

Corridor 51-205

Interstate 90 Corridor

Corridor Purpose and Rationale

The corridor provides a pathway for east-west energy transport east of Butte, Montana. Input regarding alignment from multiple organizations¹ during the WWEC PEIS suggested following this route. There are no major pending ROWs for transmission line or pipeline projects within the corridor at this time. The corridor may not be able to accommodate additional energy development.

Corridor location:

Montana (Jefferson and Silver Bow Co.)
BLM: Butte Field Office
USFS: Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF
Regional Review Region: Region 6

Corridor width, length:

Width 3,500 ft
9 miles of designated corridor
28 miles of posted route, including gaps

Designated Use:

- corridor is multi-modal

Corridor of concern (N)

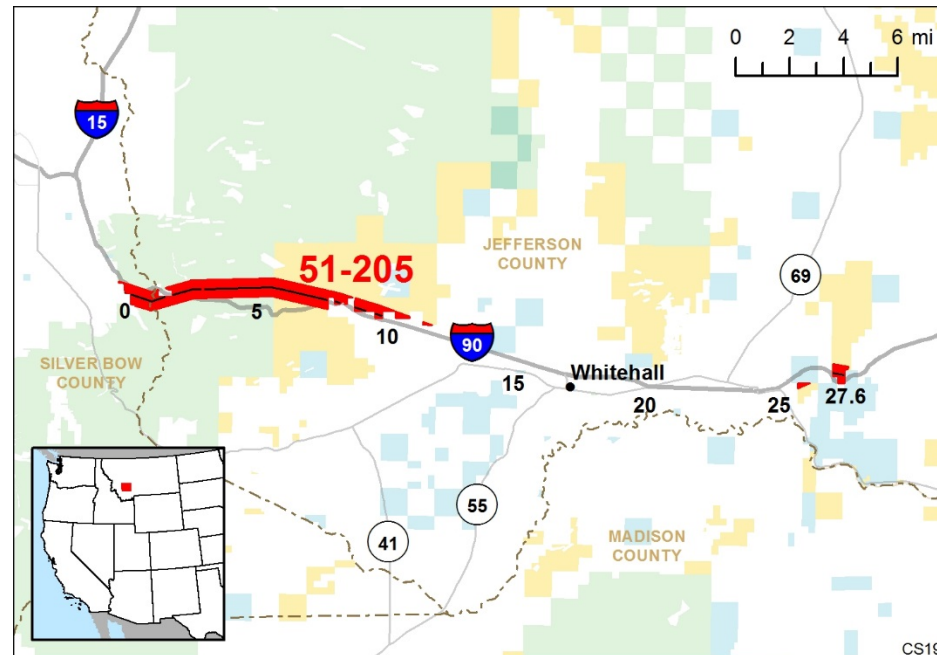


Figure 1. Corridor 51-205

Corridor history:

- Locally designated prior to 2009 (N)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
 - 161- and 230-kV transmission lines extend the full length of the corridor.
 - A natural gas pipeline is within and adjacent to the corridor from MP 0 to MP 25.
 - Highway I-90 runs along the corridor
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
 - A natural gas power plant is within 4 mi of the corridor.
 - 12 substations are within 5 mi of the corridor
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

¹ American Wind Energy Association, Avista Utilities, Maximus USA, NW Energy, PacifiCorp, Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study, and Western Utility Group

