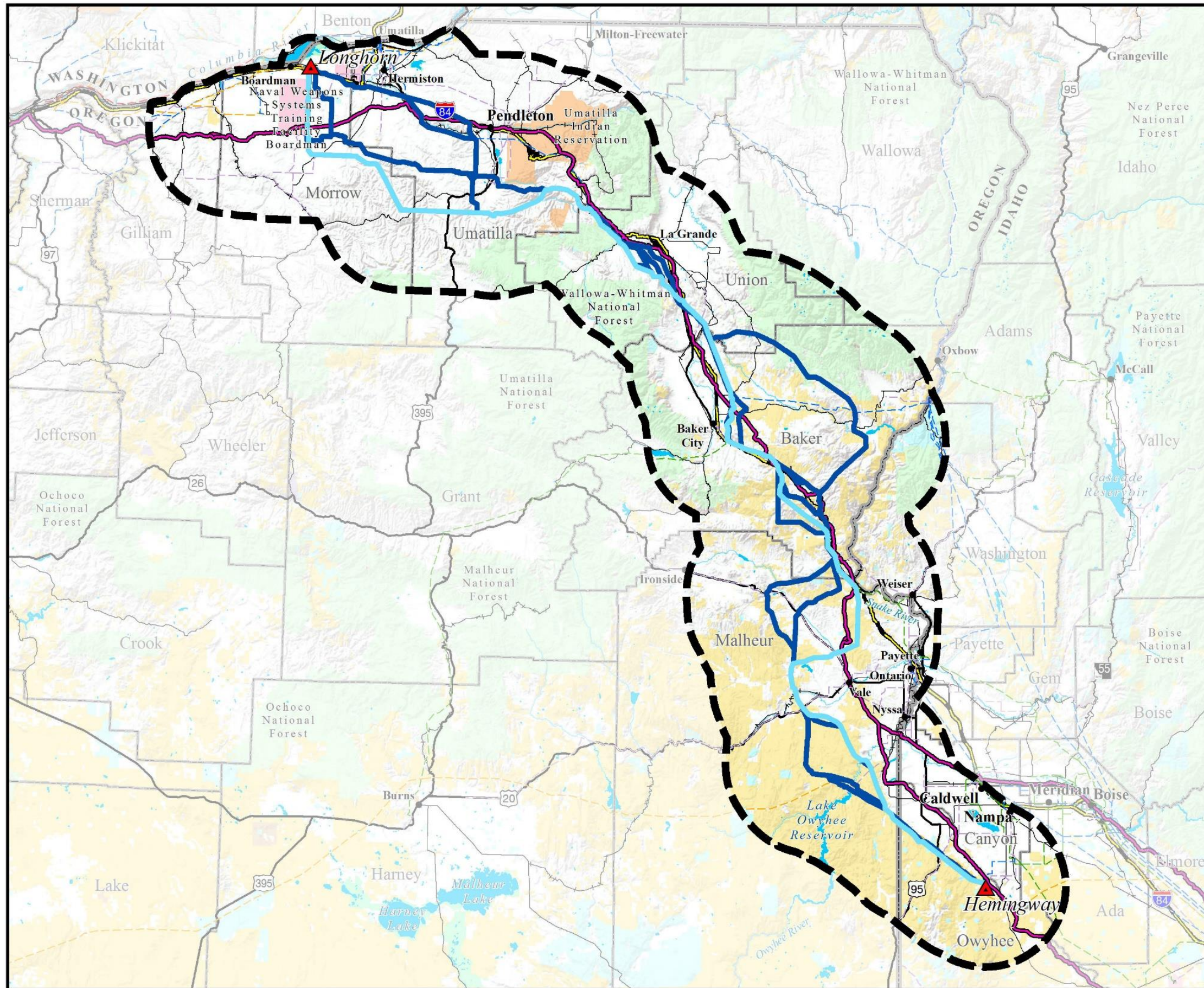
Specific items that will require a NTP before the ROW holder may use the granted areas are identified in Appendix B of this ROD. In addition, the Applicant may not begin construction until compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local and other laws and regulations is documented as satisfactorily complete, as appropriate.

Decision

Right-of-Way Authorization and Selected Alternative

After reviewing the Final EIS and other documentation relating to the proposed ROW and plan amendments, the BLM has decided to authorize issuance of a ROW to Idaho Power Company for a 250-foot-wide ROW on 85.6 miles of BLM-administered lands for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a 500-kV transmission line following the Agency Preferred Alternative identified in the Final EIS, hereinafter referred to as the Selected Alternative (refer to Map 1 of this ROD).

The ROW authorization decision applies only to BLM-administered lands in the B2H Project area. In making its decision, however, BLM considered effects on other public lands managed by the BLM, as well effects on private lands and lands managed by agencies other than the BLM. This decision would achieve the B2H Project's purpose while also avoiding, minimizing, or requiring compensation for impacts on sensitive resources along the route.



Map 1

Selected Alternative

BOARDMAN TO HEMINGWAY TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Alternative Routes

Selected Alternative (Light Blue Line)
Alternative Route (Dark Blue Line)

Project Features

Project Area Boundary (Thick Black Dashed Line)
Substation (Project Terminal) (Red Triangle)

Land Ownership

Bureau of Land Management (Yellow)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Light Green)
Bureau of Reclamation (Light Yellow)	U.S. Forest Service (Light Green)
Indian Reservation (Orange)	Other Federal (Light Blue)
National Park Service (Purple)	State Land (Light Blue)
U.S. Department of Defense (Pink)	Private Land (White)

General Reference

City or Town (Black Dot)	Interstate Highway (Yellow/Black Line)
500-kV Transmission Line (Yellow/Black Line)	U.S. Highway (Black Line)
345-kV Transmission Line (Red Line)	State Highway (Grey Line)
230-kV Transmission Line (Blue Line)	Lake or Reservoir (Blue Area)
138-kV Transmission Line (Green Line)	State Boundary (Grey Line)
69- to 115-kV Transmission Line (Purple Line)	County Boundary (Thin Grey Line)
Railroad (Black Line with Cross-ticks)	Oregon National Historic Trail Congressionally Designated Alignment (Purple Line)

SOURCES:
 Land Status, BLM 2014, 2015; Cities and Towns, ESRI 2013;
 Transmission Lines, Bonneville Power Administration 2009, Idaho Power Company 2007,
 Logan Simpson Design 2011, Verityx 2012; Pipelines, ESRI 2012;
 Railroads, Idaho DOT 2006, Oregon DOT 2014; Highways, ESRI 2013;
 Waterbodies, ESRI 2013; State and County Boundaries, ESRI 2013;
 Oregon National Historic Trail Congressionally Designated Alignment, BLM 2015

NOTES:

- Substation symbols do not necessarily represent precise locations.
- The B2H Project area boundary is defined by buffering the alternative route centerlines.
- Other federal land ownership may include lands administered by the U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, General Services Administration, or U.S. Department of Agriculture (except U.S. Forest Service).
- Each alternative route is composed of links, which are discrete sections of the route sharing common endpoints determined by the point of intersection with other adjacent links; the common endpoint is referred to as a link node. Links generally are numbered from north to south. Similarly, a segment is composed of alternative routes that share common endpoints determined by the point of intersection with other adjacent alternative routes; the common endpoint is referred to as a segment node.
- No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

Alternative routes last revised: February 18, 2016
 Printed: January 2, 2017

1:1,393,920 or 1 inch = 22 miles

Legal descriptions for the ROW granted on BLM-administered lands in the BLM Baker, Malheur, and Owyhee Field Offices are included in Appendix C of this ROD.

The decision includes approval of the draft POD that was submitted by the Applicant for purposes of the BLM's NEPA analysis. That POD, which is attached as Appendix D, has been reviewed and approved by the cooperating agencies and the BLM and Idaho Power. It is based on information and data carried forward from the Final EIS. As noted above, the requirements for completing an acceptable final POD for construction (prior to any surface disturbing activities other than geotechnical) are included in Appendix B. The final POD must include all the information and measures included in the draft POD or updated from the draft POD.

The draft POD covers the entire B2H Project and includes the following measures:

- West-wide Energy Corridor (WWEC) interagency operating procedures, which must be adhered to wherever the Selected Alternative is located within a designated WWEC;
- Design features of the B2H Project for environmental protection, as described in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS (refer to Table 2-7) and contained in the draft POD (Appendix D of this ROD);
- The BLM RMP land-use stipulations, best management practices, and standard operating procedures applicable to transmission line ROW for project construction, operation, and maintenance as described in the Final EIS; and
- Additional mitigation and monitoring measures to avoid, minimize, or rectify (over time) impacts. The agency-required mitigation measures are described in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS (Table 2-13) and in Appendix C of the Final EIS (Mitigation Framework). The agency-required mitigation measures have been refined and incorporated into the draft POD (Appendix D of this ROD); the final POD will be required to include application of the mitigation measures based on final design and engineering of the Selected Alternative.

Following the completion of various resource surveys (e.g., for biological, cultural, and paleontological resources) and the review and acceptance by the agency (or agencies) responsible for overseeing the surveys, the agency-required measures in the draft POD will be refined based on those surveys to prepare the final POD for construction. The agencies will be asked to review the final POD. The final POD must be consistent with the Selected Alternative, as analyzed in the Final EIS. If refinements to the final POD cause a substantial change to the approved project or the impacts as analyzed in the Final EIS, those refinements may be subject to additional NEPA analysis. Preparation and approval of the final POD is a required condition of BLM's ROW grant(s). Furthermore, the Applicant agrees to be bound by all terms and conditions, stipulations, and mitigation prescribed in such documents. As noted above, completion of the final POD is a precondition of NTP issuance (except for geotechnical work). The Applicant may add requirements to the approved final POD after issuance but the additions may require updated resource surveys or additional NEPA reviews, which will be based on whether the BLM determines the change(s) are substantial. Approval of changes may involve issuance of a variance or amendment to the POD, and potentially amend the ROW grant. These procedures are spelled out in Appendix A5 of the draft POD.

The final POD also will incorporate the additional measures identified in the following documents:

- The Programmatic Agreement (refer to Appendix E of this ROD) developed by the BLM, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) for Oregon and Idaho and the Confederated

Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), National Park Service, USFS, Reclamation and USACE, was signed on February 7, 2017, and is incorporated into this ROD;

- The Biological Opinion (BO) issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries (dated February 28, 2017) and the letter of concurrence issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (dated January 18, 2017) have been incorporated into the ROD. All conservation measures for federally listed species as identified in the Final Biological Assessment (BA) including addendum (dated December 15, 2016 and the NOAA Fisheries BO are incorporated into this ROD; and
- All standard, terms, conditions, and stipulations of the BLM ROW Regulations at (43 C.F.R. Part 2800).

As noted above, mitigation measures, terms, and conditions have been developed based on the analysis in the Final EIS. Site-specific implementation details will be adopted prior to issuance of a NTP and will include the requirements identified in Appendix B of this ROD and the following:

- The Applicant's completion of the final POD, which is subject to review and approval by the BLM and other agencies with regulatory authority over affected resources. This final POD will include provisions for site-specific mitigation and monitoring during construction, operation, and maintenance of the B2H Project.
- The Applicant must incorporate the species-specific conservation measures developed through the Section 7 of the ESA consultation process by the BLM, USFWS, and NOAA Fisheries to eliminate or minimize impacts on federally listed species as identified in the NOAA Fisheries and USFWS BAs (dated November 16, 2016, and December 15, 2016, respectively) and the NOAA Fisheries BO (dated February 28, 2017) into the Biological Resources Conservation Plan to be contained in the final POD. Measures include specific requirements related to transmission line structure types (i.e., power line poles) to minimize B2H Project impacts on sensitive species. Species-specific conservation measures apply to ESA-listed species where they occur regardless of jurisdiction.
- The Applicant must incorporate the species-specific conservation measures developed through the NEPA process into the Greater Sage-grouse Mitigation Plan to be contained in the final POD. No construction can begin until the BLM, in coordination with state agencies, has determined that the Greater Sage-grouse Mitigation Plan complies with Federal and state policies for avoiding or minimizing adverse effects on the species and its habitat and the approved plan is consistent with USFWS and state agencies recommendations. Species-specific conservation measures identified in the Final EIS apply to Greater sage-grouse priority habitat management areas, general habitat management areas, and important habitat management areas (IHMA).
- Satisfaction of the requirements set forth in the PA developed in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, including posting a financial security (i.e., cultural bond, such as a surety bond, irrevocable letter of credit, etc.) with the BLM in an amount sufficient to cover all post-fieldwork costs associated with implementing the Historic Properties Management Plans (HPMP), or other mitigation activities, and to be required by the Applicant in its contracts for services in support of the PA and for reclamation requirements and activities.

Although the BLM does not have authority over state or private land, the Applicant has agreed that provisions of the draft and final Construction PODs will be applied consistently to state and private land as well as Federal land, unless otherwise indicated by the state and/or by private landowners. The BLM does have an obligation to enforce the requirements of the NHPA and the

ESA to protect historic properties and threatened and endangered species, respectively, regardless of land jurisdiction or ownership.

This decision to issue the ROW grant(s) does not authorize the Applicant to commence construction of any B2H Project facilities or proceed with other ground-disturbing activities connected with the B2H Project on BLM-administered public lands. The Applicant may not commence construction of B2H Project facilities or proceed with any ground-disturbing activities related to the B2H Project on BLM-administered public lands until the Applicant, in accordance with 43 C.F.R. § 2807.10, receives from the BLM a written final NTP, which could consist of multiple NTPs governing various portions of the projects. These NTPs may require the submission of additional information that must first be reviewed and approved by the BLM's Authorized Officer.

To obtain a NTP (as summarized above and detailed in Appendix B), the Applicant must:

- Demonstrate complete fulfillment of all the required surveys and their review and approval, and mitigation requirements described in this ROD (including Appendix B);
- Obtain all necessary State, local and Tribal approvals and permitting requirements, including an Energy Facility Site Certificate from the State of Oregon EFSC; and
- Submit a performance bond for construction and initial reclamation for the ROW grant(s) (and USFS special-use authorization) to ensure compliance with all the terms and conditions identified in this ROD, the final POD, and applicable regulations. Acceptable bond instruments include cash, irrevocable letter of credit, cashier's or certified check, certificate or book entry deposits, negotiable U.S. Treasury bonds equal in value to the bond amount, or surety bonds from the approved list of sureties (U.S. Treasury Circular 570 available on-line), made payable to BLM.

The ROW grant and all associated long-term B2H Project facilities will be issued for a term of 30 years with a right of renewal. The BLM will issue a temporary (i.e., short-term) ROW grant for areas to be used only during construction for a period of 10 years. Activities associated with completion of the NTP requirements for construction of the B2H Project must commence within 5 years after the effective date of the ROW grant. The BLM has the discretion to renew a ROW grant if doing so is in the public interest. A renewal request will be subject to NEPA review.

The BLM also may issue a NTP for geotechnical investigation (analyzed in the Final EIS) prior to issuing a NTP to construct, operate, and maintain the B2H Project, provided that all necessary survey work associated with the geotechnical investigation is completed, and the reports are reviewed and approved by the BLM. The holder may, on approval from BLM, assign the ROW grant to another party in conformance with 43 C.F.R. Part 2800.

A decommissioning bond will be required 2 years prior to the expiration of the ROW grant, unless a timely request to renew those authorizations has been submitted. The decommissioning bond amount is to be determined with a Reclamation Cost Estimate Report submitted by the Applicant, and the final amount approved by the BLM. All costs of preparing and submitting this report shall be borne by the bond holder. If the ROW grant is renewed by the BLM, the bond will be terminated. If the grant is not renewed, the BLM will hold the bond until reclamation acceptable to the BLM Authorized Officer is completed.

Land-use Plan Amendments

Based on the analysis in the Final EIS, the BLM will amend portions of the following BLM RMPs to modify visual resource management (VRM) classes.

Consistent with NEPA, the BLM has integrated its land use planning process with its evaluation of the proposed B2H Project. With approval of these plan amendments, the B2H Project will conform to the approved RMPs (43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-3).

