

Corridor 136-277

Highway 50 Corridor

Corridor Rationale

Input regarding alignment from Western Utility Group during the WWEC PEIS suggested following this route. There are no planned transmission or pipeline projects within the corridor or pending or recently BLM-authorized ROWs for transmission line or pipeline projects within the corridor at this time. A recently authorized transmission line intersects the corridor.

Corridor location:

Colorado (Montrose Co.)
 BLM: Uncompahgre Field Office
 Regional Review Region(s): Region 2

Corridor width, length:

Width 3,500 ft
 7.8 miles of designated corridor
 30 mile-posted route, including gaps

Sec 368 energy corridor restrictions: (N)

- corridor is multi-modal

Corridor of concern (N)

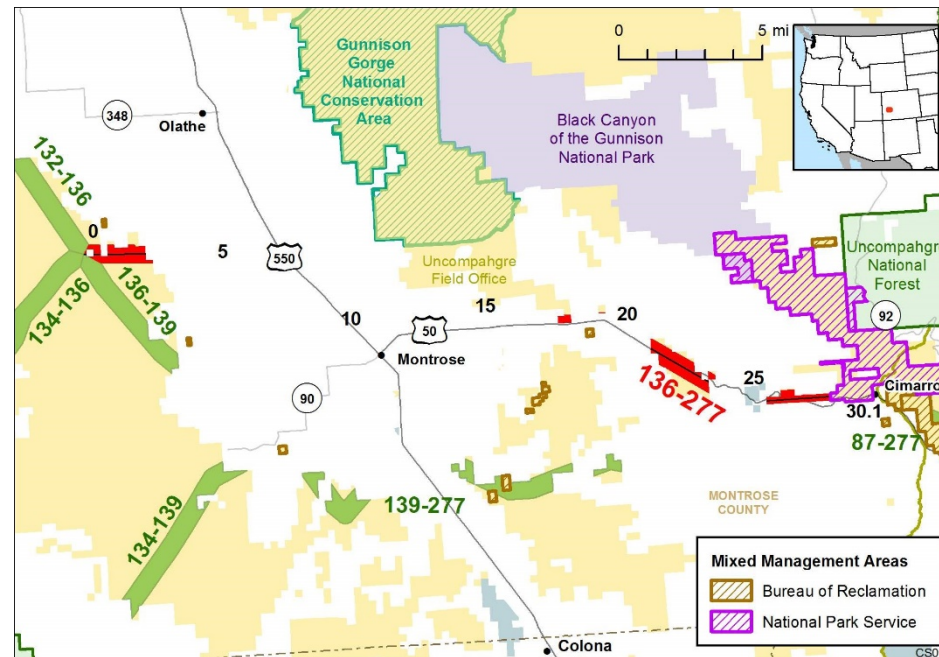


Figure 1. Corridor 136-277

Corridor history:

- Locally designated corridor prior to 2009 (N)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
 - Highways:
 - U.S. 50 (MP 11 to MP 30)
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
 - 4 hydroelectric power plants within 4 mi (MP 17, MP 18, MP 25, and MP 29)
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

