

Corridor 139-277

Montrose Sub-SE Corridor

Corridor Rationale

Input regarding alignment from the Western Utility Group during the WVEC PEIS suggested following this routes. A planned 345-kV electric transmission line project follows the entire length of the corridor. There are no pending or recently authorized ROWs within or intersecting the corridor at this time.

Corridor location:

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

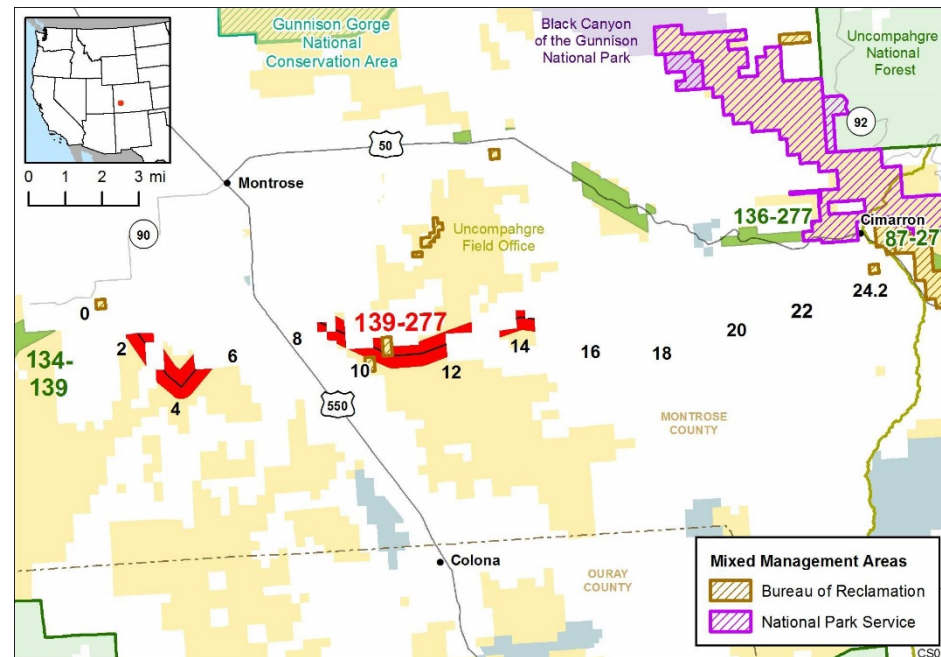
Corridor width, length:

Width 3,500 ft
 4.7 miles of designated corridor
 24.2 mile-posted route, including gaps

Sec 368 energy corridor restrictions: (Y)