Baker Resource Management Plan

The Baker RMP is amended in the VRM section beginning on page 49 to add the following language:

The 250-foot wide right-of-way for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Project within VRM Class II lands in Burnt River Canyon located in portions of:

- Township 11S, Range 42E, Section 35 on Link 3-71 between Mileposts 0.0 and 0.7 (approximately 0.7 miles) and
- Township 11S, Range 42E, Section 26 on Link 3-73 between Mileposts 0.3 and 0.4 (approximately 0.1 miles)

is amended to VRM Class IV (a total of approximately 23 acres) for only those portions of the B2H Project that exceed acceptable levels of change within the VRM Class II areas after application of all feasible measures to reduce impacts on visual resources is exhausted.

Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan

The Southeastern Oregon RMP is amended in the Visual Resource Management section beginning on page 67 to add the following language:

The 250-foot wide right-of-way for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Project within VRM Class III lands in the vicinity of, but outside, of the National Historic Oregon Trail – Birch Creek ACEC located in portions of:

- Township 15S, Range 45E, Section 9 on Link 4-75 between Mileposts 2.1 and 2.4 (approximately 0.3 miles) and
- Township 15S, Range 45E, Sections 16, 21, and 22 on Link 4-75 between Mileposts 2.8 and 4.2 (approximately 1.4 miles)

is amended to VRM Class IV (a total of approximately 51 acres) for only those portions of the B2H Project that exceed acceptable levels of change within the VRM Class III areas after application of all feasible measures to reduce impacts on visual resources is exhausted.

AND

The 250-foot wide right-of-way for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Project within VRM Class II lands to the north and outside of the Owyhee River Below the Dam ACEC located in portions of:

- Township 21S, Range 45E, Sections 14 and 15 on Link 5-40 between Mileposts 8.1 and 8.6 (approximately 0.5 miles)
- Township 21S, Range 45E, Section 14 on Link 5-45 between Mileposts 0.0 and 0.1 (approximately 0.1 miles)

is amended to VRM Class IV (a total of approximately 20 acres) for only those portions of the B2H Project that exceed acceptable levels of change within the VRM Class II areas after application of all feasible measures to reduce impacts on visual resources is exhausted.

Decision Rationale and Management Considerations

The Agency Preferred Alternative was identified as the Selected Alternative because this route attains the Applicant's interests and objectives for the B2H Project while protecting sensitive resources within the B2H Project area, and meets the BLM's mission and management objectives and purpose and need for the Federal action. A combination of several issues led the BLM to approve issuance of a ROW grant where the Selected Alternative route crosses lands administered by the BLM, including consideration of goals and objectives for the B2H Project area as outlined in the relevant BLM RMPs, and competing interests and values of the public discussed in this section. The ROW grant also will be based on the rationale described in the following sections.

Response to the BLM Purpose and Need

As described above, approval of the ROW grant for the Selected Alternative is consistent with the BLM's purpose and need by responding to the Applicant's application under Title V of FLPMA (43 U.S.C. § 1761) for a ROW grant to construct, operate, and maintain a 500-kV electric transmission line and other facilities on public lands in compliance with FLPMA, the BLM ROW regulations, and other applicable Federal laws. With the adoption of the land use plan amendments listed in this ROD, the Selected Alternative is also consistent with all BLM RMPs where the B2H Project is located.

Meeting the Applicant's Interests and Objectives

The Applicant's stated interests and objectives for the B2H Project is to relieve existing transmission constraints between the Pacific Northwest and Intermountain West regions, increase opportunities for the exchange of energy between the regions; ensure sufficient capacity for the Applicant to meet its forecasted customer demand requirements, and improve system reliability as demands on the transmission system continue to grow.

The transmission system connecting the Pacific Northwest and Intermountain West regions is at capacity limits during peak electrical demand and is causing congestion-related issues. The Northern Tier Transmission Group—a WECC planning group—determined in its 2009, 2011,

2013, and 2015 Biennial Transmission Plans that the existing regional transmission system was not adequate to serve the projected regional needs and that additional transmission system upgrades would be needed to reliably meet the projected regional needs. The B2H Project was one of the major regional transmission upgrades identified and included in the Biennial Transmission Plans to meet the future needs of the region. Adding the B2H Project to the existing transmission system would create additional redundancy, additional capacity, and would make the transmission system more robust.

The B2H Project would alleviate transmission constraints and provide operational flexibility by adding approximately 1,000 megawatts of much needed bi-directional capacity between the Pacific Northwest and Intermountain West regions. The additional capacity would help improve the regions' ability to transmit low-cost energy from a variety of generation sources to serve residences, farms, businesses, and other customers throughout the regions. The ability to exchange additional energy between the regions increases efficiencies, possibly helping to avoid the need to construct new power plants, which helps to keep electricity rates lower and is favorable for the environment.

The Applicant developed the B2H Project to comply with its 2015 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) that was approved by the public utility commission. The IRP describe the company's projected need for additional electricity and the resources necessary to meet the needs while balancing reliability, environmental responsibility, efficiency, and cost. As discussed in the Applicant's 2015 IRP, the number of customers in the Applicant's service area is expected to increase from approximately 515,000 in 2014 to more than 711,000 by 2034. Peak-hour energy demand in the Applicant's service territory is expected to grow by 1.5 percent per year and average energy demand is expected to grow by 1.2 percent per year from 2015 to 2034. Further, wind- and solar-resource development has accelerated in recent years. The B2H Project would help to reliably interconnect these often remote renewable resources and efficiently deliver power to local load centers. The B2H Project would help facilitate access to new market tools such as energy imbalance markets, which could help reduce power supply costs for customers and integrate intermittent resources such as wind and solar.

The B2H Project is neither required to support any particular new power-generation project nor justified by any particular existing power-generation project. Rather, the B2H Project would help the Applicant to meet its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Oregon Public Utility Commission, and the Idaho Public Utility Commission requirements to meet growing load needs and provide safe, reliable, and economic power supply.

Consideration of the Issues Relevant to BLM's Decision

In approving the Selected Alternative, the BLM carefully considered the effects of each alternative route on climate and air resources; geological, mineral, and paleontological resources; soils; water; vegetation, including special status plant species; wildlife, including special status wildlife species and migratory birds; aquatic resources; cultural resources and American Indian concerns; visual resources; recreation; land use, including agriculture; special designations; transportation; social and economic resources; public health and safety; wild horses; the National Conservation Lands; and wildland fire. The evaluation of potential impacts to these resources was integral to the identification of the Agency Preferred Alternative in the EIS, and ultimately the identification of the Selected Alternative. This analysis can be found in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS. Environmental documents that were considered in making this decision included the Draft and Final EIS, the BAs (NOAA Fisheries and USFWS) and the BO

from NOAA Fisheries and letter of concurrence from USFWS, as well as documents specific to National Forest System lands.

The range of issues summarized and analyzed in the Final EIS was derived from the scoping process and public involvement (described in detail in Chapter 4, Section 4.3, of the Final EIS). These issues were used to identify, refine, and evaluate alternative routes, and to direct the level of detail needed for each of the environmental resource studies completed for the EIS. A complete list of the issues identified and where each issue is addressed in the EIS is presented in Section 1.6.3 of the Final EIS.

From the inclusive list of issues identified in scoping and public involvement, many issues are addressed by design features of the B2H Project or were found not to be substantive through the effects analysis conducted for the B2H Project. However, several planning issues proved to be pivotal to B2H Project development and critical to the decision for the Selected Alternative. These issues include potential impacts on Naval Weapons System Training Facility (NWSTF) Boardman, Greater sage-grouse, agriculture, cultural and historic resources, and National Conservation Lands (particularly National Historic Trails [NHT]). Considerations related to each of these resources are addressed below.

In addition to helping inform the selection of the preferred Alternative, the BLM's evaluation of resource impacts was used to identify all practicable measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm to resources. This ROD requires the adoption and implementation of these measures as part of the Selected Alternative.

Naval Weapons System Training Facility Boardman

The Selected Alternative crosses Navy lands on the NWSTF Boardman. The Navy has expressed concern regarding the construction of transmission-line structures within special-use airspace in proximity of Bombing Range Road. The Federal Aviation Administration requires utility line separation from runways and horizontal and conical zones for the safety of the planes and helicopters using the air space. Further, the B2H Project description includes structure-design modifications to meet the requirements of the Navy and the Federal Aviation Administration in response to NWSTF Boardman's request to limit tower heights to 100 feet or less and to allow the Navy to meet their training mission. The Final EIS assessed direct and indirect impacts on the environment within the portions of the Selected Alternative on these lands. Cumulative impacts from the proposed B2H Project could include the creation of a utility corridor through existing land uses and NWSTF Boardman. Cumulative impacts also may occur in the vicinity of the utility project and on military training activities due to the increase in above-ground utility projects that may represent a hazard for aviators to avoid and could pose a compatibility issue with regards to airspace use.

Greater Sage-Grouse

The range-wide population of Greater sage-grouse became a candidate species for listing under the ESA as threatened or endangered on March 4, 2010 (*75 Federal Register* 13909). However, on October 2, 2015, the USFWS found that protection for Greater sage-grouse under the ESA was no longer warranted (*80 Federal Register* 59857). The BLM's Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (ARMPA) (described in Section 3.2.4.2 of the Final EIS) were a critical component to ensure the protection of Greater sage-grouse habitat and helped support

the USFWS's determination that Greater sage-grouse no longer warrants protection under the ESA. As noted in the Final EIS at 3-406-08, the BLM's ARMPA does not apply to the B2H Project and the BLM has identified conservation measures and compensatory mitigation required as a condition of the approval of the ROW grant as discussed in this ROD.

The Selected Alternative crosses general habitat management areas (GHMA) in all B2H Project Segments except Segment 1. Greater sage-grouse priority habitat management area (PHMA) is crossed by the Selected Alternative in Segments 3 and 4. No PHMA is crossed in Segments 5 and 6. Where GHMA is crossed, the B2H Project will introduce long-term moderate residual impacts on Greater sage-grouse, and where PHMA is crossed, the B2H Project will introduce long-term high residual impacts on Greater sage-grouse. In Idaho, the Selected Alternative crosses important habitat management area including lands identified as used by Greater sage-grouse. In addition to the design features of the B2H Project for environmental protection and selective mitigation measures that would avoid or minimize impacts on Greater sage-grouse, the BLM is requiring the B2H Project to achieve a net conservation gain for Greater sage-grouse through compensatory mitigation (refer to Appendix C of the Final EIS).

Agriculture

The analysis of potential effects on high-value agricultural lands has been expanded in the Final EIS based on public comments received. Impacts on agriculture include both short-term and long-term effects, with long-term effects being significantly lower than the short-term effects associated with construction activities. The B2H Project would permanently occupy the lands on which project facilities are constructed, but some agricultural activities could continue within the ROW. For more information, refer to Section 3.2.7 of the Final EIS.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Consistent with the approved PA for the B2H Project (Appendix I of the Final EIS), Class III cultural resources inventory surveys (intensive pedestrian surveys) will be conducted on Federal lands and accessible non-Federal lands in the 500-foot-wide study corridor for the Selected Route. The results will be documented in Class III Technical Reports.

All cultural resources identified in the survey will be evaluated for eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) based on criteria set forth in the Federal regulation 36 C.F.R. § 60.4. The final Class III technical reports will facilitate the BLM, in consultation with the SHPOs, and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO) to identify NRHP-eligible properties and make determinations of eligibility and findings of effect on those properties, and to develop HPMPs (one for each state). The HPMPs will address the effects of the B2H Project on identified historic properties. Eligible cultural resource sites will be treated in accordance with the direction in the HPMPs. The HPMPs will be implemented in consultation with the BLM, SHPOs, THPOs, other involved agencies, and consulting parties (including other tribes).

National Conservation Lands

National Historic Trails

The Selected Alternative will affect the Oregon NHT. Without successful implementation of compensatory mitigation measures (Appendix C of the Final EIS) to offset these high residual impacts, the B2H Project will substantially interfere with the trail's nature and purpose. The presence of large transmission towers would introduce long-term impacts on views as well as indirect impacts on recreational experiences and historic and cultural settings. The key Oregon NHT high impact areas include views from the National Park Service auto tour route (Segments 1, 2, 3, 4), Boardman high potential route segment (Segment 1), National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (NHOTIC); Segment 3), Birch Creek Interpretive Site (Segment 4), and Alkali Springs high potential route segment (Segment 4).

The Selected Alternative will moderately affect and cross the Lewis and Clark NHT auto-tour route, near the intersection of U.S. Highway 730 and Interstate 84, in an area south of the congressional trail alignment, in Segment 1. The B2H Project, however, is located more than 2 miles away from the congressional trail alignment along the Columbia River, and since the B2H Project is located adjacent to existing modifications, this component of the NHT would be affected minimally by the B2H Project. Compensatory mitigation for residual effects on this component of the NHT will not be required as outlined in Appendix C of the Final EIS.

The Selected Alternative will moderately affect the Goodale's Cutoff Study Trail for approximately 0.5 mile where visible west of the NHOTIC in Baker Valley. Through the application of selective mitigation measures, including minimizing cut and fill slopes associated with construction access and work areas as well as limiting the construction of new or improved access roads, the effects on the potential designation of the trail would be minimized to the extent practicable. Compensatory mitigation for residual effects on this component of the NHT will not be required as outlined in Appendix C of the Final EIS.

Due to the limited existing modifications in proximity to the Selected Alternative crossing of the Meek Cutoff Study Trail, the B2H Project will highly affect the study trail. After the application of selective mitigation measures including minimizing cut and fill slopes associated with construction access and work areas, limiting the construction of new or improved access roads, and maximizing the transmission line span across the trail, these high impacts on the Meek Cutoff Study Trail would remain. Compensatory mitigation would be required to reduce effects on the trails potential designation as outlined in Appendix C of the Final EIS for the final route in the POD and following final engineering and design.

The Selected Alternative will moderately affect views from the Olds Ferry Road Study Trail, to the west from Farewell Bend; however, through the application of selective mitigation measures, including minimizing cut and fill slopes associated with construction access and work areas, limiting the construction of new or improved access roads, and using overland construction techniques where possible, the effects on the potential designation of the trail will be minimized to the extent practicable. Compensatory mitigation for residual effects on this component of the NHT will not be required as outlined in Appendix C of the Final EIS.

Impacts on other trails under study for congressional designation will be low in magnitude after application of selective mitigation measures. For more information, refer to Section 3.2.15 of the Final EIS.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Lands within the Vale District, that are within the planning area for the Southeastern Oregon RMP are under a court-approved settlement agreement that sets out certain requirements that the BLM must follow until the BLM completes a RMP amendment for the Southeastern Oregon RMP (Settlement Agreement Between the Oregon Natural Desert Association Committee for the High Desert, Western Watershed Project, and BLM (June 7, 2010)). The settlement agreement precludes the BLM from approving any surface-disturbing activity on lands that the BLM has identified as having wilderness characteristics if the BLM finds that the project would either diminish the size of the inventory unit or cause the entire inventoried unit to no longer meet the criteria for wilderness character (*Oregon Natural Desert Association v. Bureau of Land Management* [2010]). The Selected Alternative avoids lands with wilderness characteristics.

Consideration of Public Comments and Concerns

As lead Federal agency, the BLM prepared a public involvement plan as part of the EIS process. The purpose of the plan is to serve as a guide for conducting public engagement activities during the NEPA process.

The first opportunity for the public to be involved in the B2H Project was scoping. The purpose of scoping was to identify early in the NEPA process the range, or scope, of issues that should be addressed in the EIS. Following Applicant-initiated activities (Section 1.6.2), the Applicant (Idaho Power Company 2010a) submitted a revised application and preliminary POD to BLM, USFS, and Reclamation on June 21, 2010. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* on July 27, 2010, announcing preparation of the EIS and possible plan amendments as well as the opportunity for the public to participate in the process and provide input. Publication of the NOI on July 27, 2010, initiated the formal 90-day scoping period, which ended on September 27, 2010. During August 2010, 8 public scoping meetings conducted in Oregon and Idaho, to inform the public about the B2H Project and the NEPA process, and to solicit input on the B2H Project and potential issues.