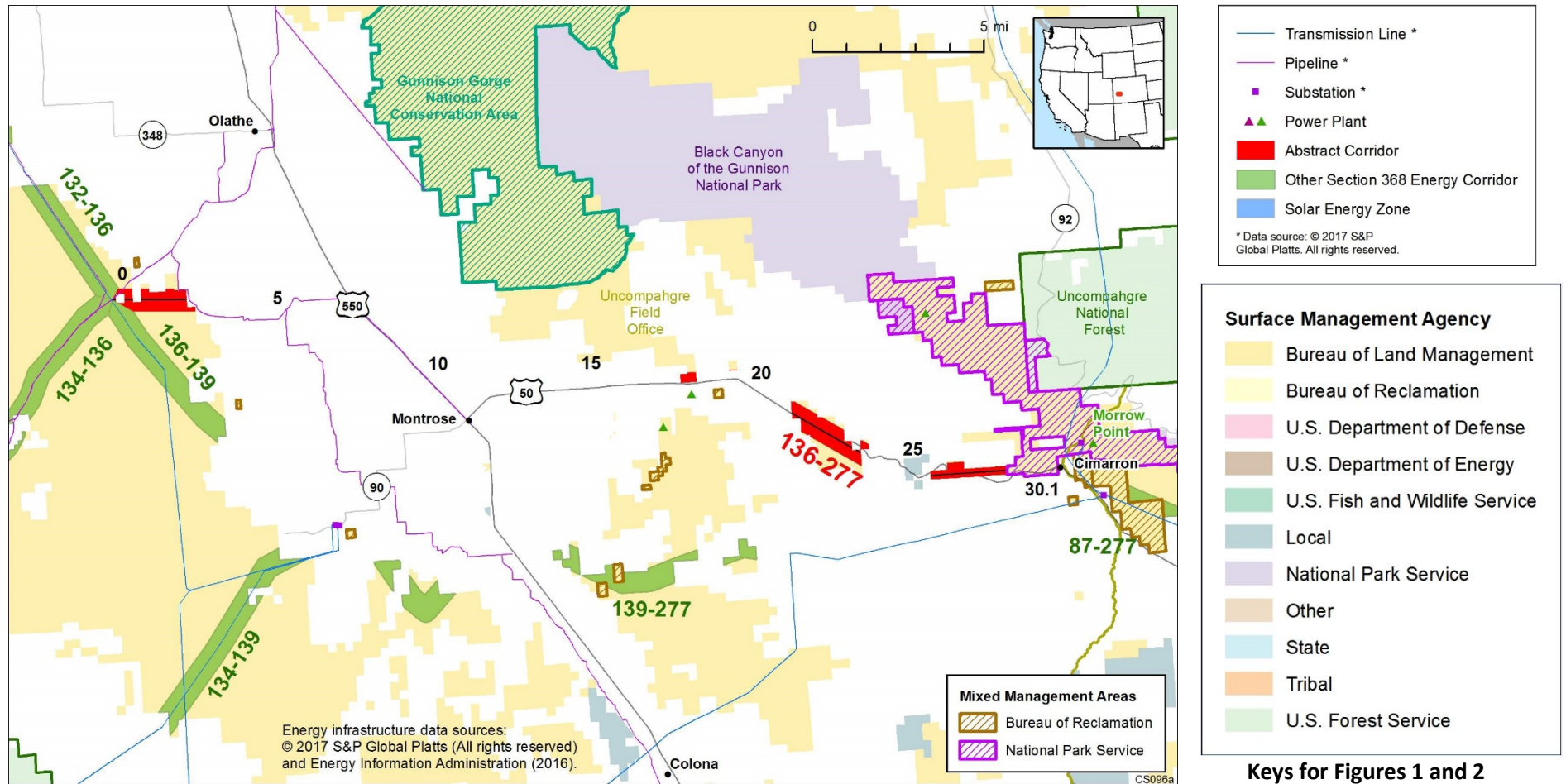


Figure 2. Corridor 136-277 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

Conflict Map Analysis

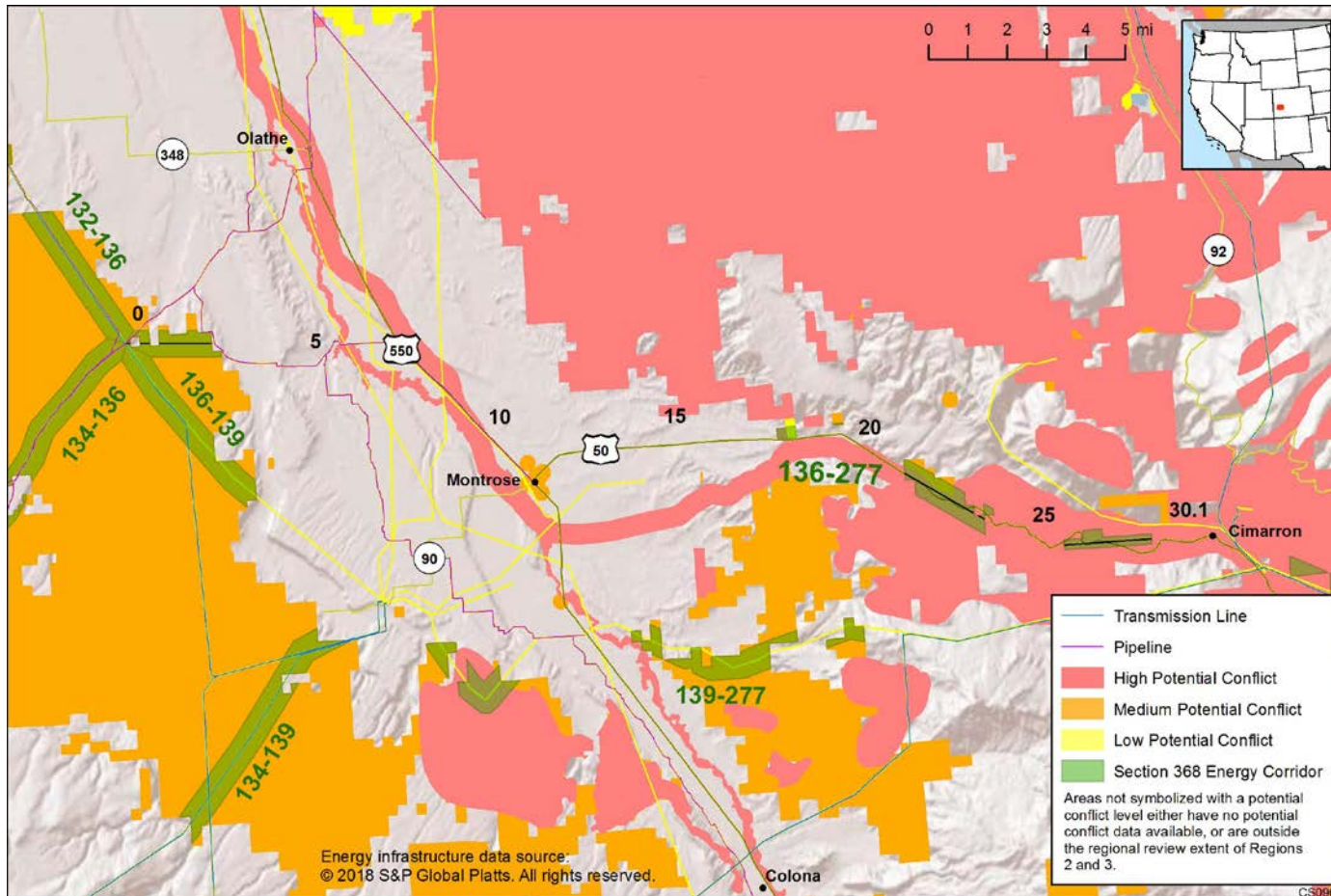


Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 136-277

Figure 3 reflects a comprehensive resource conflict assessment developed to enable the Agencies and stakeholders to visualize a corridor’s proximity to environmentally sensitive areas and to evaluate options for routes with lower potential conflict. The potential conflict assessment (low, medium, high) shown in the figure is based on [criteria](#) found on the WWEC Information Center at www.corridoreis.anl.gov. To meet the intent of the Energy Policy Act and the Settlement Agreement siting principles, corridors may be located in areas where there is potentially high resource conflict; however, where feasible, opportunity for corridor revisions should be identified in areas with potentially lower conflict.

Visit the 368 Mapper for a full view of the Potential conflict map (<https://bogi.evs.anl.gov/section368/portal/>)