- corridor is electrical transmission only

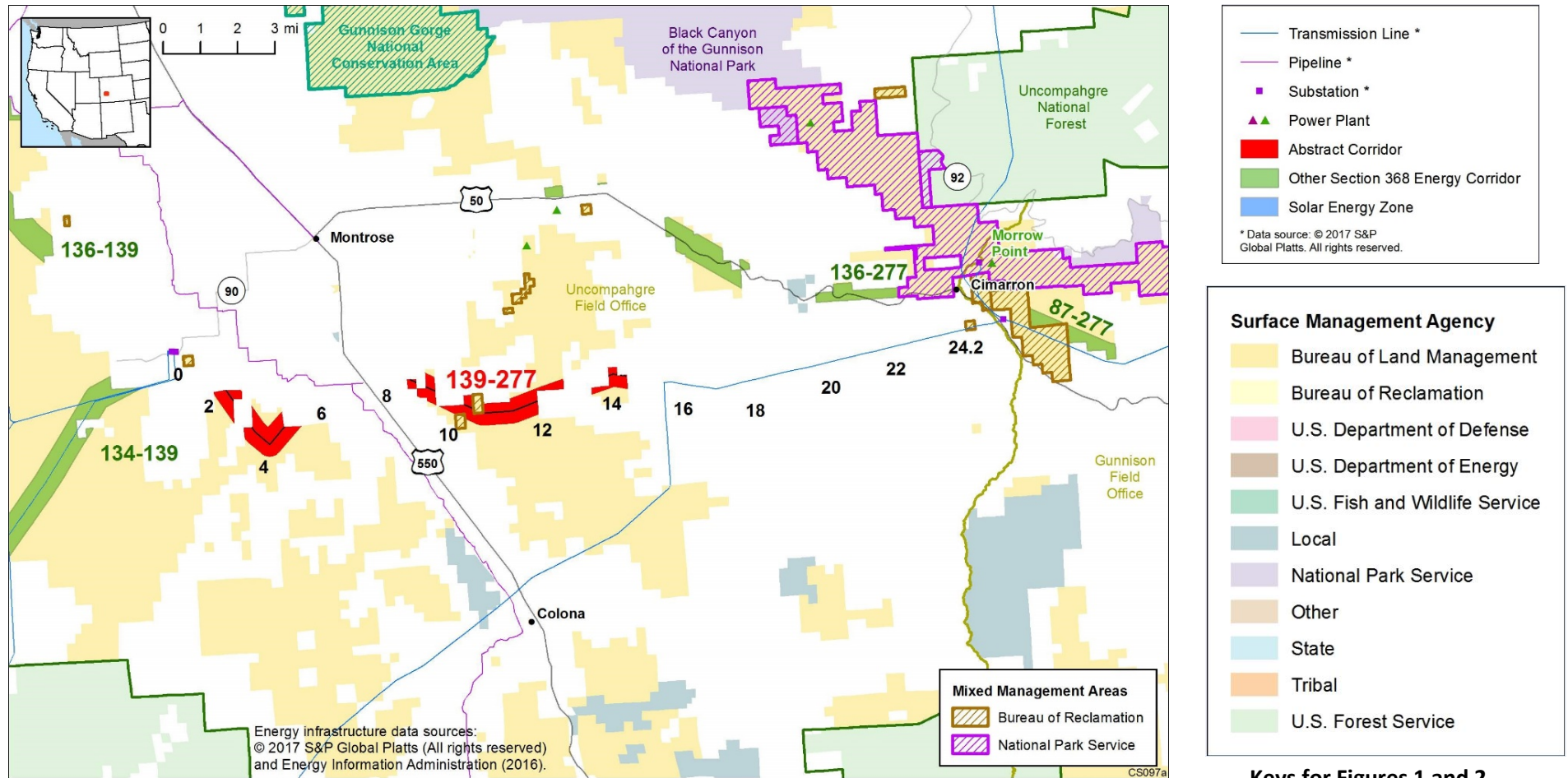
Corridor of concern (N)



Corridor history:

- Locally designated corridor prior to 2009 (N)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
 - Electric transmission:
 - 115-kV line (MP 0 to MP 24)
 - 230-kV line (MP 16 to MP 24)
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
 - substation in corridor (MP 11)
 - 4 hydroelectric power plants within about 4 mi near MP 10, MP 13, MP 14, and MP 24
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