Due to the extent of privately owned lands potentially crossed by the B2H Project, the public involvement process was critical in informing the BLM decision to permit the B2H Project as decisions made on BLM-administered lands affect adjacent private land owners as well as other land-managing agencies (e.g., USFS, Navy, State lands, etc.). In July 2012, the BLM conducted four landowner meetings in Oregon (Baker City, Durkee, Brogan, and North Powder) to update landowners about the status of the B2H Project. In August 2012, the BLM hosted six public open houses—five in Oregon (Boardman, Pilot Rock, La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario) and one in Idaho (Marsing)—to discuss the alternative routes being considered for analysis in the Draft EIS, to answer questions, and to identify future comment and input opportunities.

The BLM published a NOA of the Draft EIS for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on December 19, 2014. The EPA published a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on the same day, which initiated a 90-day public comment period. During the comment period, 382 comment submittals on the Draft EIS were received from various Federal, state, and local agencies; various special interest groups; and individuals. The comments received and responses to the substantive comments are provided in Appendix K of the Final EIS.

Based on agency and public comments received, the BLM expanded the analysis of the Draft EIS when it prepared the Final EIS. The Final EIS assessed impacts on all lands, including private lands, to determine effects on resources and respond to issues identified during public scoping. Generally, changes were made to the network of alternative routes studied and analyzed, which are summarized as follows:

- The Applicant changed the northern end of its Proposed Action from the proposed Grassland or alternative Horn Butte substation to the proposed Longhorn Substation and added a route variation along the west side of Bombing Range Road (requiring removal of an existing BPA 69 kV line), which is on the NWSTF Boardman along the west side of Bombing Range Road on the eastern boundary of the military facility (Section 2.1.1.1)
- The BLM requested colocation of the Draft EIS Agency Preferred Alternative route for the proposed transmission line closer to existing transmission lines where possible (Section 2.1.1.2)
- Localized route-variation options were developed from recommendations in comments received between the Draft EIS and Final EIS (Section 2.1.1.3)

Also in response to comments received on the Draft EIS, explanation and information has been incorporated in various sections of the document. A description of the overall approach for organizing the NEPA process and the methodologies for conducting the resource analyses has been added to assist the reviewer in understanding the means for reaching conclusions. Explanation of where impacts would occur and where mitigation would be applied, and effectiveness of mitigation, has been expanded. Since the Draft EIS was prepared, updated resource data have become available and have been incorporated for resource analysis where applicable. More in-depth descriptions of analysis results are provided.

Statement of No Unnecessary or Undue Degradation

Congress declared that it is the policy of the United States that the public lands be managed for multiple use and sustained yield, in a manner to protect certain land values, to provide food and habitat for species, and to provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use (43 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(7)(8)). Multiple use management means that public land resources are to be managed to best meet the present and future needs of the American public, balanced to take into consideration the long-term needs of future generations without permanent impairment of the lands (43 U.S.C. § 1702(c)). The BLM manages public land through land use planning, acquisition, and disposition, and through regulation of use, occupancy, and development of the public lands (Subchapters II and III, respectively, 43 U.S.C. §§ 1711 to 1722, and 1731 to 1748).

FLPMA specifically provides that in “managing the public lands the Secretary shall, by regulation or otherwise, take any action necessary to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands” (43 U.S.C. § 1732(b)). The process for siting and evaluating the B2H Project has involved extensive efforts on the part of the BLM and cooperating agencies, local governments, public commenters, and other organizations. This process identified a Selected Alternative that accomplishes the BLM’s purpose and need while preventing any unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands. This process included:

- The siting of the B2H Project in or adjacent to designated corridors or existing linear facilities, and avoiding lands that have been specifically designated for the protection of specific resources;

- The evaluation of alternative routes which could meet the BLM's purpose and need for the B2H Project while avoiding and minimizing the overall impacts of the B2H Project; and the development of mitigation measures, including compensation requirements, to further avoid, minimize, or compensate for those impacts.

In addition, BLM's ROW regulations at 43 C.F.R. § 2805.11(a)(1) to (5) require that BLM limit the grant to those lands the BLM determines:

- The applicant for the ROW will occupy with authorized facilities;
- Are necessary for constructing, operating, and maintaining the authorized facilities;
- Are necessary to protect the public health and safety;
- Will not unnecessarily damage the environment; and
- Will not result in unnecessary or undue degradation.

Statement of Technical and Financial Capability

The BLM's ROW regulations require a project application to include information on an applicant's financial and technical capability to construct, operate, maintain, and terminate the project (43 C.F.R. § 2804.12(a)(5)).

The Applicant, Idaho Power Company, is a federally regulated utility serving more than 1 million customers across 24,000 square miles in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. The Applicant's commitment to developing the B2H Project is demonstrated by the substantial investment of capital and time already made to date.

The Applicant's statement of technical and financial capability is provided in its ROW application for the B2H Project. Based on the information provided, the BLM has determined that the Applicant has the technical and financial capability to construct the B2H Project.

Connected Actions

The Applicant submitted an application, dated June 22, 2015, to the Navy requesting an easement that would repurpose the area along the eastern boundary of the NWSTF Boardman on the west side of Bombing Range Road, currently occupied by a 69-kV transmission line, for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the B2H Project transmission line. The BPA, a permitting partner on the B2H Project, owns and operates the 69-kV transmission line (which serves Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative in southern Morrow County) pursuant to a use agreement with the Navy. The BPA would cooperate with the Applicant to terminate its existing use agreement with the Navy and remove the 69-kV transmission line and construct the B2H Project in place of the 69-kV transmission line. The location and width of the Idaho Power easement would be the same as that provided in the BPA's existing use agreement for the 69-kV transmission line; that is, a 90-foot-wide use area. The Applicant is proposing a modified transmission-line structure type, which would be no taller than 100 feet to mitigate potential impacts; that is, minimize interference with the military operations of the NWSTF Boardman. Umatilla Electric Cooperative, which owns and operates a 115-kV transmission line on private property on the east side of Bombing Range Road, would cooperate with the BPA to help the BPA continue to provide electrical service to its customers served by the displaced 69-kV transmission line. This is considered a connected action under the NEPA. Description of the 69-

kV line relocation is presented in Section 2.5.2.1 and analysis of the action is included throughout Chapter 3 of the Final EIS

Mitigation and Monitoring

Rules implementing NEPA expressly require that an EIS identify and address appropriate mitigation measures in its discussion of environmental consequences and that the associated ROD state whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted, and if not, why not. Mitigation and monitoring measures were developed through the NEPA process to avoid, minimize, rectify over time, or compensate for resource impacts. A Mitigation Framework was included in the Final EIS that describes requirements of a comprehensive mitigation plan, including compensatory mitigation obligations, consistent with requirements of NEPA and its implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. § 1508.20, as well as BLM's statutory obligations under FLPMA, prior to any surface-disturbing activity associated with construction of the transmission line being permitted. All mitigation requirements and commitments are included in Appendix B, Mitigation and Monitoring Requirements, of this ROD. Also, consistent with those requirements, mitigation and monitoring measures were included by the Applicant in the draft POD.

This B2H Project includes the following measures, terms, and conditions:

- Design features of the Proposed Action for environmental protection and agency-required mitigation measures outlined in Chapter 2 (Table 2-7 and 2-13, respectively) and Section 4 of the draft POD (Appendix D of this ROD);
- Terms and conditions in the PA (Appendix E of this ROD);
- Conservation measures in the BAs and BO (Appendix F of the ROD);
- Additional mitigation and monitoring measures related to greater sage-grouse found in Appendix B of this ROD; and
- Standard terms, conditions, and stipulations (43 C.F.R. Part 2800).

The final agency-approved POD for construction will be required to incorporate all of the mitigation measures required by this ROD, including those identified in the draft POD. Demonstrating compliance with these mitigation and monitoring requirements (Appendix B of this ROD) is a pre-requisite to NTP issuance for construction of the B2H Project. Monitoring plans developed as part of the final POD must include an adaptive management element. Additionally, the BLM will require the Applicant to post a financial security (such as a surety bond, letter of credit, etc.) with the BLM in an amount sufficient to cover all post-fieldwork costs associated with implementing the HPMP (i.e., Cultural Bond), or other mitigation activities, to be required by the Applicant when they contract for services in support of the B2H Project's PA for reclamation requirements and activities.

In support of these measures, the BLM requires the Applicant to provide for an environmental (CIC), to represent the BLM during the construction, and reclamation phases of the B2H compliance inspection contractor Project. The CIC will report directly to the BLM. The primary role and responsibility of the CIC is to ensure the Applicant's compliance with all terms, conditions, and stipulations of the ROW grant(s), the final POD, and other permits, approvals and regulatory requirements, as described in Section 1.10 of the Final EIS and Section 1.5 of the draft POD (refer to Appendix D of this ROD). Additionally, the CIC will follow the Environmental Compliance Management Plan, included as Appendix A5 of the POD.

The Applicant will also be responsible for monitoring the reclamation of the transmission line, access roads not needed for operation and maintenance, and ancillary facilities, as described in Appendix C1 (Reclamation, Revegetation, and Monitoring Framework Plan), and for compliance with Appendix B2 (Noxious Weed Management Plan) of the POD.

Based on the foregoing and consistent with 40 C.F.R. § 1505.2(c), the BLM has determined based on the analysis in this ROD that all practicable mitigation measures that are necessary to fully mitigate the potential effects of the B2H Project per Federal laws, rules, policies, and regulations have been adopted by this ROD.

Alternatives

Alternatives Considered in Detail

The B2H Project area is organized into the same six segments broadly described in the Draft EIS and is based generally on similar geography, natural features, drainages, resources, and/or land uses. The B2H Project segments, from north to south, are as follows:

- Segment 1—Morrow-Umatilla
- Segment 2—Blue Mountains
- Segment 3—Baker Valley
- Segment 4—Brogan
- Segment 5—Malheur
- Segment 6—Treasure Valley

There are multiple alternative routes in each segment. Each segment begins and ends where the alternative routes meet and intersect at a common point, or segment node. This section provides a description of each alternative route, and localized variations, if applicable, in each of the six segments. The alternative routes analyzed for the Final EIS include the alternative routes analyzed in the Draft EIS and the route variations resulting (1) from co-locating the alignment of the proposed transmission line closer to existing transmission lines and (2) from recommendations received in comments on the Draft EIS. The BLM determined that these route variations were minor, non-substantial changes because they were all within the B2H Project area analyzed in the Draft EIS and were within the spectrum of alternatives already analyzed. Based on this determination, the BLM concluded that the addition of these minor route variations did not require supplementation of the Draft EIS pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(c)(1).

Segment 1

Segment 1 begins at the planned Longhorn Substation in Morrow County and ends west of La Grande in Union County on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The seven alternative routes and two areas of local variations in Segment 1 are shown in Map 2-7a of the Final EIS.

Applicant's Proposed Action

Comments on the Draft EIS from the Applicant indicated a change in the Applicant's Proposed Action from using the Grassland or Horn Butte Substation to using the proposed Longhorn

Substation. The Longhorn Substation was addressed in the Draft EIS; however, the Applicant Proposed Action Alternative route now exits the Longhorn Substation and heads south on the west side of Bombing Range Road to a point where the route variation turns to the east and then continues along the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative described in the Draft EIS.

The Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative in Segment 1 exits the planned Longhorn Substation to the south, crossing the intersection of Interstate 84 and U.S. Highway 730, where the transmission line would then cross to the west side of Bombing Range Road. The alternative continues along the west side of Bombing Range Road for approximately 12 miles, within a 90-foot-wide use area, currently occupied by a 69-kV transmission line owned by BPA, on the NWSTF Boardman, before crossing the road and turning to the east traversing areas of irrigated and dryland agriculture for approximately 40 miles north of Butter Creek and Jack Canyon. The transmission line would cross U.S. Highway 395 between the community of Pilot Rock and the McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge before ascending the Blue Mountains, south of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, across McKay Creek and onto the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This alternative does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice and continues to the southeast between the interstate and the Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon.

This alternative (as well as the Applicant's Proposed Action – Southern Route Alternative and West of Bombing Range Road – Southern Route Alternative) would be designed using two tower types. From Longhorn Substation for about 3.0 miles, the transmission line structures typically would be 170-foot tall self-supported steel lattice with typical spans of approximately 1,500 feet between structures. From that point to the south, where the transmission line would be adjacent to the NWSTF Boardman, structures would be no taller than 100 feet tubular steel H-frame with typical spans of 400 to 600 feet between structures. Where the transmission line would no longer be adjacent to the NWSTF Boardman, the structure type would revert to 170-foot tall self-supported steel lattice.

Variation S1-B1 shares the same alignment as all of the alternative routes in Segment 1 located between Interstate 84 and Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon. This variation does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice.

Variation S1-B2 separates from the Segment 1 alternatives, south of Kamela, to parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line crossing Interstate 84 twice before rejoining the Segment 1 alternatives south of the interstate.

East of Bombing Range Road

The East of Bombing Range Road Alternative was addressed in the Draft EIS as the Longhorn Variation. It differs from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative only in that it parallels Bombing Range Road on the east side rather than on the west side of the road. The route was developed to address concerns (1) raised by the Navy regarding encroachment on military airspace in the vicinity of the NWSTF Boardman, (2) to minimize effects on tree farms and dairies in the area, and (3) to align with an existing transmission corridor.

Although closer to the NWSTF Boardman property, the alternative route parallels the existing Umatilla Electric Cooperative 115-kV transmission line (located on the east side of Bombing Range Road) and the BPA 69-kV line (located on the west side of Bombing Range Road). The

ROW along the northern portion of this alternative would be immediately adjacent to but would not extend over the eastern boundary of the NWSTF Boardman property.

The alternative route exits the planned Longhorn Substation to the southwest, where it immediately crosses over the Union Pacific Railroad, then turns south and crosses the intersection of Interstate 84 and U.S. Highway 730, where the transmission line would continue south along the east side of Bombing Range Road, crossing mostly private land and a parcel of state-administered land. The alternative route continues along the east side of Bombing Range Road for approximately 15 miles, along the edge of the Boardman Tree Farm and other irrigated agricultural lands, before turning to the east traversing areas of irrigated and dryland agriculture for approximately 40 miles north of Butter Creek and Jack Canyon. The transmission line would cross U.S. Highway 395 between the community of Pilot Rock and the McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge before ascending the Blue Mountains, south of the CTUIR, across McKay Creek and onto the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This alternative route does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice and continues to the southeast between the interstate and Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon.

The East of Bombing Range Road Alternative would be designed using two structure types. From Longhorn Substation for about 3.0 miles, the transmission line structures typically would be 170-foot tall self-supported steel lattice with typical spans of approximately 1,500 feet between structures. From that point to the south, where the transmission line would be adjacent to the NWSTF Boardman, structures would be no taller than 100 feet tubular steel H-frame with typical spans of 500 to 700 feet between structures. Where the transmission line would no longer be adjacent to the NWSTF Boardman, the structure type would revert to 170-foot tall self-supported steel lattice.

Applicant's Proposed Action – Southern Route

The Applicant's Proposed Action – Southern Route Alternative was not addressed as such in the Draft EIS and is the result of incorporating a route-variation option recommended in comments since the Draft EIS was released for public review. It is the same as the Applicant's Proposed Action through Link 1-61 where it turns south. The north-south portion that passes to the west of Pilot Rock was proposed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of the CTUIR to connect with the southern route alternative proposed by Morrow and Umatilla counties.

The alternative route exits the planned Longhorn Substation to the south, crossing the intersection of Interstate 84 and U.S. Highway 730, where the transmission line would then cross to the west side of Bombing Range Road. The alternative route continues along the west side of Bombing Range Road for approximately 12 miles, within a 90-foot-wide use area, currently occupied by the BPA 69-kV transmission line, on the NWSTF Boardman, before crossing the road and turning to the east traversing areas of irrigated and dryland agriculture for approximately 40 miles north of Butter Creek and Jack Canyon. The transmission line would then turn south crossing U.S. Highway 395 about 4 miles west of Pilot Rock and continue to the south before turning toward the east and ascending the Blue Mountains across Rocky Ridge. This alternative route crosses McKay Creek and enters the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This alternative route does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice and continues to the southeast between the interstate and Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon.