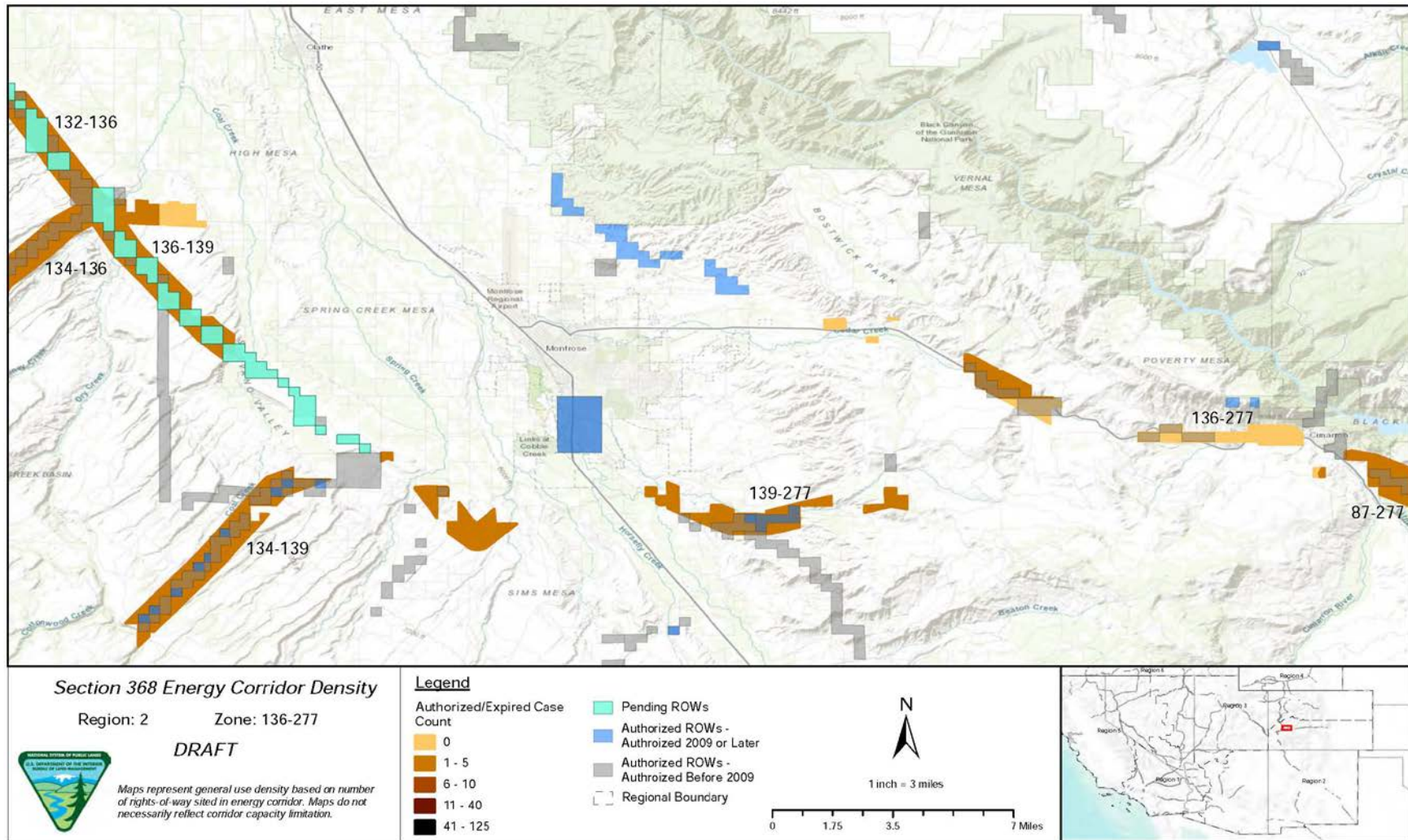


Figure 4. Corridor 136-277, Corridor Density Map

Figure 4 shows the density of energy use to assist in evaluating corridor utility. ROWs granted prior to the corridor designation (2009) are shown in grey; ROWs granted after corridor designation are shown in blue; and pending ROWs under current review for approval are shown in turquoise. Note the ROW density shown for the corridor is only a snapshot that does not fully illustrate remaining corridor capacity. Not all ROWs have GIS data at the time this abstract was developed. BLM and USFS are currently improving their ROW GIS databases and anticipate more complete data in the near future.

General Stakeholder Feedback on Corridor Utility

Stakeholders did not provide specific input on corridor utility.

Corridor Review Table

The table below captures details of the Agencies’ review of the energy corridor. Consideration of the general corridor siting principles of the 2012 Settlement Agreement framed each corridor review, to identify potential improvements to maximize corridor utility and minimize impacts on the environment. Initial Agency analysis is provided to facilitate further discussion during stakeholder workshops.