Figure 1. Corridor 139-277



Keys for Figures 1 and 2

Figure 2. Corridor 139-277 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

Conflict Map Analysis

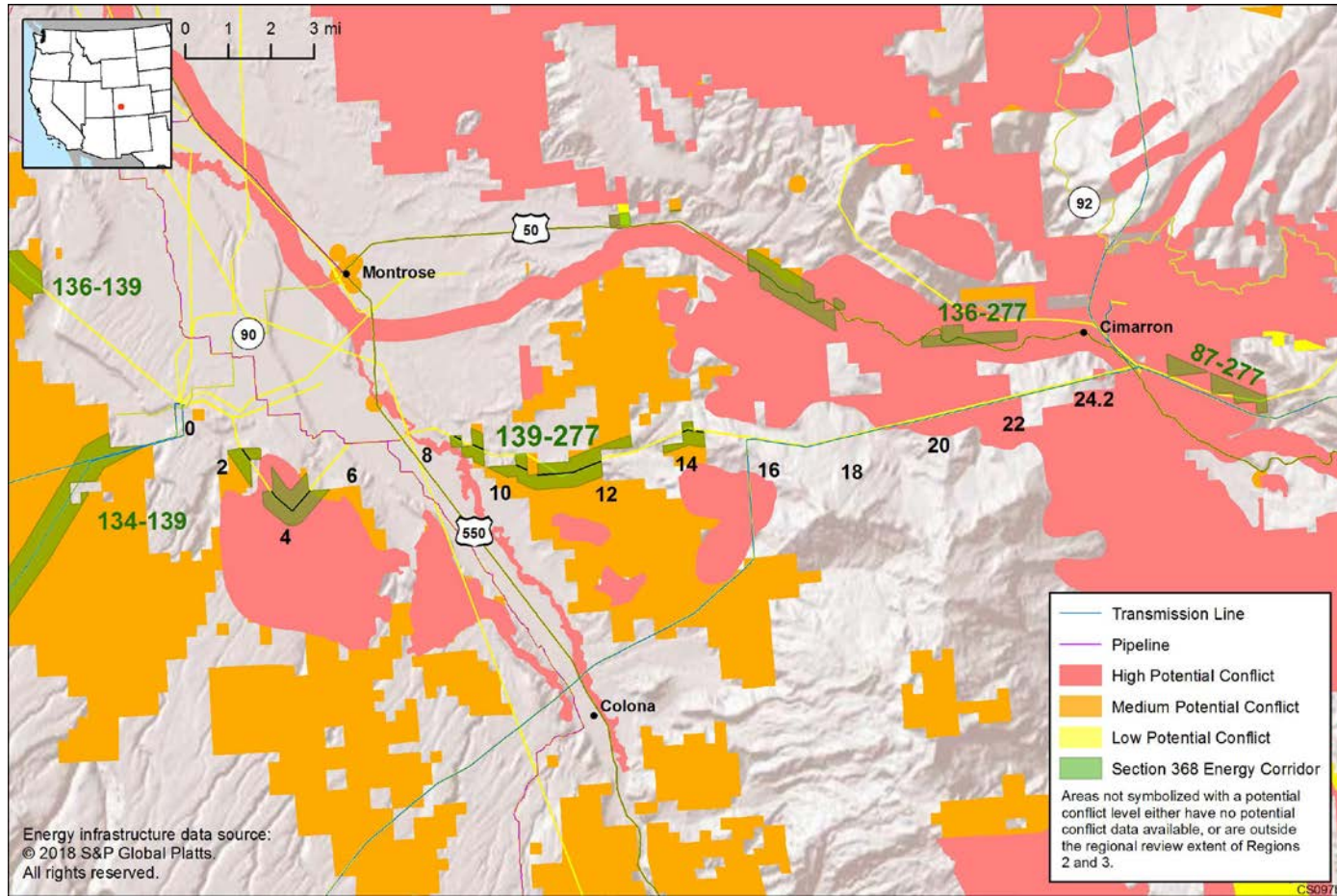


Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 139-277

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/>)