West of Bombing Range Road – Southern Route

The West of Bombing Range Road to Southern Route Alternative was not addressed in the Draft EIS and is the result of a route-variation option recommended in comments since the Draft EIS was released for public review. It was proposed by Morrow and Umatilla counties to avoid agricultural areas and areas of potential windfarm development. The north-south portion of the alternative route south of the Longhorn Substation is the same alignment as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative and the Applicant's Proposed Action – Southern Route Alternative.

It exits the planned Longhorn Substation to the south, crossing the intersection of Interstate 84 and U.S. Highway 730, where the transmission line would then cross to the west side of Bombing Range Road. The alternative route continues along the west side of Bombing Range Road for approximately 12 miles, within a 90-foot-wide use area, currently occupied by a 69-kV transmission line owned by BPA, on the NWSTF Boardman, before crossing the road and continuing an additional 5 miles to the south. Just west of Oregon Route 207, the transmission line would turn to the east traversing an area of dryland agriculture for 15 miles before crossing Butter Creek and turning to the southeast paralleling Matlock Canyon (the Umatilla south route-variation option recommended by Morrow County [Section 2.1.1.3]). This alternative route then continues to the east for approximately 25 miles crossing U.S. Highway 395 9 miles southwest of Pilot Rock and ascending the Blue Mountains across Rocky Ridge. This alternative route crosses McKay Creek and enters the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This alternative route does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice and continues to the southeast between the interstate and Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon.

Longhorn

The Longhorn Alternative was addressed in the Draft EIS. Except for the initial north-south portion of the route Links 1-5, 1-9, 1-15, the Longhorn Alternative is the same as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative. The alternative route exits the planned Longhorn Substation to the east crossing U.S. Highway 730 before turning to the south across Interstate 84. This alternative route then continues to the southeast avoiding irrigated agricultural lands and the Boardman Tree Farm for approximately 8 miles, then the transmission line would turn to the south toward Sand Hollow before heading east to traverse areas of irrigated and dryland agriculture for approximately 35 miles north of Butter Creek and Jack Canyon. The transmission line would cross U.S. Highway 395 between the community of Pilot Rock and the McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge before ascending the Blue Mountains, south of the CTUIR, across McKay Creek and onto the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This alternative route does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice and continues to the southeast between the interstate and Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon.

Interstate 84

The Interstate 84 Alternative was not addressed in the Draft EIS and is the result of a route-variation option recommended in comments on the Draft EIS; comments received from Umatilla County; WildLands Defense; a letter from a consortium of the OCTA, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, Oregon Wild, and WildEarth Guardians; and several individuals. The intent was to

consolidate the proposed transmission line with other linear facilities and in areas already disturbed.

The Interstate 84 Alternative exits the planned Longhorn Substation to the east crossing U.S. Highway 730 and then parallels Interstate 84 for approximately 35 miles (except for approximately a 6-mile-long section just south of the Umatilla Ordnance Depot) to an area 6 miles west of Pendleton. The alternative route then turns to the south crossing the Umatilla River before joining the alignment of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative northwest of Pilot Rock. The transmission line would cross U.S. Highway 395 between the community of Pilot Rock and the McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge before ascending the Blue Mountains, south of the CTUIR, across McKay Creek and onto the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This alternative route does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice and continues to the southeast between the interstate and Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon.

Variation S1-A1 is the same alignment as the Interstate 84 and Interstate 84 to southern route alternative, paralleling Interstate 84 to the southeast for approximately 15 miles. About 6 miles west of Pendleton, the route turns to the south crossing the Umatilla River.

Variation S1-A2 was not addressed in the Draft EIS and was developed to respond to the comments on the Draft EIS to parallel Interstate 84 and/or the exiting 230-kV transmission line. This variation separates from the Interstate 84 and Interstate 84 – Southern Route alternatives by turning southeast in an area north of the community of Echo and parallels the existing 230-kV line crossing the Umatilla River approximately 15 miles west of Pendleton. The route continues to parallel the Umatilla River, about 1 mile to the south for another 9 miles before rejoining the Interstate 84 and Interstate 84 to Southern Route alternatives.

Interstate 84 – Southern Route

The Interstate 84 – Southern Route Alternative was not addressed in the Draft EIS and is the result of a route-variation option recommended by the CTUIR DNR. The CTUIR DNR preferred routing along the Interstate 84 where there is existing disturbance, but suggested extending the north-south portion (Link 1-49) farther south to connect with the southern route, thereby avoiding a cultural landscape in the McKay Creek area.

The Interstate 84 – Southern Route Alternative exits the planned Longhorn Substation to the east crossing U.S. Highway 730 and then parallels Interstate 84 for approximately 35 miles, except for about 6 miles south of the Umatilla Ordnance Depot, to an area 6 miles west of Pendleton. The alternative route then turns to the south crossing the Umatilla River and Jack Canyon before joining the Southern Route southwest of Pilot Rock and ascending the Blue Mountains across Rocky Ridge. This alternative route then crosses McKay Creek and enters the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This alternative route does not parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, starting south of Kamela, to avoid crossing Interstate 84 twice and continues to the southeast between the interstate and Blue Mountain Forest State Scenic Corridor in Railroad Canyon.

Segment 2

Segment 2 begins west of La Grande in Union County and ends east of North Powder in Union County. The three alternative routes and six areas of local route variations in Segment 2 are shown on Map 2-7b of the Final EIS.

Applicant's Proposed Action

The Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative in Segment 2 was addressed in the Draft EIS and was the Agency Preferred Route in the Draft EIS. It was developed to the west of and to avoid the community of La Grande, Morgan Lake, and Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area. It continues from Segment 1 traveling to the southeast crossing Oregon Route 244, near Hilgard Junction State Park, and briefly heading east toward La Grande, for 3 miles, before again turning to the southeast. This alternative route is located 1 mile west of Morgan Lake and crosses Glass Hill and Ladd Creek as the route continues to the southeast for 15 miles before crossing Interstate 84 approximately 15 miles south of La Grande. Continuing to the southeast, the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative crosses Powder River to the end of Segment 2 on Riverdale Hill.

Variation S2-A1 shares the same alignment as all the alternatives in Segment 2, located 0.5 mile southeast of Interstate 84, paralleling the interstate for 3 miles to an area west of the Hilgard Junction State Park.

Variation S2-A2 separates from the Segment 2 alternatives and parallels the existing 230-kV transmission line for 3 miles before rejoining the Segment 2 alternatives west of Hilgard Junction State Park.

Variation S2-B1 shares the same alignment as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative route beginning south of Oregon Route 244 and traveling to the east for approximately 3 miles, located a 0.5 mile south of the existing 230-kV transmission line, crossing Rock Creek.

Variation S2-B2 separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative route south of Oregon Route 244 and more closely parallels the existing 230-kV transmission line for 3 miles before rejoining the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative east of Rock Creek.

Variation S2-C1 shares the same alignment as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative beginning 1.5 miles west of Morgan Lake heading to the southeast between Rock Creek and Sheep Creek for 7 miles, before turning to the east across Glass Hill to an area 1.5 miles northwest of Ladd Creek.

Variation S2-C2 separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative and would be located 0.25 mile from Morgan Lake and roughly paralleling Variation S2-C1 between Mill Creek and Sheep Creek, staying east of Glass Hill, to an area 1.5 miles northwest of Ladd Creek.

Variation S2-E1 shares the same alignment as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative and Glass Hill Alternative 0.5 mile southeast of Ladd Creek and continuing 2 miles to the southeast.

Variation S2-E2 separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative and Glass Hill Alternative southeast of Ladd Creek and traverses down a steep slope toward Interstate 84 before traversing back up the northeast flank of Baldy to rejoin the Applicant's Proposed Action and Glass Hill alternatives.

Variation S2-F1 shares the same alignment as all of the Segment 2 alternatives starting east of Baldy and traveling to the southeast for 12 miles crossing Interstate 84 and the Powder River to the end of Segment 2 on Riverdale Hill.

Variation S2-F2 separates from the Segment 2 alternatives east of Baldy and parallels an existing 230-kV transmission line for 12 miles crossing Interstate 84 and the Powder River to the end of Segment 2 on Riverdale Hill.

Glass Hill

The Glass Hill Alternative was addressed in the Draft EIS. The alternative route was developed in response to various considerations of landowners, environmental resources, visual effects, and constructability expressed during the Community Advisory Process (Idaho Power Company 2012: 10-15) and scoping for the NEPA process to address concerns regarding proximity of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative to Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area and concerns about the visibility of the transmission line from La Grande in Union County.

The alternative route continues from Segment 1 traveling to the southeast crossing Oregon Route 244, near Hilgard Junction State Park, separating from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative by continuing southeast adjacent to Little Graves Creek located 3 miles west of Morgan Lake, before turning to the east to rejoin the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative 5 miles southwest of La Grande. The transmission line then would continue to the southeast for 11 miles before crossing Interstate 84 approximately 15 miles south of La Grande. Continuing to the southeast, the Glass Hill Alternative crosses Powder River to the end of Segment 2 on Riverdale Hill.

Variation S2-D1 shares the same alignment as the Glass Hill Alternative starting at Little Graves Creek and crossing Graves Creek, Little Rock Creek, and Rock Creek as this route travels to the southeast toward Glass Hill.

Variation S2-D2 was recommended as part of comments on the Draft EIS, the intent of which was to help blend the transmission line structures into the surrounding landscape better and to avoid an elk population. Variation S2-D2 separates from the Glass Hill Alternative and roughly parallels Variation S2-D1 across Graves Creek, Little Rock Creek, and Rock Creek but located 0.75 mile farther to the south.

Mill Creek

The Mill Creek Alternative was not addressed in the Draft EIS and is the result of a route-variation option recommended by Union County to parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line except in the general area of La Grande. The Mill Creek Alternative continues from Segment 1 traveling to the southeast where this alternative separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative, near Hilgard Junction State Park, crossing Oregon Route 244 parallel to the existing 230-kV transmission line toward La Grande to the east. The transmission line would follow the existing 230-kV transmission line until Table Mountain where this alternative route avoids closely approaching La Grande, and residences south of town, by turning to the south and would be located 1 mile east of Morgan Lake. Approximately 4 miles south of La Grande, this alternative route again parallels the existing 230-kV transmission line crossing the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area and then Interstate 84 twice in Ladd Canyon before rejoining the Applicant's

Proposed Action Alternative 12 miles south of La Grande. Continuing to the southeast, the Mill Creek Alternative crosses Powder River to the end of Segment 2 on Riverdale Hill.

Segment 3

Segment 3 begins at a point east of North Powder in Union County and ends at a point just south of Dixie in Baker County. The three alternative routes and three areas of local route variations in Segment 3 are shown on Map 2-7c of the Final EIS.

Applicant's Proposed Action

The Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative in Segment 3 was addressed in the Draft EIS. It begins on Riverdale Hill paralleling an existing 230-kV transmission line to the southeast passing to the east of Magpie Peak and then turning east of Flagstaff Hill to pass to the east of the NHOTIC and 5 miles east of Baker City. After crossing Oregon Route 86, the alternative travels south to Interstate 84, to the east of Lone Pine Mountain, where the transmission line would roughly parallel the interstate on the north side for approximately 28 miles except near the community of Durkee and Gold Hill. In this area, the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative is located 1.5 miles to the northeast of Interstate 84 before paralleling the interstate between the communities of Weatherby and Dixie to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek.

Variation S3-A1 shares the same alignment as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative beginning on Riverdale Hill where it parallels an existing 230-kV transmission line for approximately 12 miles to the southeast passing to the east of Magpie Peak before ending approximately 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203.

Variation S3-A2 was not addressed in the Draft EIS and is a route-variation option developed as a result of the BLM's request to collocate the proposed transmission line closer to the existing transmission line. This variation begins on Riverdale Hill paralleling an existing 230-kV (offset approximately 250-feet to the west) for approximately 12 miles to the southeast passing to the east of Magpie Peak before ending approximately 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203.

Variation S3-B1 begins 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203 and is a part of the alignment of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative ending just north of an existing 138-kV transmission line and Interstate 84.

Variation S3-B2 begins 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203 and shares the same alignment as the Flagstaff B Alternative for approximately 8 miles before heading southeast following the Flagstaff A Alternative (Flagstaff Alternative from the Draft EIS) for approximately 4 miles. It then rejoins the Flagstaff B Alternative heading southeast for approximately 2 miles before ending just north of an existing 138-kV transmission line and Interstate 84.

Variation S3-B3 begins 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203 and shares the same alignment as the Flagstaff B Alternative before ending just north of an existing 138-kV transmission line and Interstate 84.

Variation S3-B4 begins 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203 and shares the same alignment as the Flagstaff A and B alternatives for approximately 1.5 miles. It then briefly heads southeast to parallel (250-feet offset to west) the existing 230-kV transmission line for approximately 2.6

miles. It then joins the alignment of the Flagstaff A Alternative in the vicinity of Oregon Route 86. It then leaves the Flagstaff A Alternative and heads southwest, roughly parallel to the existing 230-kV transmission line, before joining the Flagstaff B Alternative route, approximately 1.3 miles east of Coyote Peak. The variation follows the same alignment of the Flagstaff B Alternative for approximately 6.0 miles, ending just north of an existing 138-kV transmission line and Interstate 84.

Variation S3-B5 begins 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203 and shares the same alignment as the Flagstaff A Alternative before ending just north of an existing 138-kV transmission line and Interstate 84.

Variation S3-C1 is part of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative beginning just east of Straw Ranch Creek and approximately 0.8 mile north of Interstate 84 and ending at Dixie Creek.

Variation S3-C2 begins just east of Straw Ranch Creek, approximately 0.8 mile north of Interstate 84 and an existing 138-kV transmission line. The variation heads southeast for 0.3 mile, crossing the existing 138-kV transmission line, and then continues parallel to the existing 138-kV transmission line (on south side) for approximately 4.8 miles. Approximately 0.1 mile south of Hindman Road, the variation heads east for 0.1 mile crossing a railroad and the existing 138-kV transmission line again before heading southeast parallel to the existing 138-kV transmission line (on north side) for approximately 1.9 miles. The variation then heads directly east for 1.7 miles, crossing Durkee Creek approximately 0.7 mile north of Durkee, where it then joins the alignment of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative for 12.8 miles before ending at Dixie Creek.

Variation S3-C3 begins just east of Straw Ranch Creek and north of the existing 138-kV transmission line, approximately 0.8 mile north of Interstate 84, and north of the existing 138-kV transmission line. This variation follows the alignment of the Flagstaff A – Burnt River Mountain Alternative, which was addressed in the Draft EIS and intended to avoid Greater Sage-Grouse PHMA and the community of Durkee. The variation turns more to the south crossing Interstate 84 and then Burnt River Canyon, located 2.5 miles west of Durkee, before crossing Interstate 84 again near Weatherby. The variation then parallels the interstate for approximately 4 miles to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek.

Variation S3-C4 shares the same alignment as Variation S3-C3, except for a 3.2-mile portion (Links 3-68 and 3-70) crossing Burnt River Canyon, approximately 0.6 mile west of the alignment that was addressed in the Draft EIS. This adjustment was developed in response to the comments on the Draft EIS.

Variation S3-C5 begins just east of Straw Ranch Creek and north of the existing 138-kV transmission line, approximately 0.8 mile north of Interstate 84, and north of the existing 138-kV transmission line. This variation shares the same alignment as the Flagstaff B – Burnt River West Alternative. It crosses Burnt River Canyon before heading southeast for approximately 13 miles toward Weatherby Mountain, crossing the northern flank of Baldy Mountain. After traversing the southwestern flank of Weatherby Mountain the variation crosses Dixie Creek to the end of Segment 3 approximately 0.5 mile west of Interstate 84.

Variation S3-C6 shares the same alignment as Flagstaff B – Durkee Alternative in the Durkee area. This alignment is new based on comments on the Draft EIS received from Baker County and is intended to avoid more private and agricultural lands. As the route travels to the south, it crosses Burnt River Canyon before turning east on the northeast flank of Pedro Mountain

crossing Dixie Creek twice, and the Snake River Mormon Basin Backcountry Byway, to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek approximately 0.5 mile west of Interstate 84.