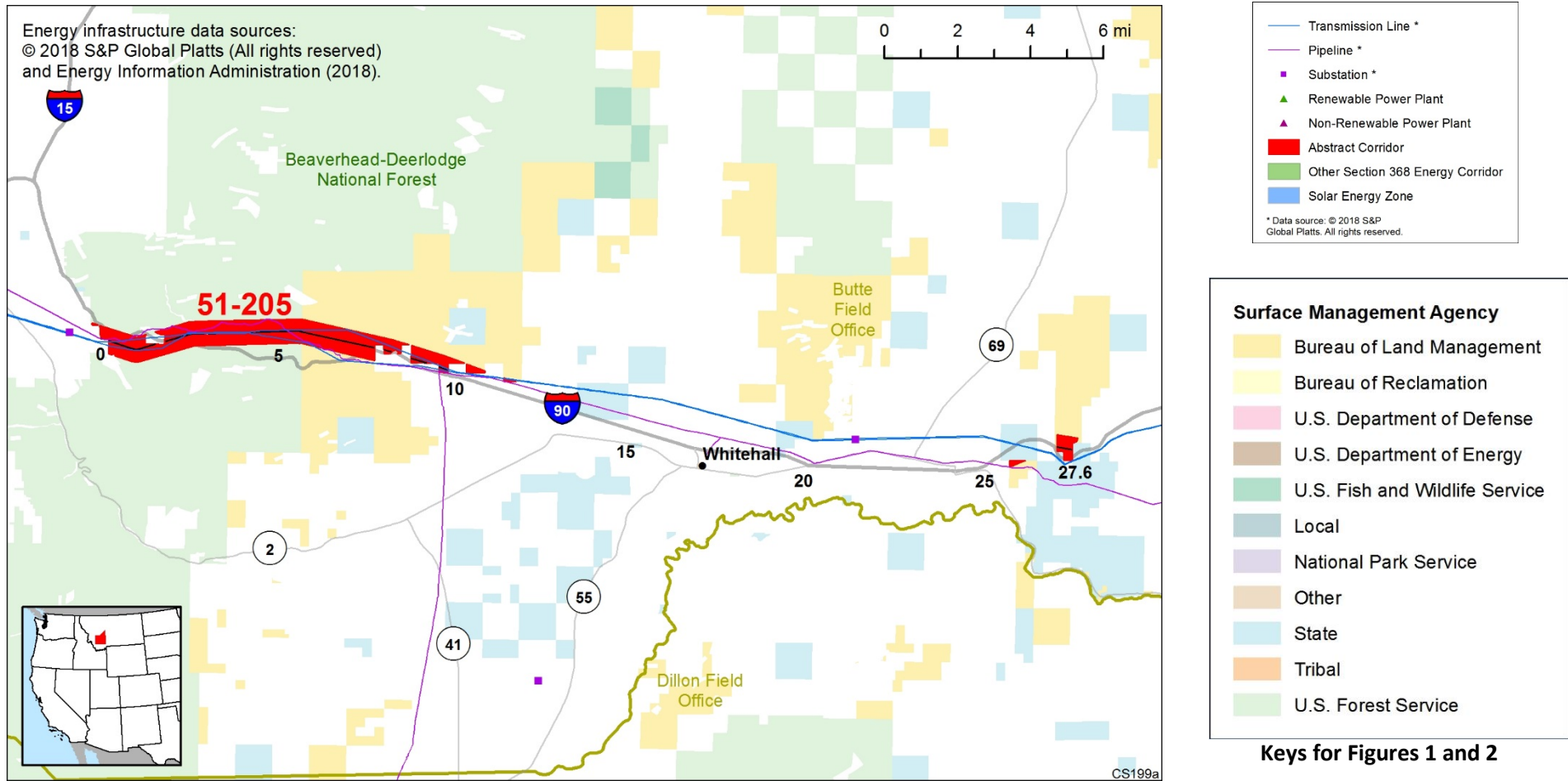


Figure 2. Corridor 51-205 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

Conflict Map Analysis

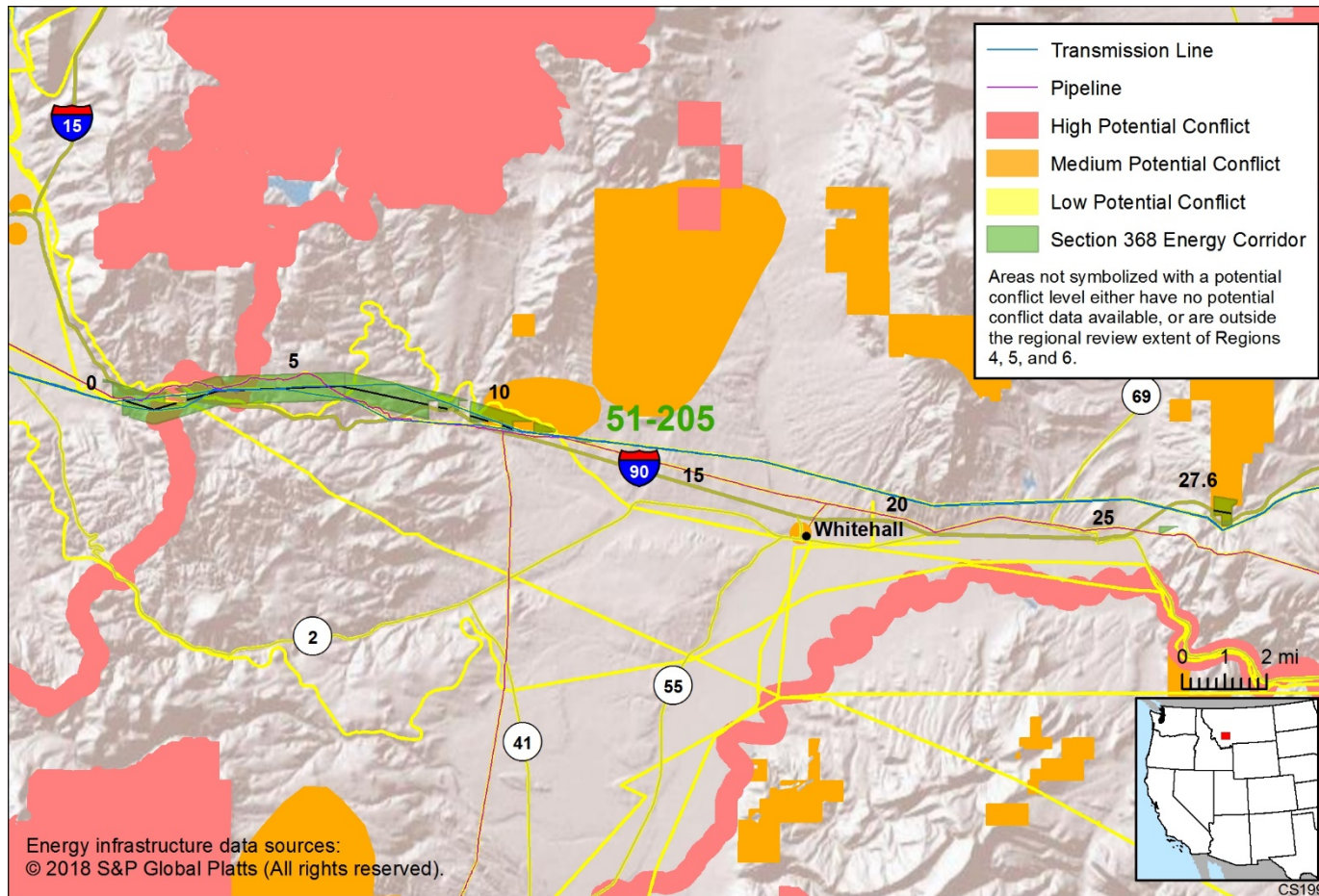


Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 51-205

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 WVEC 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/>)