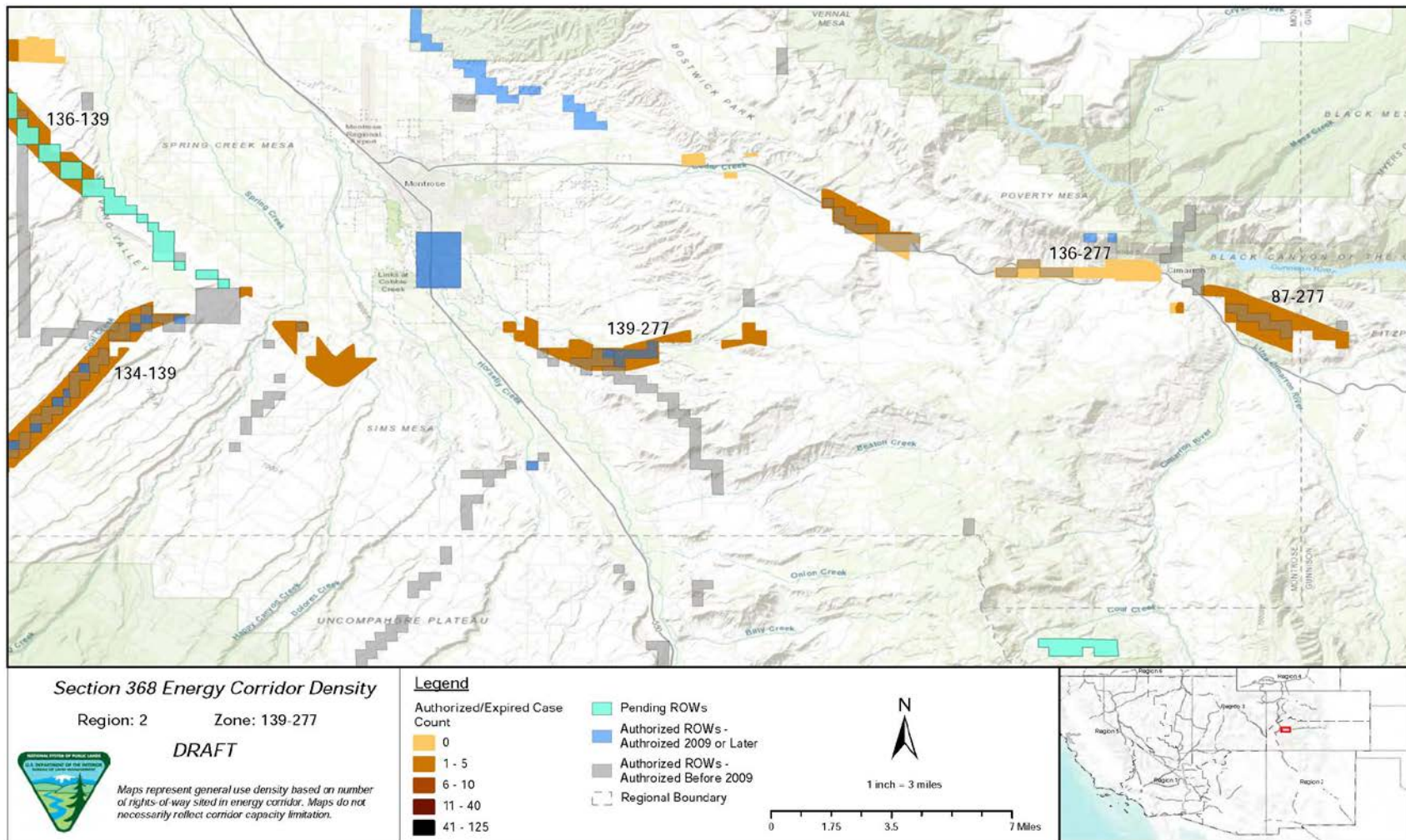


Figure 4. Corridor 139-277, Corridor Density Map

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 139-277 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>							
139-277 .001	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	Fairview RNA/ACEC	MP 10	GIS Analysis: RNA/ACEC over 1 mi north of corridor.	The corridor and the Fairview RNA/ACEC do not intersect. The corridor best meets the siting principles. The Uncompahgre Basin RMP does state that the Fairview RNA/ACEC is open to major utilities, except pipelines, as long as there is no disturbance of listed plant species or their potential habitat. (1)
139-277 .002	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	NSO Area	MP 25	GIS Analysis: NSO area as close as 2,600 ft northeast of corridor.	The corridor is not in a NSO area and there is no conflict with existing RMP. (1)
<i>Ecology</i>							
139-277 .003	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	GUSG critical habitat (ESA-listed: threatened)	MP 2 to MP 5, MP 15 to MP 22, and MP 24	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. Consult closely with state fish and game Agencies and WGA to implement the full mitigation	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