Flagstaff A

The Flagstaff A Alternative was addressed in the Draft EIS as the Flagstaff Alternative and was developed to parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line and avoid the Greater Sage-Grouse PHMA in the area east of Baker City.

The Flagstaff A Alternative begins on Riverdale Hill co-located to closely parallel an existing 230-kV transmission line, where possible, to the southeast passing to the east of Magpie Peak and turning south near Oregon Route 203. The route continues to be co-located to closely parallel the existing 230-kV transmission line, where possible, west of Flagstaff Hill and the NHOTIC. In this area, the transmission line would be located 3 miles east of Baker City continuing to the south toward Interstate 84 passing on the west side of Lone Pine Mountain. This alternative route roughly parallels the interstate on the north side for 31 miles except near the community of Durkee and Gold Hill. In this area, the Flagstaff Alternative is located 1.5 miles to the northeast of Interstate 84 before paralleling the interstate between the communities of Weatherby and Dixie to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek.

Timber Canyon Alternative

The Timber Canyon Alternative was addressed in the Draft EIS and was developed to avoid effects on Greater Sage-Grouse PHMAs and Oregon NHT segments. The Timber Canyon Alternative begins on Riverdale Hill where the route heads east passing north of Thief Valley Reservoir and ascending the southern edge of Wallowa Mountains onto the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. After crossing Oregon Route 203 north of the community of Medical Springs, this route turns to the southeast crossing Big Creek and Goose Creek before passing east of the community of Sparta to Eagle Creek. In this area, the route turns to the south staying west of the communities of New Bridge and Richland then crosses the Powder River before turning to the southwest. This alternative route travels 17 miles southwest toward the community of Weatherby passing to the west of Big Lookout Mountain and Daly Creek. The Timber Canyon Alternative does not parallel existing transmission lines except at the southern end of the route near Weatherby, the transmission line would parallel Interstate 84 for approximately 4 miles to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek.

Flagstaff A – Burnt River Mountain

The Burnt River Mountain portion of the Flagstaff A – Burnt River Mountain Alternative was addressed in the Draft EIS and was intended to avoid Greater Sage-Grouse PHMA and the community of Durkee.

The Flagstaff A – Burnt River Mountain Alternative begins on Riverdale Hill, co-located to closely parallel an existing 230-kV transmission line where possible, to the southeast passing to the east of Magpie Peak and then turning east of Flagstaff Hill to pass to the west of the NHOTIC and 5 miles east of Baker City. After crossing Oregon Route 86, the alternative route travels south to Interstate 84, to the east of Lone Pine Mountain, where the transmission line would roughly parallel the interstate on the north side for 28 miles except near the community of

Durkee. In this area, the route turns more to the south crossing Interstate 84 and then Burnt River Canyon, located 2.5 miles southeast of Durkee, before crossing Interstate 84 again near Weatherby. The alternative route then parallels the interstate for 4 miles to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek.

Flagstaff B

The Flagstaff B Alternative was not addressed as such in the Draft EIS and is the result of incorporating a route-variation option recommended in comments between the Draft and Final EIS. The Flagstaff B Alternative begins on Riverdale Hill paralleling an existing 230-kV transmission line to the southeast passing to the east of Magpie Peak. Beginning 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203, the Flagstaff B Alternative follows the alignment of the Flagstaff A Alternative for approximately 0.6 mile before joining other route-variation option alignments to avoid private lands and agricultural operations recommended between the Draft and Final EIS.

The alternative route follows the existing 230-kV transmission line for 1 mile before heading southeast into Flagstaff Gulch before turning southwest crossing Oregon Route 86 1 mile west of Flagstaff Hill. The route turns to the southwest before turning south as it closely parallels the existing 230-kV transmission line for 3 miles and then travels south to Interstate 84, where the alternative would roughly parallel the interstate on the north side for 31 miles except near the community of Durkee and Gold Hill. In this area, the alternative is located 1.5 miles to the northeast of Interstate 84 before paralleling the interstate between the communities of Weatherby and Dixie to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek.

Flagstaff B – Burnt River West

The Flagstaff B – Burnt River West Alternative was not addressed as such in the Draft EIS and is the result of incorporating route-variation options recommended in comments between the Draft and Final EIS. The Flagstaff B – Burnt River West Alternative begins on Riverdale Hill paralleling an existing 230-kV transmission line (offset approximately 250-feet to the west). Beginning 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203, the Flagstaff B Alternative follows the alignment of the Flagstaff A Alternative for approximately 0.6 mile before joining other route-variation option alignments to avoid private lands and agricultural operations recommended since the Draft EIS was released for public review. The alternative follows the existing 230-kV transmission line for 1 mile before heading southeast into Flagstaff Gulch before turning southwest crossing Oregon Route 86 1 mile west of Flagstaff Hill. The route turns to the southwest before turning south as it closely parallels the existing 230-kV transmission line for 3 miles and then travels south to Interstate 84. To the east of Straw Ranch Creek, the alternative crosses a 138-kV transmission line and Interstate 84 and follows a route-variation option recommended by Baker County. The alternative route crosses Burnt River Canyon before heading southeast for approximately 13 miles toward Weatherby Mountain, crossing the northern flank of Baldy Mountain. After traversing the southwestern flank of Weatherby Mountain the alternative route crosses Dixie Creek to the end of Segment 3 approximately 0.5 mile west of Interstate 84.

Flagstaff B – Durkee

The Flagstaff B – Durkee Alternative was not addressed as such in the Draft EIS and is the result of incorporating a route-variation option recommended in comments between the Draft

and Final EIS. The Flagstaff B – Durkee Alternative begins on Riverdale Hill paralleling an existing 230-kV transmission line to the south passing to the east of Magpie Peak. Beginning 1 mile north of Oregon Route 203, the Flagstaff B Alternative follows the alignment of the Flagstaff A Alternative for approximately 0.6 mile before joining a new alignment the result of route-variation options to avoid private lands and agricultural operations recommended since the Draft EIS was released for public review. The alternative follows an existing 230-kV transmission line for 1 mile before heading southeast into Flagstaff Gulch before turning southwest crossing Oregon Route 86 1 mile west of Flagstaff Hill. The route turns to the southwest before turning south as it closely parallels the existing 230-kV transmission line for 3 miles and then travels south to Interstate 84, roughly paralleling the interstate for 9 miles. To the east of Straw Ranch Creek, the alternative route crosses a 138-kV transmission line and Interstate 84 and follows a route-variation option recommended by Baker County. The alternative route travels south for 11 miles crossing Burnt River Canyon and below Sheep Mountain before turning and heading east on the northeastern flank of Pedro Mountain, crossing Dixie Creek twice, and the Snake River Mormon Basin Backcountry Byway, to the end of Segment 3 at Dixie Creek approximately 0.5 mile west of Interstate 84.

Segment 4

Segment 4 begins at a point just south of Dixie in Baker County and ends at a point south of Jamieson in Malheur County. The three alternative routes and one area of local route variations in Segment 4 are shown on Map 2-7d of the Final EIS.

Applicant's Proposed Action

The Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative in Segment 4 was addressed in the Draft EIS and parallels an existing 138-kV transmission line to the south from Dixie Creek to Durbin Creek (west of the community of Huntington), approximately 5 miles, before turning to the southwest toward the community of Brogan. The route passes north of Lost Tom Mountain and then crosses Birch Creek and Phipps Creek east of Brogan. The transmission line would cross U.S. Highway 26, approximately 4 miles east of Brogan, where the route turns to the south running along the eastern flank of Cottonwood Mountain to the end of the Segment 4 north of Bully Creek.

Variation S4-A1 is the same alignment as Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative and Willow Creek Alternative paralleling an existing 138-kV transmission line from Dixie Creek to Durbin Creek (west of community of Huntington) for approximately 6 miles.

Variation S4-A2 separates from the Segment 4 alternatives by more closely paralleling the existing 138-kV transmission line from Dixie Creek to Durbin Creek (west of community of Huntington) for approximately 6 miles before rejoining the Segment 4 alternative routes.

Variation S4-A3 begins 0.2 mile west of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative before joining the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative for 0.4 mile before turning southeast to closely parallel the existing 138-kV transmission line from Dixie Creek to Durbin Creek (west of community of Huntington) for approximately 5 miles before rejoining the Segment 4 alternative routes.

Tub Mountain South

The Tub Mountain South Alternative, addressed in the Draft EIS, was developed to avoid Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in the Brogan area, and was identified in the Draft EIS as the Agency Preferred Alternative. The Tub Mountain South Alternative route was co-located to closely parallel an existing 138-kV transmission line to the south from Dixie Creek to Durbin Creek (west of the community of Huntington), approximately 5 miles, before turning to the southeast toward the Snake River. Where possible (Links 4-20 and 4-21), the route is within a WWEC and a BLM-designated utility corridor (along the northern portion of Link 4-75). This route passes within 1 mile of Farewell Bend State Recreation Area, adjacent to an existing 138-kV transmission line, where the alternative route turns south crossing Pine Tree Ridge and along the eastern flank of Tub Mountain. On the Alkali Flats, 8 miles north of the community of Vale, this alternative turns toward the southwest crossing Willow Creek and U.S. Highway 26 to the end of Segment 4 north of Bully Creek.

Willow Creek

The Willow Creek Alternative, addressed in the Draft EIS, was developed to avoid Greater Sage-Grouse habitat and several known Greater Sage-Grouse leks. The Willow Creek Alternative route parallels an existing 138-kV transmission line to the south from Dixie Creek to Durbin Creek (west of the community of Huntington), approximately 5 miles, before continuing to the south toward Birch Creek. In this area, the route turns to the southwest passing south of Striped Mountain, Brosman Mountain, and McDowell Butte. Approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the community of Jamieson, at the crossing of U.S. Highway 26, the route turns to the south to pass between Sugarloaf Butte and Hope Butte to the end of Segment 4 north of Bully Creek.

Segment 5

Segment 5 begins at a point south of Jamieson in Malheur County and ends at a point 3 miles west of the Oregon-Idaho border. The three alternative routes and two areas of local route variations in Segment 5 are shown on Map 2-7e of the Final EIS.

Applicant's Proposed Action

The Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative in Segment 5 was identified as the Agency Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS. It crosses Bully Creek at the beginning of Segment 5 traveling to the south where the route crosses Malheur Canyon and U.S. Highway 20 before turning toward the east to pass around the north side of Double Mountain. The route then continues to the southeast crossing the Owyhee River in a portion of the river determined by the BLM to be suitable for designation as a National WSR. South of the Owyhee River, the transmission line would continue to the southeast to the end of Segment 5 near Succor Creek approximately 3 miles west of the Oregon-Idaho border.

Variation S5-A1 addressed in the Draft EIS, was developed to avoid crossing lands with wilderness characteristics. Variation S5-A1 is the alignment of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative south of U.S. Highway 20 to Cow Hollow for a distance of approximately 7 miles.

Variation S5-A2 addressed in the Draft EIS, separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative, south of U.S. Highway 20, by being located about a mile farther to the south before rejoining the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative in Cow Hollow. Variation S5-A2 crosses areas of lands with wilderness characteristics.

Variation S5-B1 addressed in the Draft EIS, is the alignment of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative across the Owyhee River in an area determined by the BLM to be suitable for designation as a National WSR for a distance of approximately 2.5 miles.

Variation S5-B2 was not addressed in the Draft EIS and is a route-variation option developed by the BLM farther to the northeast and outside the area determined to be suitable for wild and scenic designation. Variation S5-B2 separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative at the crossing of the Owyhee River.

Malheur S

The Malheur S Alternative, addressed in the Draft EIS, was developed to avoid privately owned farmland and to avoid lands with wilderness characteristics. Malheur S Alternative crosses Bully Creek at the beginning of Segment 5 traveling to south where the route crosses Malheur Canyon and U.S. Highway 20 into Sand Hollow. North of Grassy Mountain, this alternative turns to the southeast to cross the Owyhee River in the Owyhee River Below the Dam Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and a portion suitable for wild and scenic designation, north of an existing 500-kV transmission line 2.5 miles north of the Owyhee Dam. The transmission line would continue to parallel the existing 500-kV transmission line to the southeast to the end of Segment 5 near Succor Creek approximately 3 miles west of the Oregon-Idaho border.

Malheur A

The Malheur A Alternative, addressed in the Draft EIS, was developed to be within or parallel the WWEC in the vicinity of the Owyhee Dam. Malheur A Alternative crosses Bully Creek at the beginning of Segment 5 traveling to south where the route crosses Malheur Canyon and U.S. Highway 20 into Sand Hollow. North of Grassy Mountain, this alternative turns to the southeast to cross the Owyhee River, in the Owyhee River Below the Dam ACEC and a portion suitable for wild and scenic designation, south of an existing 500-kV transmission line 1.5 miles north of the Owyhee Dam. The transmission line would continue to parallel the existing 500-kV transmission line to the southeast to the end of Segment 5 near Succor Creek approximately 3 miles west of the Oregon-Idaho border.

Segment 6

Segment 6 begins at a point approximately 3 miles west of the Oregon-Idaho border and ends at the Hemingway Substation in Owyhee County, Idaho. The one route and two areas of local route variations in Segment 6 are shown on Map 2-7f of the Final EIS.

Applicant's Proposed Action

The Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative in Segment 6, addressed in the Draft EIS, begins near Succor Creek, approximately 3 miles west of the Oregon-Idaho border, traveling to the southeast into Idaho adjacent to an existing 500-kV transmission line, along the northwestern flank of the Owyhee Mountains. This route is located northeast of Jump Creek Canyon ACEC and further to the southeast is located within a designated WWEC, crossing U.S. Highway 95 and Reynolds Creek before entering the existing Hemingway Substation 7 miles west of the community of Melba, Idaho.

Variation S6-A1 is the alignment of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative from Succor Creek, crossing the Oregon-Idaho border, to Jump Creek for a total distance of 9 miles in proximity to the existing 500-kV transmission line.

Variation S6-A2 was developed between the Draft and Final EIS by the BLM. Variation S6-A2 separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative at Succor Creek, to more closely parallel the existing 500-kV transmission line and to be located within the designated WWEC to Jump Creek.

Variation S6-B1 is the alignment of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative from Jump Creek to Wilson Creek, 2.5 miles northwest of the existing Hemingway Substation, for a total distance of 14 miles. This route more closely parallels the existing 500-kV transmission line in the designated WWEC.

Variation S6-B2 was developed between the Draft and Final EIS by the BLM. Variation S6-B2 separates from the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative at Jump Creek and crosses in proximity to the Jump Creek Canyon ACEC than Variation S6-B1 traveling to the southeast for 14 miles to Wilson Creek, 2.5 miles northwest of the existing Hemingway Substation. This route is not located as close to the existing 500-kV transmission line as Variation S6-B1 since it is located along the southwest edge of the WWEC to allow for future linear utilities to be sited between the proposed and the existing transmission lines.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative describes the reasonably foreseeable outcome that would result from denying the Applicant's request for a ROW grant and special use authorization to construct the proposed B2H Project. If no action is taken, the BLM would not grant a ROW, the USFS would not grant a special use authorization, and other potentially affected Federal agencies would not grant applicable authorizations or permits to cross Federal lands and the transmission line and ancillary facilities would not be constructed on Federal lands. Additionally, the objectives of the signatories to the 2009 MOU to accommodate additional electrical generation capacity, improve reliability, and reduce congestion by expanding and modernizing the transmission grid through the B2H Project would not be met. The Applicant's objectives for the B2H Project, which include providing additional capacity to connect the Pacific Northwest region with the Intermountain region of southern Idaho to alleviate existing transmission constraints between the two areas and to ensure sufficient capacity so that Idaho Power can meet present and forecasted load requirements (Section 1.4) would not be met.

The No Action Alternative is intended to describe the existing and future state of the environment in the absence of the Proposed Action. It provides a baseline for comparing

environmental effects of the action and demonstrates the consequences of not granting a ROW and authorizing special use.