CORRIDOR 136-277 REVIEW TABLE							
ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Issue	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source	Agency Review and Analysis ^{1, 2}
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE ISSUES							
<i>Specially Designated Areas</i>							
136-277 .001	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	OSNHT	MP 19 and MP 30	GIS Analysis: the OSNHT closely parallels the corridor from MP 18 to MP 30 and intersects the corridor between MP 21 and MP 24 and again between MP 25 and MP 26.	There is an opportunity for the Agencies to consider adding an IOP for NSTs and NHTs as well as adding an IOP related to Visual Resources to ensure appropriate consideration occurs with proposed development within the energy corridor. (2)
<i>Ecology</i>							
136-277 .002	BLM & BOR	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	GUSG critical habitat (ESA-listed: threatened)	MP 21 to MP 29 and MP 30	RFI: re-route or exclude new infrastructure ROWs and avoid all new energy infrastructure development within GUSG Production Areas. Use full mitigation hierarchy to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts within 4 mi of important GUSG breeding areas. The corridor cuts through the most important remaining GUSG habitat in the Gunnison Basin. GIS Analysis: critical habitat and corridor intersect. Comment on abstract: Reroute to avoid critical habitat. 8 mi of	Protection of ESA-listed species habitat is important. The preferred methodology to mitigate undue degradation of resources is to collocate future energy infrastructure across public land with existing infrastructure to the extent feasible. As such, the current location appears to best meet the siting principles based on the settlement agreement, since any alternative route would go through areas of ESA-listed critical habitat and would not lend-itself to collocation with existing development (U.S. Highway 50) and would further fragment critical habitat.

CORRIDOR 136-277 REVIEW TABLE							
ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Issue	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source	Agency Review and Analysis ^{1,2}
						corridor intersects GUSG critical habitat.	However, between MP 22 and MP 29, where corridor intersects critical habitat or is within 4 mi of a lek, the corridor should be revised to be underground only, and habitat should be restored to meet PCEs of critical habitat for PCE2 (Breeding). (2)
136-277 .003	NA	NA	Montrose, CO	Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo proposed critical habitat (ESA-listed: threatened)	MP 5 to MP 11	GIS Analysis: proposed critical habitat present in corridor gap. Comment on abstract: re-route to avoid proposed critical habitat. 5 mi of corridor intersects with Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo proposed critical habitat.	The corridor is not designated in proposed Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat, as there are no BLM or USFS lands along the area of critical habitat. The Agencies can only authorize projects on federally administered lands. Development in a corridor gap would require coordination outside of the Agencies. (1)
136-277 .004				Special Status Species	Not Specified.	Comment on abstract: Additional species not identified in the corridor abstract may be present: Mexican Gray Wolf, New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse, Least Tern, Mexican Spotted Owl, Northern Aplomado Falcon, Piping Plover, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Narrow-headed Gartersnake, Chiricahua Leopard Frog, Gila Trout, Rio Grande Silvery Minnow, Alamosa Springsnail Chupadera Springsnail, Socorro Springsnail, Socorro Isopod, Pecos Sunflower, Sneed Pincushion Cactus, Todsens' Pennyroyal, and Wright's Marsh Thistle.	This corridor location within the current range where these species may occur is not easily resolved or avoided by corridor-level planning because alternate routes would still require siting through the current range of these species. Further analysis to determine the presence of all species occurring within the area will be considered outside of corridor-level planning. (3)

CORRIDOR 136-277 REVIEW TABLE

ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Issue	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source	Agency Review and Analysis ^{1,2}
						Conduct further analysis to determine the presence of abovementioned species.	
Visual Resources							
136-277 .005	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	VRM Class II	MP 28 to MP 30	GIS Analysis: VRM Class II areas and corridor intersect.	Future development within the corridor could be limited as VRM Class II allows for low level of change to the characteristic landscape. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. (3)
136-277 .006	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	VRM Class III	Entire length of corridor	GIS Analysis: VRM Class III areas and corridor intersect.	VRM Class III allows for moderate change to the characteristic landscape, although minimizing visual contrast remains a requirement. Management activities may attract the attention of the casual observer, but shall not dominate the view. (1)
136-277 .007	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	VRM Class IV	MP 18	GIS Analysis: VRM Class IV areas and corridor intersect.	The existing corridor location best meets the siting principles. (1)
Cultural Resources							
136-277 .008	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	D&RG Narrow Gauge Trestle, D&RG Railroad Box Outfit Car No. 04414, D&RGW Railroad Stock Car No. 5620, D&RGW Railroad Stock Car No. 5679D, RGS Railroad Derrick Car, D&RGW Railroad Caboose No. 0577, D&RGW Railroad Locomotive No. 278 and Tender, and D&RGW Railroad Boxcar No. 3132	MP 27 (near) and MP 29 (near)	GIS Analysis: Multiple NRHP properties related to the D&RG and D&RGW railroads as close as under 1 mi northeast of corridor.	The properties are not within the corridor and are not a consideration for corridor-level planning. Section 106 process would be followed to identify possible impact of development. (1)