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						<p>hierarchy of avoidance, minimization, and compensation for CHAT resources at "Very High" risk.</p> <p>GIS Analysis: critical habitat and corridor intersect.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: recommend that GUSG critical habitat within the satellite populations be designated as a ROW Exclusion Area and in the Gunnison Basin, designated as a ROW Avoidance Area and recommend that the corridor be rerouted to avoid GUSG habitat. Where existing transmission lines are present, recommend disturbance only within existing infrastructure footprint. If avoidance or co-location is not possible within the Gunnison Basin, recommend burying the transmission line and instituting compensatory mitigation.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: Reroute to avoid critical habitat. About 10 mi of the corridor intersect GUSG critical habitat.</p>	<p>would not lend-itself to collocation and would further fragment critical habitat. (1)</p> <p>The Uncompahgre Basin RMP does not make mention of the GUSG. However, the RMP does mention that measures designed to protect listed species and their habitats are required for all land use activity plans, and that the USFWS will be consulted as required.</p>
139-277 .004	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo proposed critical habitat (ESA-listed: threatened)	MP 7 to MP 9	<p>GIS Analysis: proposed critical habitat and corridor intersect.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: Reroute to avoid proposed critical habitat. About 2 mi of the corridor intersect Western</p>	<p>Projects taking place in this corridor may require ESA Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. Projects within this corridor should be evaluated for impacts on listed species and their habitats, and measures be undertaken to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts: There is an opportunity at this</p>

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ID	Agency	Agency Jurisdiction	County	Primary Issue	Corridor Location (by Milepost [MP])	Source	Agency Review and Analysis ^{1,2}
						Yellow-billed Cuckoo proposed critical habitat.	corridor location within the current range where the yellow-billed cuckoo may occur to slightly reduce the width of the corridor or to shift the corridor slightly to the northeast to avoid critical habitat. (2)
139-277 .005				Special Status Species	Not specified.	<p>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's Pennyroyal, and Wright's Marsh Thistle.</p> <p>Conduct further analysis to determine the presence of abovementioned species.</p>	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)
139-277 .006	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	Clay-loving Wild Buckwheat (ESA-listed: endangered)	MP 9 to MP 12	Agency Input: Clay-loving Wild Buckwheat located along corridor.	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

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							alternative route would go through areas of ESA-listed critical habitat and would not lend-itself to collocation and would further fragment critical habitat. (1)
Visual Resources							
139-277 .007	BLM	Uncompahgre	Montrose, CO	VRM Class II	MP 24	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)
139-277 .008	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	VRM Class III	Entire length of corridor, with one minor exception as noted above.	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)
Cultural Resources							
139-277 .009	BLM	Uncompahgre FO	Montrose, CO	NRHP properties	MP 24 (near)	GIS Analysis: multiple properties listed on the NRHP associated with D&RGW railroad (D&RGW Railroad Box Outfit Car No. 04414, D&RGW Railroad Stock Car No. 5620, D&RGW Railroad Stock Car No. 5679D, and RGS Railroad Derrick Car) are as close as 1 mile north of the 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)
Land Use Concerns							
Other noted land use concerns							
139-277 .010				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	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

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						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.	ROWs/easements, 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

ACEC = Area of Critical Environmental Concern; BLM = Bureau of Land Management; CHAT = Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool; CPW = Colorado Parks and Wildlife; D&RGW = Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad; ESA = Endangered Species Act; FO = Field Office; GIS = geographic information system; GUSG = Gunnison Sage-grouse; IOP = interagency operating procedure; MP = milepost; NHT = National Historic Trail; NRHP = National Register of Historic Places; NSO = No Surface Occupancy; NST = National Scenic Trail; OSNHT = Old Spanish National Historic Trail; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; RFI = request for information; RGS = Rio Grande Southern; RMP = Resource Management Plan; RNA = Research Natural Area; ROW = right-of-way; USFS = U.S. Forest Service; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; VRM = Visual Resource Management; WGA = Western Governors’ Association; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.