Alternatives Considered But Not Studied in Detail

Section 6.6.3 of BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1 (BLM 2008) provides that a suggested alternative to a proposed action may be considered but eliminated from detailed analysis if:

- It is ineffective (it would not respond to the BLM's purpose and need).
- It is technically or economically infeasible.
- It is inconsistent with the basic policy objectives for the management of the area (such as not conforming to the BLM's RMPs or the USFS Land and Resource Management Plan).
- Its implementation is remote or speculative.
- It is substantially similar in design to an alternative that is analyzed.
- It would have substantially similar effects on an alternative that is analyzed.

The alternatives and modifications to the Proposed Action, features and technologies described here were not carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS. The process for eliminating alternatives from detailed analysis complies with 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(a) of the CEQ regulations. A description of each alternative considered but eliminated from detailed analysis, along with the rationale for elimination, is provided in Section 2.5.4 of the Final EIS.

Transmission Line Routes Considered and Eliminated

The Applicant's process to identify alternative routes and, ultimately, an Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative route for the proposed transmission line is summarized in the 2010 Siting Study (Idaho Power Company 2010b) and 2012 Supplemental Siting Study (Idaho Power Company 2012). In response to comments on the Draft EIS, revisions were made to the network of alternative routes to address in the Final EIS. A number of comments on the Draft EIS offered recommendations for route-variation options as variations of sections of the longer alternative routes. The BLM evaluated each route-variation option and many of the route-variation options were carried forward as sections of alternative routes in the Final EIS; only a few were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis in the EIS (Section 2.5.4.3). Descriptions of the recommended route-variation options are provided in Section 2.1.1.3 of the Final EIS. The network of alternative routes carried forward for analyze in the Final EIS is shown on Maps S-2a and S-2b of the Final EIS.

Alternatives to a Transmission Line Option

Locate Energy Production at the Point of Demand to Avoid the Need for Transmission

The B2H Project is not designed to transmit electrical power from any identified power source or to any identified load center. The purpose of the B2H Project is to increase transmission capacity connecting the Pacific Northwest to the Intermountain Region of southern Idaho and to alleviate existing transmission constraints to ensure sufficient capacity to meet projected

increased system loads. This alternative was considered by the BLM but was eliminated from detailed analysis in the EIS as it would not meet the BLM's purpose and need to support improving infrastructure for distribution of energy resources needed to advance Federal policy direction in the EPAct aimed at increasing the capability and reliability of power transmission.

Employ Energy Conservation and Demand-Side Management to Reduce Energy Demand

Conservation and demand-side management consist of a variety of approaches to reduce electricity use, including energy efficiency and conservation, building and appliance standards, and load management and fuel substitution. The Applicant already encourages conservation by offering energy efficiency incentives to customers, sharing conservation tips and tools, and by providing energy efficiency education. The Applicant is required by both Federal and state laws to plan for and meet load and transmission requirements. The Applicant proposed the B2H Project to meet the system improvement commitments of its approved 2015 IRP. This alternative was considered by the BLM but was eliminated from detailed analysis in the EIS as it would not meet the BLM's purpose and need to support improving infrastructure for distribution of the energy resources needed and would not advance Federal policy direction in the EPAct aimed at increasing the capability and reliability of power transmission.

Agency Preferred Alternative

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(e), the Agency Preferred Alternative on Federal lands is the alternative route the BLM, in coordination with the cooperating agencies, believes would fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical, and other factors. The DOI's regulations at 43 C.F.R. § 46.20(d) allow the responsible official to render a decision on a proposed action as long as it is within the range of alternatives discussed in the relevant environmental document. The decision of the responsible official(s) may combine alternatives discussed, in the relevant environmental document, if the effects of such combined elements of alternatives are reasonably apparent from the analysis.

As described in Section 2.8 of the Final EIS, the BLM identified the Agency Preferred Alternative in coordination with the USFS, Tribes, and other Federal, state, and local agencies (cooperating agencies) using criteria-based key resource concerns and issues, and regulation and policy. The criteria used to help identify the Agency Preferred Alternative, described in the subsequent section of this ROD, are similar to those used to identify the environmental preferable action alternative with additional considerations. The additional criteria include the following:

- Maximizes use of existing designated utility corridors by locating within the corridors or paralleling existing linear utility rights-of-way;
- Avoids or minimizes impacts on resources that are regulated by law, after consideration of design features of the B2H Project for environmental protection and selective mitigation measures. This includes impacts on Greater sage-grouse;
- Avoids or minimizes impacts on resources that demonstrate potentially unavoidable adverse impacts after consideration of design features of the B2H Project for environmental protection and selective mitigation measures, even though those resources may not be regulated by law;
- Minimizes the need for plan amendments through conformance to land-use plans;

- Avoids or minimizes proximity to private residences and residential areas, thereby addressing concerns with public health and safety, aesthetics, visual effects, and others; and
- Minimizes use of private lands, assuming natural resource impacts are more or less similar.

If multiple alternatives meet the preceding criteria, the Agency Preferred Alternative would be the alternative that also minimizes technical constraints, construction, operation, and maintenance expense and/or time.

In addition, because a high percentage of the land that would be crossed by the proposed transmission line is privately owned (approximately 70 percent private or state, 30 percent federally administered), the BLM collaborated extensively with the affected counties to identify a route that would be responsive to their concerns.

Segment 1—Morrow-Umatilla

The Agency Preferred Alternative route exits the proposed Longhorn Substation to the south, crossing the boundary of the NWSTF Boardman at the northeastern corner and parallels the eastern boundary of the NWSTF Boardman on the west side of Bombing Range Road for approximately 7 miles. At that point, the route crosses over Bombing Range Road to the east, thereby avoiding the Resource Natural Area B; a Washington ground squirrel Resource Management Area; and traditional cultural properties (of religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes) on the NWSTF Boardman. The route proceeds across the road for approximately 350 feet where it intersects with and then parallels along the east side of Bombing Range Road to the south for approximately 3.6 miles. Map 2-12 in the Final EIS shows this portion of the alternative route. The Agency Preferred Alternative route then turns to the southeast and then south to a point where it intersects with the southernmost east-west route. This northern portion of the Agency Preferred Alternative (1) repurposes an existing use area currently occupied by the BPA 69-kV transmission line on the NWSTF Boardman (on the west side of and parallel to Bombing Range Road), (2) avoids airspace conflicts by complying with the Navy's requested 100-foot height restriction for transmission lines along Bombing Range Road, (3) avoids and/or minimize effects on areas planned for potential wind-farm development, (4) avoids and/or minimize effects on high-value agricultural lands, and (5) was developed and recommended through collaboration with Morrow and Umatilla counties and local stakeholders. The Agency Preferred Alternative route follows the southernmost east-west route, proposed by Morrow and Umatilla counties, to the east. The east-west section of the southern route was selected for a number of reasons. This east-west route minimizes effects on the areas of potential wind farm development and agricultural lands and, farther west, avoids the effects on an area of cultural importance to Native Americans in the area south of McKay Creek. In the southernmost portion of Segment 1, on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, the USFS identified its preference to use of the designated utility corridor, and endorsed the route as the USFS Agency Preferred Alternative on the Forest.

In comments on the Final EIS, the EPA (letter dated December 19, 2016) recommended an additional explanation regarding the selection of an Agency Preferred Alternative that is considerably different from the environmentally preferable action alternative in Segment 1.

As explained previously in this section, the criteria used to help identify the Agency Preferred Alternative are similar to those criteria used to identify the environmentally preferable

alternative, but with additional considerations. Because a high percentage of the land that would be crossed by the proposed transmission line (project wide) is privately owned, the BLM collaborated extensively with the affected counties to identify a route that would be responsive to their concerns. In Segment 1, the percentage of private lands crossed is much greater—approximately 87 percent. Most of the remaining 13 percent of the lands crossed by alternative routes and variations are Federal; most notably, approximately 7 miles of the NWSTF Boardman and 4.5 miles of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Below is the expanded explanation requested by the EPA.

The Environmentally and Agency Preferred Alternative identified in Segment 1 in the Draft EIS was the Longhorn Alternative (Draft EIS Section 2.5.2). Comments on the Draft EIS submitted by local businesses and landowners, local governments, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association (Final EIS Section 2.1.1.3) criticized both the Longhorn Alternative and the Longhorn Variation (East of Bombing Range Road Alternative in the Final EIS), expressing concern about the potential effects on irrigated agriculture and related economic effects. A number of commenters advocated for a route-variation option on the west side of Bombing Range Road on Federal land withdrawn for military use by the Navy (Final EIS Section 2.1.1). In response, the BLM and Applicant coordinated with local stakeholders and the Navy to develop the West of Bombing Range Road alternative variation.

Other comments on the Draft EIS from Umatilla County, the WildLands Defense, Glass Hill Coalition, Elk Song Ranch, the CTUIR, several individuals; and a consortium letter from the Oregon California Trail Association, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, Oregon Wind, and WildEarth Guardians recommended the route-variation option parallel to Interstate 84 in Umatilla County and/or existing transmission lines. The intent was to reduce impacts on privately owned lands along the Draft EIS alternatives (Longhorn Alternative, East of Bombing Alternative), consolidate linear infrastructure to avoid proliferation of utility corridors, and site the proposed transmission line in areas already disturbed by previous development (Final EIS at Section 2.1.1.3). In response to these Draft EIS comments, the BLM requested that the Applicant develop route variations co-located with Interstate 84 and/or the existing 230-kV transmission line in that area.

Between the Draft EIS and Final EIS, the BLM reviewed the alternative route variations with the Tribes and cooperating agencies (both state and local government agencies) and, because of the compelling preference for a variation west of Bombing Range Road by the stakeholders who would be affected most directly by the alternative routes and variations in Segment 1, extensive additional collaboration was conducted. This collaboration with the cooperating agencies resulted in further refinements to the West of Bombing Range Road alternative variation to develop a solution acceptable to the stakeholders. The BLM and Applicant coordinated with local stakeholders, local and state government, and the Navy to develop the alternative variation to: (1) repurpose the existing use area currently occupied by the BPA 69-kV transmission line on the NWSTF Boardman; (2) avoid airspace conflicts by complying with the Navy's 100-foot height restriction for transmission lines; (3) avoid environmentally sensitive areas on the NWSTF Boardman (i.e., Resource Natural Area B, Washington ground squirrel Resource Management Area, and traditional cultural properties); and (4) avoid crossing private lands and agricultural operations east of Bombing Range Road for approximately 7 of the 11 miles along the NWSTF Boardman boundary. In addition, Morrow and Umatilla counties coordinated to identify a variation continuing south from the West of Bombing Range Road alternative variation that would minimize effects on wind-farm development. Proceeding east, south of the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative, the variation identified by the counties crosses private

lands and does not parallel an existing transmission line, but is in an area where the terrain is not conducive to development and sensitive environmental resources are not as prevalent as along other alternatives and variations in Segment 1.

Regarding the Interstate 84 alternative variations, the Applicant attempted to site the alignments of the variations in a narrow corridor between the Interstate 84 ROW and/or between the existing 230-kV ROW and the existing agricultural operations (pivot and other mechanized irrigation). The western portion of the Interstate 84 variations: (1) would not be subject to the NWSTF Boardman height restrictions; (2) would avoid or minimize environmental effects in the already-disturbed area; and (3) avoids most of the pivot and other mechanized irrigation, the alignments would cross several parcels of private land; would constrain development of potential future agricultural use of those private lands, which could result in adverse economic effects; and may not comply with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality noise-control standards in Oregon Administrative Rule 340-35-0035, *Noise Control Regulations for Industry and Commerce*, which will be determined for the selected route for the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE), EFSC process and site certification.

Therefore, based on comments on the Draft EIS, alternative route variations were developed in Segment 1 to respond to the concerns expressed: (1) one that would repurpose approximately 7 miles of an existing utility corridor on Federal land, thereby reducing the amount of private lands crossed and potential effects on existing agricultural operations, and (2) one that would cross lands already disturbed by development thereby avoiding or minimizing effects on sensitive environmental resources, but crossing several private parcels, though avoiding agricultural operations to the extent practicable. Because of the compelling preference for a variation west of Bombing Range Road by the stakeholders who would be affected most directly by the alternative routes and variations in Segment 1 and because a high percentage of the lands in Segment 1 are private, the West of Bombing Range Road alternative variation was identified as the agency preferred.

Segment 2—Blue Mountains

The Agency Preferred Alternative in Segment 2 is the same as the environmentally preferable action alternative (i.e., a combination of Variation S2-A2 on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, the Glass Hill Alternative with Variation S2-D2, and Variation S2-F2 along the southern portion of Segment 2).

The preference of the USFS on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in this northern portion of the Segment 2 is to co-locate closer to the existing 230-kV transmission line within the USFS-designated utility corridor to the extent practicable (Variation S2-A2). The intent is to minimize vegetation removal and surface disturbance by using the existing service roads associated with the existing 230-kV transmission line.

Continuing on to the southeast, the environmentally preferable action alternative and Agency Preferred Alternative follow the Glass Hill Alternative, using the variation (Variation S2-D2, recommended in comments on the Draft EIS). In the area of Glass Hill, this alternative routing does not parallel existing linear facilities, but is west of and the farthest from La Grande and associated land uses and cultural resources (primarily historic sites), the Oregon NHT, associated cultural resource sites (resource issues of significance raised during scoping). Also, the Glass Hill Alternative avoids some high-value soils for potential agriculture, which exist along the other alternative routes to the east. In addition to other streams, the Glass Hill

Alternative crosses steelhead, Chinook salmon, and bull trout critical habitat in the Grande Ronde River. The route crosses through elk winter range on Elk Song Ranch. Use of Variation S2-D2 would result in avoiding the high elevation (unique ecology) of Cowboy Ridge and reducing potential views of the line from Morgan Lake recreation area. The route does cross steelhead critical habitat in Rock Creek and Graves Creek.

Along the southern portion of Segment 2, the environmentally preferable and Agency Preferred Alternative route parallels the existing 230-kV transmission line (Variation S2-F2) and avoids potential effects on center-pivot and other irrigated agricultural land, reduces effects on Greater-Sage-Grouse General Management Habitat Areas, and reduces effects on the Oregon NHT.

Segment 3—Baker Valley

The Agency Preferred Alternative in Segment 3 crosses interspersed private land and BLM-administered lands. Because it is not possible to locate a route entirely on BLM-administered land, the BLM collaborated with Baker County to identify route-variation options in areas of dense agriculture to minimize impacts on agricultural operations. The Agency Preferred Alternative is the Flagstaff B-Burnt River West Alternative.

In the northern portion of Segment 3, the Agency Preferred Alternative is co-located to parallel closer to an existing 230-kV transmission line and is the same as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative south to the Flagstaff B Variation. The Flagstaff B Variation is a combination of a portion of a route co-located closer to the existing 230-kV transmission line, the Draft EIS Flagstaff Alternative, and proposed route-variation options recommended by local stakeholders, including Baker County, as part of comments on the Draft EIS. This alternative route has been identified as the Agency Preferred Alternative because the route (1) parallels existing linear facilities along its entire length (existing 230-kV line along the northern portion and existing 138-kV line along the southernmost portion of the variation), (2) avoids and/or minimizes effects on Greater Sage-Grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas, (3) avoids and/or minimizes effects on irrigated agriculture, (4) minimizes impacts on a large gravel operation, and (5) as mentioned, the route-variation option was recommended by and developed in collaboration with Baker County and other local stakeholders. From the NHOTIC, the proposed transmission line would be viewed in context with consolidated development at the edge of the Baker Valley (i.e., the existing 230-kV transmission line and existing agricultural development). Similar to all of the alternative routes west of the NHOTIC, the Agency Preferred Alternative route would have reduced cumulative effects by consolidating development at the edge of the Baker Valley compared to the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative, which would include views of the transmission line and development to both the east and west.

At the southern end of the Flagstaff B Variation, where the alternative intersects with the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative, the Agency Preferred Alternative is the same as the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative – Burnt River West Variation. This segment of the Agency Preferred Alternative parallels an existing 138-kV transmission line for much of its length, avoids irrigated agriculture, avoids Greater Sage-Grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas, and avoids the Straw Ranch 1 parcel of the Oregon Trail ACEC.