CORRIDOR 136-277 REVIEW TABLE							
ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Issue	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source	Agency Review and Analysis ^{1,2}
Land Use Concerns							
Military and Civilian Aviation							
136-277 .009	NA	Private land	Montrose, CO	Civilian Aviation - Montrose Memorial Hospital Heliport and Cerro Summit Heliport	MP 12 MP 24	GIS Analysis: heliports in corridor gaps.	BLM can only authorize projects on BLM-administered lands. Development in a corridor gap would require coordination outside of the Agencies. Coordination with the private heliport owner would be required for any project-specific use. (1)
Public Access and Recreation							
136-277 .010	NA	NA	Montrose, CO	Cerro Summit Recreation Area – City of Montrose	MP 25	Agency Input: Cerro Summit Recreation Area – City of Montrose in corridor gap	BLM can only authorize projects on BLM-administered lands. Development in a corridor gap would require coordination outside of the Agencies. Any use of this corridor would require coordination with the City of Montrose on a project-specific basis. (3)
136-277 .011	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	West Elk Loop Scenic Byway	MP 29	GIS Analysis: West Elk Loop Scenic Byway as close as under 2 mi northeast of corridor.	The corridor and byway do not intersect. The byway follows State Highways, is managed by CDOT, and has a CDOT management plan. This portion of the corridor would be within the area under NPS management. It is unlikely that the corridor would be visible to the byway due to topography, but if so there are already two existing transmission lines in the area that might be visible. Agencies confirm that the corridor best meets the siting principles. (1)
Other noted land use concerns							
136-277 .012	BOR	BOR	Montrose CO	Mixed management	MP 28 to MP 29 and MP 30	GIS Analysis: 38-acre parcel at the intersection of Corridors 87-277, 136-277, and 139-277 is a corridor gap managed by BOR.	The area is identified as mixed surface and administrative management of lands among BLM, NPS, and BOR. BLM can only authorize projects on BLM-administered lands. Development in a corridor gap would require coordination outside of the Agencies,

CORRIDOR 136-277 REVIEW TABLE							
ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Issue	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source	Agency Review and Analysis ^{1, 2}
136-277 .013	State	Colorado Parks and Wildlife		Conservation easements	Not specified.	Comment on abstract: corridor crosses private lands encumbered by conservation easements or CPW-owned properties which are managed for wildlife, wildlife related recreation, and other recreational uses. In many instances corridor development would be incompatible with the purpose for which those properties were acquired and are managed. Recommend avoiding CPW properties for corridor alignments, otherwise close pre-planning and coordination with CPW staff would be required. In instances where an easement prohibits corridor development and avoidance of the parcel is not possible, and the exercise of eminent domain may result, then the lost conservation values due to corridor development must be compensated for and replaced.	in this case with BOR and NPS. See Figure 5 for referenced area. (3) BLM can only authorize land uses on public land. Any gaps between public land within a new proposal would have to be coordinated with those landowners/managers. Since the corridor is centered on the existing ROW/easement, additional uses may be compatible within that footprint, depending on how the conservation easements and the easements across non-BLM managed lands are written. (3)

¹ Projects proposed in the corridor would be reviewed during their ROW application review process and would adhere to Federal laws, regulations, and policy.

² (1) = confirm existing corridor best meets siting principles; (2) = identify opportunities to improve corridor placement or IOPs; (3) = acknowledge concern not easily resolved or avoided by corridor-level planning.

Abstract Acronyms and Abbreviations

BLM = Bureau of Land Management; BOR = Bureau of Reclamation; CDOT = Colorado Department of Transportation; CPW = Colorado Parks and Wildlife; D&RG = Denver & Rio Grande; D&RGW = Denver & Rio Grande Western; ESA = Endangered Species Act; FO = Field Office; GIS = geographic information system; GUSG = Gunnison sage-grouse; IOP = interagency operating procedure; MP = milepost; NA = not applicable; NHT = National Historic Trail; NPS = National Park Service; NRHP = National Register of Historic Places; NST = National Scenic Trail; OSNHT = Old Spanish National Historic Trail; PCE =Primary Constituent Element; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement;

RFI = request for information; RGS = Rio Grande Southern; RMP = Resource Management Plan; ROW = right-of-way; USFS = U.S. Forest Service; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; VRM = Visual Resource Management; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.