In the southern portion of Segment 3, the Agency Preferred Alternative is the Burnt River West Variation, a route-variation option developed in coordination with Baker County to reduce impacts on irrigated agriculture, reduce impacts on Greater Sage-Grouse General Habitat

Management Areas, reduce the number of freeway crossings, and reduce visual impacts on the Chimney Creek Parcel of the Oregon Trail ACEC.

Segment 4—Brogan

The Agency Preferred Alternative in Segment 4, with a mixed private and Federal land-ownership pattern, is the Tub Mountain South Alternative, which was the Agency Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS. This alternative route parallels an existing 138-kV transmission line, parallels Interstate 84 to the area of Farewell Bend. The northern portion (along Links 4-20 and 4-21) is within a WVEC and is within BLM-designated utility corridor in the area of Farewell Bend. The alternative route then turns south and then southwest. This alternative route has been identified as the Agency Preferred Alternative because (1) avoids crossing most Greater Sage-Grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas and (2) avoids an area of irrigated agriculture of particular concern to local stakeholders. However, there would be substantive impacts on a broad cultural landscape that includes important pre-contact and historic cultural resources extending from the Farewell Bend area to the south. Malheur County and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the USFWS support this Agency Preferred Alternative recommendation. The CTUIR supports paralleling the transmission line and Interstate 84 to the Farewell Bend area, but preferred the route to cross over to the Willow Creek Alternative to avoid impacts on the broad cultural landscape south of the Farewell Bend area. However, the Willow Creek alternative crosses a substantial amount of Greater Sage-Grouse Priority Habitat Management Area. As part of recent comments on the alternative routes, Baker County did not express an opinion for a preferred alternative route in this area.

Segment 5—Malheur

Most of the lands crossed by the alternative routes in Segment 5 are administered by the BLM with some private land interspersed. The Agency Preferred Alternative in Segment 5 is the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative with a variation at the crossing of the Owyhee River. This variation, not addressed in the Draft EIS, was developed to avoid lands with wilderness characteristics in the Double Mountain area; avoid impacts on an ACEC; use portions of the BLM-designated utility corridor along the southern portion of Segment 5; and minimizes habitat fragmentation, impacts on cultural resources, and to avoid impacts on an area of the Owyhee River determined suitable for designation as a National WSR.

The variation at the crossing of the Owyhee River was developed by the BLM between the Draft and Final EIS to relocate the alignment farther to the northeast out of the area determined by the BLM suitable for designation as a National WSR. Malheur County stated it has received no input from residents in the area and, thus Malheur County is taking a neutral position on this alternative route. The Joint Committee of the Owyhee Project and the Owyhee Irrigation District expressed concern that the transmission line crossing of the river in this area could interfere with operations, and expressed a preference for the Malheur A or S alternatives. However, these alternative routes cross the river in the same corridor determined by the BLM as suitable for designation as a National WSR.

Segment 6—Treasure Valley

In Segment 6, most of the lands crossed are administered by the BLM. In the northwestern portion of the segment, the BLM's recommendation for the Agency Preferred Alternative is to use the Applicant's Proposed Action Alternative. There is mixed Federal, state, and private land ownership in this portion of the segment and the Applicant's Proposed Action would avoid crossing three additional landowners (at the request of Owyhee County where land-owner permission is required and has not been given by these three additional landowners), and to have more distance from a large cultural resource area known as Graveyard Point. In the southeastern portion of Segment 6, the BLM's recommendation for the Agency Preferred Alternative is to use the route variation, allowing for efficient use of the WWEC on BLM-administered land to preserve space for future use of the corridor.

Environmentally Preferable Action Alternative

The CEQ regulations require the ROD to identify one or more environmentally preferable alternative(s) (40 C.F.R. § 1505.2(b)). The alternative route that results in the least impact on the natural, human, and cultural environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources is the environmentally preferable action alternative.

Comments on the Draft EIS recommended local route variations (i.e., variations of alternative routes addressed in the Draft EIS). In some cases, these route variations were developed by counties working with local stakeholders. Because of the additional variations, all alternative routes were analyzed and compared for the Final EIS. As a result, the environmentally preferable action alternative route that emerged from the analysis for the Final EIS is the route exhibiting the least effects overall on the natural, human, and cultural environment. Key considerations to compare the relative impacts among alternative routes included the following:

- Vegetation: Native Grassland, Shrubland, Forest, Riparian vegetation communities
- Wildlife: Washington ground squirrel, Greater Sage-Grouse, big game winter range
- Fisheries: ESA-listed fish species, Essential Fish Habitat
- Land uses: relevant and important values or characteristics of certain land uses established for conservation or recreation (specially designated areas, Potential Congressional Designations, managed recreation areas), lands with wilderness characteristics, paralleling existing linear facilities, consideration of existing development (e.g., commercial, residential)
- Agriculture: existing agriculture (i.e., irrigated agriculture and crop production), soils important to farming as identified in Federal and state law (i.e., high-value soils and important farmland), Conservation Reserve Program lands (agricultural lands in the B2H Project area are important because of the high-quality soils associated with the Columbia River Basin, proximity to processing facilities, and flat topography)
- NHTs/study trails: direct, indirect effects on trails
- Visual resources: scenic quality/landscape character, visibility from key observation points (residential, recreation, historic and scenic travel routes)
- Cultural resources: NRHP-eligible and listed properties, sites and/or areas of concern to Native Americans, cultural landscapes, and other areas of cultural significance

The combinations of alternative routes and route variations that compose the environmentally preferable action alternative are summarized in Table S-3 of the Final EIS and below.

- **Segment 1** – Interstate 84 – Southern Route Alternative with Variation S1-A2
- **Segment 2** – Glass Hill Alternative with Variations S2-A2, S2-D2, and S2-F2
- **Segment 3** – Flagstaff B – Burnt River West Alternative with Variations S3-A2 and S3-B4
- **Segment 4** – Tub Mountain South Alternative with Variation S4-A2
- **Segment 5** – Applicant’s Proposed Action Alternative with Variation S5-B2
- **Segment 6** – Applicant’s Proposed Action Alternative with Variations S6-A2 and S6-B2

Relationship with Other Plans, Policies, and Programs

Land-use Plan Compliance

BLM lands are administered with direction from land use plans that establish the goals and objectives for the management of the resources that would be affected by the Proposed Action. The B2H Project area includes lands administered by the BLM Baker and Malheur Field Offices in Oregon and the Owyhee Field Office in Idaho. The relevant approved management plans include the following:

- 1989 Record of Decision and Approved Baker Resource Management Plan – Vale District Office;
- 2002 Record of Decision and Approved Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan – Vale District Office; and
- 1999 Owyhee Resource Management Plan – Owyhee Field Office

The BLM has determined that the ROW would not conform to certain aspects of the Baker and Southeastern Oregon RMP and that plan amendments for these RMPs are required. This ROD includes a decision to amend portions of the two BLM Oregon RMPs (refer to the Decision section of this ROD). With approval of these plan amendments, the B2H Project will conform to the approved RMPs.

State, County and Local Plans

State, county, and local plans were considered during the development of the Draft and Final EISs. Applicable plans are listed and referenced in Section 1.9 in the Final EIS.

Upon publication of the Final EIS, the Governor of Oregon conducted consistency review for the proposed plan amendments to identify any inconsistencies with State or local plans, policies, or programs. No inconsistencies were identified.

Other Laws

Endangered Species Act

Under the provisions of Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, a Federal agency that carries out, permits, licenses, funds, or otherwise authorizes an activity must consult with the USFWS as appropriate to ensure the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species listed under the ESA or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat.

Consultation activities to meet the Section 7 requirements are detailed in the Consultation section of this ROD.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. §§ 703-712) states it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture, or kill; attempt to take, capture, or kill; or possess any migratory bird, part, nest, egg or product, manufactured or not. The MBTA provides a framework for state-managed hunting of some species and authorizes the issuance of permits for take of other birds under limited conditions such as for falconry, research, conservation, and to prevent crop predations.

Executive Order 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, directs Federal agencies to take certain actions to further implement the MBTA. The Federal agencies are directed to develop and implement an MOU with the USFWS to promote conservation of migratory bird populations. As such, *BLM Memorandum of Understanding WO-230-2010-04 Between the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Promote the Conservation of Migratory Birds* outlines a collaborative approach to promote the conservation of migratory bird populations and is intended to strengthen migratory bird conservation efforts by identifying and implementing strategies to promote conservation and reduce or eliminate adverse impacts on migratory birds through enhanced collaboration between the BLM and the USFWS in coordination with state, tribal, and local governments. Several design features of the B2H Project for environmental protection are aimed at avoiding or minimizing B2H Project effects on migratory birds, including raptors. Additional mitigation requirements to avoid or minimize effects on migratory birds, including raptors, are presented in Appendix B of this ROD.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 668-668c), enacted in 1940 as amended, prohibits, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, anyone from taking eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. Several design features of the B2H Project are aimed at avoiding or minimizing B2H Project effects on bald and golden eagles and other raptors. Additional mitigation requirements to avoid or minimize effects on raptors are presented in Appendix B of this ROD.

Clean Air Act

Temporary effects on air quality would result from fugitive dust and emissions from vehicles and equipment during construction. Construction activities that would generate emissions include land clearing, ground excavation, and cut and fill operations. The intermittent and short-term emissions generated by these activities would include dust from surface disturbance and combustion emissions from the construction equipment. Emissions associated with construction equipment include PM₁₀ (particulate matter less than 10 microns), PM_{2.5} (particulate matter less than 2.5 microns), nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, sulfur oxides, and small amounts of air toxic pollutants. These emissions could result in low, short-term impacts on air quality in the immediate vicinity of B2H Project construction.

In the absence of more refined analysis, the BLM will require Tier 3 or better diesel equipment to provide a reasonable assurance that 1-hour nitrogen dioxide impacts will not exceed that National Ambient Air Quality Standard. This requirement is documented in Appendix B of this ROD.

Safe Drinking Water Act

Potential impacts of the Selected Alternative on drinking water sources (i.e., wells, springs, and shallow groundwater) were determined to be low (refer to Section 3.2.2 of the Final EIS).

Clean Water Act, Executive Order 11988, and Executive Order 11990

The B2H Project has been designed to comply with the requirements of Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Wetland Protection), and Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act (refer to Sections 3.2.2, 3.2.3, and 3.2.5 of the Final EIS).

Paleontological Resources Preservation Act

Surveys for paleontological resources will be conducted, in accordance with the framework for the Paleontological Resources Treatment Plan (PRTP) and the survey protocols in Appendix D of the POD, to identify significant paleontological resources in the inventory area. Excavation activities, erosion of fossil beds exposed due to grading, and unauthorized collection could damage or destroy paleontological resources during construction.

The PRTP was prepared to comply with the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009 (PRPA) and the requirements of the BLM Manual 8270 and Handbook H-8270-1, General Procedural Guidance for Paleontological Resource Management, as well as certain state and local government lands. Specific measures to meet the requirements and conditions of the PRPA, any additional BLM requirements, and the conditions are included in the PRTP that has been approved by the BLM and the relevant state agencies.

Environmental Justice, Executive Order 12898

Potential environmental justice populations are not expected to be disproportionately affected by impacts associated with construction of the B2H Project (refer to Section 3.2.17 of the Final EIS).

Migratory Birds, Executive Order 13186

On April 12, 2010, a National MOU between the BLM and the USFWS was entered into to promote the conservation of migratory birds. The analysis regarding migratory birds presented in the Final EIS is compliant with the terms of both the National MOU (refer to Section 3.2.4 and Appendix E of the Final EIS) and Executive Order 13186. Mitigation requirements related to migratory birds are discussed in Appendix B of this ROD.

Consultation

The BLM is required to prepare EISs in coordination with any studies or analyses required by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. § 661 et seq.), ESA, and the NHPA. Also, in accordance with Executive Order 13175, BLM also must consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis regarding actions that may affect them.

Consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act

Section 7 of the ESA, as amended, calls for interagency cooperation to conserve federally listed species and designated critical habitats. Pursuant to Section 7, Federal agencies are required to consult with the USFWS, the NOAA Fisheries (formerly, the National Marine Fisheries Service), or both on all projects that may affect federally listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species (including plants, fish, and wildlife and their critical habitats). In accordance with these regulations, the USFWS has participated in B2H Project-related discussions and meetings even before the initiation of the EIS.

Preliminary coordination for the B2H Project began with a biological resources and Level 1 Team meeting held in August 2008.

The NOAA Fisheries was invited to B2H Project meetings beginning in July 2012 when it became clear that the proposed B2H Project may affect species and their critical habitats under its jurisdiction.

The USFWS lists of endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species and designated critical habitats in Oregon and Idaho counties where B2H Project activities may occur were periodically reviewed and B2H Project data have been updated, as appropriate.

The most recent review of these lists was completed in March 2016. Coordination between the BLM (including cooperating agencies) and USFWS and NOAA Fisheries has continued throughout the development of the EIS and has included meetings, conference calls, letters, and other correspondence. Initial coordination was carried out through by the Biological Resource Work Group, and in July 2014, the BLM established the Biological Resources Task Group composed of the biologists from the BLM, USFS, Reclamation, USFWS, and state wildlife agencies. The Biological Resources Task Group meets via conference call once a month to discuss the status of the B2H Project and key biological resource issues related to the B2H Project, as well as the approach to address these issues.

In early 2016, the USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, BLM, USFS, Reclamation, USACE, and BPA (Federal agencies with the authority and responsibility to perform certain actions associated with the B2H Project) entered into a Consultation Agreement. The Agreement addresses interagency coordination for the affirmative conservation and recovery of listed species under Section 7(a)(1) of the ESA. Section 7(a)(1) directs all Federal agencies to use their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of the ESA by “carrying out programs for the conservation and recovery of listed species.” Pursuant to Section 7(a)(1), the Agreement clarifies agency roles during consultation under Section 7(a)(2) for the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the Proposed Action on listed species, species proposed for listing, and their associated designated or proposed critical habitat. In coordination with appropriate state natural resource management agencies that have trust authority for non-listed species, the Agreement also speaks to

interagency coordination for the conservation of, and assessment of effects on, candidate species that may be affected by the B2H Project.

Two biological assessments were prepared to evaluate the effects of the selected transmission line route on species listed under the ESA—one evaluating the effects on terrestrial and inland aquatic species was submitted to the USFWS, and one evaluating the effects on anadromous fish species (those species that migrate inland from the ocean to spawn) was submitted to NOAA Fisheries. Submittal of the BA to NOAA Fisheries initiated the formal Section 7 consultation process. The BO issued by NOAA Fisheries (dated February 28, 2017) and the letter of concurrence issued by the USFWS (dated January 18, 2017) have been incorporated into the ROD. All conservation measures for federally listed species as identified in the USFWS Final BA including addendum (dated December 15, 2017) and the NOAA Fisheries BO are incorporated into this ROD and are a term and condition of any ROW grant issued; and will be incorporated into the final POD.

Note that the Navy is responsible for Section 7 consultation on lands administered by the Navy and would lead consultation, if needed, for ESA-listed species on the NWSTF Boardman in Segment 1.

Consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Section 106 of the NHPA (54 U.S.C. § 306108) requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of actions on historic properties eligible for or listed in the NRHP. The ACHP's Section 106 regulations (36 C.F.R. Part 800) define how Federal agencies meet their statutory responsibilities as required under the law. The Section 106 process seeks to accommodate historic preservation concerns with the needs of Federal undertakings through consultation among the agency official and other parties with an interest in the effects of the undertaking on historic properties (36 C.F.R. § 800.1). These parties include the ACHP, SHPOs, Indian tribes, THPOs, state and other Federal agencies, and individuals or organizations with a demonstrated interest in the undertaking due to their legal or economic relation to the undertaking or affected properties, or their concern with the effects of undertakings on historic properties (36 C.F.R. § 800.2).

As the lead Federal agency for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, the BLM initiated Section 106 consultation with the following agencies, tribal governments, and organizations:

Federal

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District
- Bonneville Power Administration
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Fish and Wildlife Service, Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
 - Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area
 - Lewis and Clark Trail Office
 - National Historic Trails System Office
 - National Trust for Historic Preservation

Tribal Governments

- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe
- Nez Perce Tribe (including the Joseph Band of the Nez Perce)
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation
- Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation
- Yakama Nation

State

- Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
- Oregon Department of Energy
- Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council
- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
- Washington State Historic Preservation Office

County

- Baker County
- Morrow County
- Union County

Local

- Baker City

Organizations

- Halt Idaho Power
- Ice Age Floods Institute
- Ice Age Floods Institute, Columbia Gorge Chapter
- Ice Age Floods Institute, Lake Lewis Chapter
- Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Headquarters and Washington and Oregon Chapters
- Lewis and Clark Trust
- Malheur County Historical Society
- Oregon-California Trail Association Oregon and Idaho Chapters
- Poison Creek Neighborhood Group

Note that the Navy is responsible for consultation on lands administered by the Navy and would lead consultation, if needed, for sensitive historic properties that could be affected on the NWSTF Boardman.

Parties to Section 106 consultation also include several members of the public who possess a demonstrable interest in historic properties located within the B2H Project area and have petitioned the BLM in writing to participate in consultation.

After initiating Section 106 consultation, the BLM invited all consulting parties to attend a 1-day meeting in La Grande, Oregon, to review the scope and status of the undertaking, and apprise parties of the agency's ongoing efforts to identify historic properties that may be affected by the B2H Project. The meeting—held on August 16, 2011, at Eastern Oregon University—involved representatives from agencies, contractors, and consulting parties, and resulted in the formation of a consulting party workgroup to collaborate on development of a Programmatic Agreement to provide for the phased identification, evaluation, and effects assessment for historic properties in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800.14(b).

A Programmatic Agreement is a legally binding document that identifies the terms and conditions agreed on to fulfill the lead Federal agency's compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800.14(b) and 36 C.F.R. § 800.16(t). A Programmatic Agreement documents an alternative process to the procedures set forth in the regulations, and can be employed when effects on historic properties are similar and repetitive or are multistate or regional in scope or when effects cannot be fully determined before approval of an undertaking.

Between September 17, 2011, and September 10, 2014, the consulting party workgroup met via webinar and teleconference on 34 occasions to develop sections of the B2H Project Programmatic Agreement. The draft Programmatic Agreement was included in the Draft EIS (Appendix G) for public review and comments, and the final Programmatic Agreement is included in this Final EIS in Appendix I. The BLM has continued to receive comments on and refine the draft B2H Project Programmatic Agreement from consulting parties. The B2H Project Programmatic Agreement was fully executed on February 7, 2017, and is included in this ROD as Appendix E.

Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation

The United States has a unique legal relationship with American Indian Tribal governments as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, Executive Orders (e.g., Executive Order 13175), Federal statutes, Federal policy, and tribal requirements, which establish the interaction that must take place between Federal and tribal governments.

As sovereign nations, federally recognized Tribal governments retain legal rights and benefits with respect to their relationship with the U.S. Government. Many of the rights were reserved in treaties, executive orders, or statutes. This relationship is founded on the U.S. Government's trust responsibilities to safeguard tribal sovereignty and self-determination, as well as tribal lands, assets, and resources reserved by treaty and other federally recognized rights. Federal agencies are required by both statute and regulation to consult with tribal governments on a government-to-government basis on Federal actions or undertakings that may affect "trust assets," including cultural and natural resources, of concern to the tribal governments on Federal land. These statutes include, but are not limited to, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, NEPA, NHPA, and Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Executive and secretarial orders further establish the relationships between Federal agencies and tribal governments. These include Executive Orders 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites), 13084 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments), and 13175 (Consultation with Indian Tribal Governments); Secretarial Orders 3175 (Departmental Responsibilities for Indian Trust Resources) and 3206 (American Indian Tribal Rights and the ESA); and executive

memoranda issued in September 2004 (Government-to-Government Relationship with Tribal Governments) and October 2009 (Tribal Consultation). A more complete list of the regulatory requirements is identified in Section 3.2.14.1 of the Final EIS.

Government-to-government consultation involves the process of seeking, discussing, and considering tribal governments' views on policies, undertakings, and decisions such as environmental review of the proposed B2H Project. Government-to-government consultation is guided by BLM Manual Handbook 1780 *Tribal Relations* (BLM 2016); by the provisions of Secretarial Order 3317 (Department of the Interior Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes); and the Department of the Interior Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes transmitted through BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-062 (BLM 2012) (both now formalized in BLM Manual 512 DM 4 and 5, which specifies meaningful direct involvement of the agency official with delegated authority for actions and conduct of consultation within the context of ongoing relationships involving regularly recurring meetings where appropriate.

In letters dated August 21, 2008, the BLM formally initiated consultation with eight tribal governments that previously have expressed connection to lands associated with the B2H Project area to inform them of the B2H Project and to inquire about their interest in continuing government-to-government consultation. The contacted tribal governments are as follows:

- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon
- Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe
- Nez Perce Tribe (including the Joseph Band of the Nez Perce)
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation
- Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation

Subsequently, on May 4, 2011, a revised scoping report was mailed to the aforementioned eight tribal governments, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, and the following tribal governments:

- Yakama Nation
- Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Klamath Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians
- Coquille Indian Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians
- Kalispel Tribe
- Fort Bidwell Indian Community
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Spokane Tribe
- Samish Indian Nation

Consultation generally has involved formal letters and submission of material via U.S. Postal Service Certified Mail, with follow-up telephone contact. The venue for government-to-government consultation for the B2H Project has followed the established form of contact

preferred by each tribe. Appendix A provides a record of government-to-government consultation activities for the B2H Project.

Two tribal governments, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation and the CTUIR, have indicated regular meetings as their preferred form of consultation on the B2H Project.

Government-to-government consultation has taken place and will continue to take place between the BLM and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation through third-party-facilitated ad hoc Wings and Roots meetings, held at the BLM Boise District Office or BLM Idaho State Office. The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation provide their concerns about the B2H Project and comments on work products (such as the Programmatic Agreement and associated plans, Draft EIS, draft Final EIS) directly to the BLM at these meetings. Although the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation have participated in consultation on the development of the B2H Project Programmatic Agreement, they have indicated that their concerns about the B2H Project are much broader than the topics under the scope of NHPA consultation. They expressed concern about the limited definition of “historic properties” under Section 106 and developed a separate MOU agreement document with the BLM Idaho State Office (signed in 2015) to address their concerns about B2H Project impacts on cultural resources considered important to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.

The CTUIR have provided comments both through the scoping process and through formal government-to-government consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA. Consultation with the CTUIR has occurred through face-to-face and conference-call meetings. Through consultation, the CTUIR provide comments on work products (such as the Programmatic Agreement and associated plans, Draft EIS, draft Final EIS) and have expressed concerns. While no CTUIR reservation lands are crossed, there were concerns with indirect effects to reservation lands. The CTUIR signed the Project Programmatic Agreement on January 22, 2017. Concerns include the level of effort (pedestrian inventory of 15 percent random sample of lands within the area of potential effects) employed to identify historic properties, as well as the general time frame for responding to their concerns about B2H Project communications and the timeliness of response to their comments on documents.

Note that the Navy is responsible for government-to-government tribal consultation on lands administered by the Navy and would lead consultation, if needed, for sensitive historic properties that could be affected on the NWSTF Boardman in Segment 1 of the B2H Project.

Cooperating Agencies

Agencies cooperating in the preparation of the EIS include the following:

Federal

- Department of Agriculture
 - Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
- Department of Defense
 - Department of the Army
 - Army Corps of Engineers
 - Department of the Navy

- Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (for Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility Boardman)
- Department of Energy
 - Bonneville Power Administration
- Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1
- Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

State

- Idaho Governor's Office (Idaho Office of Energy Resources)
- Oregon Department of Energy
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Local

- Morrow County, Oregon
- Umatilla County, Oregon
- Union County, Oregon
- Baker County, Oregon
- Malheur County, Oregon
- Payette County, Idaho
- City of Boardman, Oregon
- Owyhee Irrigation District, Oregon
- Joint Committee of the Owyhee Project, Oregon

Public Involvement

Scoping Process

The Applicant submitted its initial application to the BLM on December 19, 2007 (Idaho Power Company 2007) and to the USFS on March 25, 2008 (Idaho Power Company 2008). On September 12, 2008, the BLM published an NOI to prepare the B2H Project EIS (BLM and USFS 2008). The BLM, USFS, and ODOE hosted six public scoping meetings in October 2008 to provide information to the public and agencies and to provide an opportunity for meeting attendees to identify issues and concerns.

Following Applicant-initiated activities (Section 1.6.2 of the Final EIS), the Applicant (Idaho Power Company 2010a) submitted a revised application and preliminary POD to BLM, USFS, and Reclamation on June 21, 2010. On July 27, 2010, the BLM published in the *Federal Register* a revised NOI to prepare the B2H Project EIS (BLM and USFS 2010). Due to the revised application, the BLM and USFS initiated an additional scoping period that occurred from July 27 through September 27, 2010, with eight public scoping meetings conducted in Oregon and Idaho during August 2010. The Revised Scoping Report, published in April 2011 (BLM 2011a), lists the dates and locations of the public scoping meetings and the issues identified during the two scoping periods. The Revised Scoping Report also incorporates the comments

received during the Applicant-sponsored public outreach. This report is available online at <http://www.boardmantohemingway.com/documents.aspx>.

In July 2012, the BLM conducted four landowner meetings in Oregon (Baker City, Durkee, Brogan, and North Powder) to update landowners about the status of the B2H Project. In August 2012, the BLM hosted six public open houses—five in Oregon (Boardman, Pilot Rock, La Grande, Baker City, and Ontario) and one in Idaho (Marsing)—to discuss the alternative routes being considered for analysis in the EIS, to answer questions, and to identify future comment and input opportunities.

In addition to the formal scoping activities, the BLM, ODOE, and Applicant jointly developed a B2H Project website (<http://www.boardmantohemingway.com/>) to publish status updates and information and to solicit questions and input from agencies, stakeholders, and the general public. Newsletters, meeting announcements, and B2H Project documents also are available on the B2H Project website.

Public Review Process

The BLM published a NOI in the *Federal Register* on July 27, 2010 (Vol. 75, No. 143, pages 44008-44010), announcing the preparation of the EIS for the proposed B2H Project and the opportunity for the public to participate in the process and provide input. The publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* marked the beginning of EIS preparation and the scoping process.

The BLM published a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS and Land Use Plan (LUP) Amendments for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on December 19, 2014 (Volume 79, Issue 244, pages 73834-75836). The EPA also published a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS and LUP Amendments in the *Federal Register* on the same day, which initiated a 90-day review and comment period. The availability of the Draft EIS and LUP Amendments; deadline for public comments; and locations, dates, and times of public meetings were announced in paid newspaper legal notices, paid newspaper advertisements, on the B2H Project website, and in a newsletter and email sent to all parties on the B2H Project mailing list, including potentially affected landowners, agencies, stakeholders, and other interested parties. Federal and state agencies, tribal governments, local governments; institutions; organizations; and individuals were sent copies of the Draft EIS and LUP Amendments (43 paper copies and 439 CDs). Printed copies of the Draft EIS also were made available for public access in 28 reading rooms in the B2H Project area.

During the 90-day review and comment period, the BLM conducted seven open -house meetings to provide the public with an opportunity to view informational displays on the B2H Project, discuss the B2H Project with BLM staff and other B2H Project representatives, and provide comments on the Draft EIS and LUP Amendments. The open -house meetings were conducted from January 5 through 9 and January 12 and 13, 2015. The open -house meetings were held in Boardman, Pendleton, La Grande, Baker City, Durkee, and Ontario in Oregon and Marsing in Idaho, respectively. A total of 307 people attended the open -house meetings. Information shared at the open house meetings also was formatted and posted to an online open house website available to the public during the review and comment period. The online open house had 211 visits and 141 unique visitors.

Comments Received on the Final EIS

Although there was no formal comment period provided for on the Final EIS, the BLM nevertheless received one comment submittal (i.e., letters or emails) from the EPA during the 30-day review period for the Final EIS. This comment letter is included in Appendix A of this ROD and was addressed to the extent practicable in the description of the Agency Preferred Alternative in this ROD.

Clarifications to the Final EIS

Table 1. Typographical Errors in the Final EIS	
Page Number	Revision
2-20	Section heading “PARALLEL INTERSTATE 84/EXISTING 23-KV...” revised to say “PARALLEL INTERSTATE 84/EXISTING 230-KV...”
2-31 (Figure 2-1)	The Proposed H-Frame structure incorrectly displays a typical height of 85 – 165’ but in Table 2-1 (on Page 2-25) the Proposed H-Frame structure has a height range of 85’ to 100’
2-32 (Figure 2-2)	The alternate structure height incorrectly states a height of 85-100’ but in Table 2-1 (on page 2-25) the alternate structure is said to be 85’ to 165’ tall
2-43	In the last paragraph, “159” should be “1519”
2-44	Other Hardware: Strike the words “grey porcelain or”. The Applicant proposes using only toughened glass insulators.
2-48	Section 2.3.1.4, Communications System, first paragraph, last sentence, strike “and public”. All Communication sites are being located on private parcels.

Several policies relating to compensatory mitigation have changed since the publication of the Final EIS. In particular, President Trump’s Executive Order on *Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth*, issued on March 28, 2017, rescinded President Obama’s Memorandum *Mitigating Impacts on Natural Resources from Development and Encouraging Related Private Investment*, issued on November 3, 2015. Additionally, Secretary Zinke issued Secretarial Order No. 3349 – *American Energy Independence* on March 29, 2017, which, among other things, rescinded Secretarial Order 3330 - *Improving Mitigation Policies and Practices of the Department of the Interior* (Oct. 31, 2013). The BLM specifically considered the earlier compensatory mitigation policies as part of the environmental review of the B2H Project and included references to these policies in the Final EIS. The BLM has considered whether the policy changes trigger an obligation to supplement the Final EIS pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(c)(1). While consistent with the rescinded policies, the purpose of the compensatory mitigation identified and analyzed as a requirement in the Final EIS was to satisfy the requirements of NEPA, as well as BLM’s statutory obligations under FLPMA. Even though the policies have changed, the environmental analysis (including the proposed action and its effects) has not, nor has the underlying purpose of complying with NEPA. Thus, the BLM has determined that the policy changes regarding compensatory mitigation do not represent a substantial change in the proposed action or “significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.” (40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(c)(1)(i), (ii).

In Appendix C of the Final EIS (page C-19), “Cultural Resources” is listed as a resource that does not warrant compensatory mitigation. However, at page C-20, “cultural resources” is listed as a resource warranting compensatory mitigation (at page C-20). To clarify, Section C.2.2.3 explains that compensatory mitigation is warranted for residual effects on cultural resources that are not deemed historic properties under Section 106 of the NHPA (and thus, not covered by

the process including mitigation, which is developed under a Programmatic Agreement and its associated HPMPs). “For example, some historic trail segments, some Native American traditional use areas, and/or cultural landscapes may not meet the definition of historic property under Section 106 of the NHPA.”

The BLM would like to clarify a data concern it received about several parcels in Union County within the B2H Project Boundary. Table 2 summarizes comments on potential discrepancies in the legal descriptions noted by Union County and BLM’s responses.

Table 2. Legal Description Land Ownership Discrepancies	
Union County Comment on Legal Descriptions	BLM Response
<i>T02SR31E Section 12 - Is it BLM or private?</i>	The NENE is BLM land according to the BLM Master Title Plats. No change to the Final EIS.
<i>T02SR36E Section 7 - Is that section all USFS or is it private?</i>	The section includes National Forest System lands and private land as analyzed in the EIS. No change to the Final EIS.
<i>T02SR36E Section 21 - Is this section all USFS or is it State land?</i>	Most of section 21 is National Forest System lands, except for two parcels. The BLM GIS ownership data used for the Final EIS is slightly incorrect and as it is missing the non-Federal portion of the N1/2SE of section 21 which is state land, and the Final EIS also showed the parcel in NWSW as private, not state land. The change to the Final EIS would slightly increase the amount (.175 mile) of state land that may be impacted in Segment 1 and decrease the amount of National Forest System lands and private land analyzed in the Final EIS.

Contact Person

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