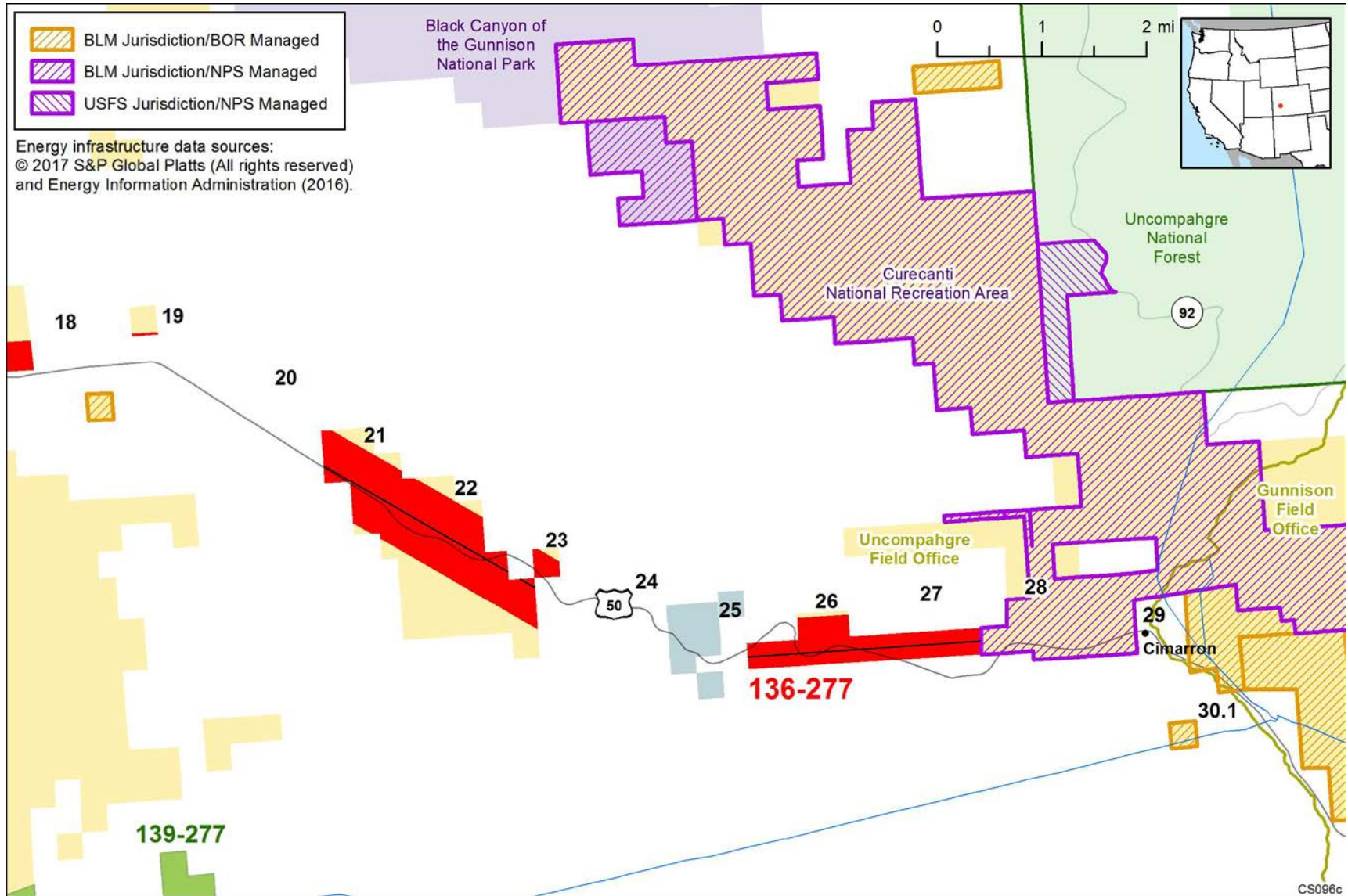


Figure 5. Close up of area with BLM and BOR/NPS mixed surface and administrative management