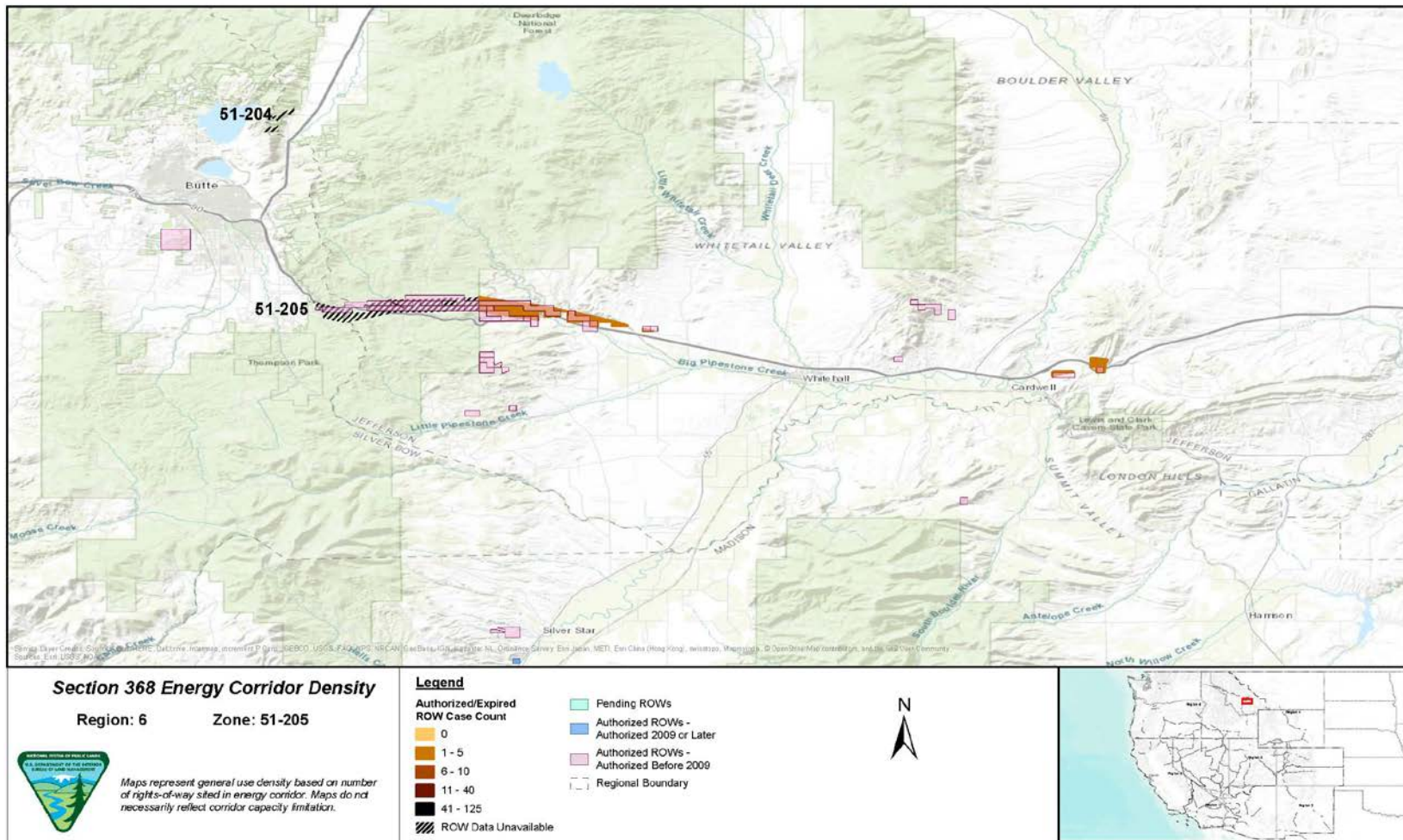


Figure 4. Corridor 51-205, Corridor Density Map

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.

Corridor Review Table

Designated energy corridors are areas of land prioritized for energy transmission infrastructure and are intended to be predominantly managed for multiple energy transmission infrastructure lines. Other compatible uses are allowable as specified or practicable. Resource management goals and objectives should be compatible with the desired future conditions (i.e., responsible linear infrastructure development of the corridor with minimal impacts) of the energy transmission corridor. Land management objectives that do not align with desired future conditions should be avoided. The table below identifies serious concerns or issues and presents potential resolution options to better meet corridor siting principles.

The preliminary information below is provided to facilitate further discussion and input prior to developing potential revisions, deletions, or additions.

CORRIDOR 51-205 REVIEW			
POTENTIAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES or CONCERNS TO EXAMINE	MILEPOST (MP) ¹	STAKEHOLDER INPUT and OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION	POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS BASED ON SITING PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS ²
<i>USFS Jurisdiction: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest</i>			
<i>Agency Land Use Plan: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest LMP (2009)</i>			
SIO High and the corridor intersect - Management of areas under the High SIO designation provides for deviations from existing conditions but must repeat the form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the landscape character so completely and at such scale that they are not evident. (Corresponds to a VQO of Retention.)	MP 0 to MP 6	Transmission lines are within the corridor from MP 0 to MP 6 and I-90 is within the corridor from MP 0 to MP 3.	The corridor appears to best meet the siting principles as it is collocated with transmission lines and I-90. Due to the width of the High SIO area to the north and south of the corridor, there is no ready option to shift the corridor out of the High SIO area.
Continental Divide NST and the corridor intersect— The LMP and the Continental Divide NST Comprehensive Plan were approved in the same year and although the LMP does not have specific guidance or objectives for the NST, the LMP scenic integrity is aligned with the NST Comprehensive Plan. The LMP states that projects in foreground areas of scenic byways, NHTs or wild and scenic rivers will be designed to meet an SIO of at least High (meaning that the landscape character must appear intact). Deviations may be present but must repeat the form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the landscape character so completely and at such scale that they are not evident.	MP 1 to MP 3	The Continental Divide NST Comprehensive Plan was finalized in 2009. The NST is managed according to the National Trails Act. The NST crosses in and out of the corridor in a zigzag pattern (MP 1) or at an angle (MP 2 to MP 3).	The corridor appears to best meet the siting principles. The corridor contains several existing transmission lines, a gas pipeline, and I-90. Agencies could consider a new IOP for NSTs and NHTs to enhance BMPs for proposed development within the energy corridor.

CORRIDOR 51-205 REVIEW

POTENTIAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES or CONCERNS TO EXAMINE	MILEPOST (MP)¹	STAKEHOLDER INPUT and OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION	POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS BASED ON SITING PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS²
<p><i>BLM Jurisdiction: Butte Field Office</i> <i>Agency Land Use Plan: Butte RMP (2009)</i></p>			
<p>Pipestone SRMA and the corridor intersect - The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusions for SRMAs within designated energy corridors.</p>	<p>MP 6 to MP 12</p>	<p>Two transmission lines, a gas pipeline, and I-90 currently occur within the corridor and intersect at least a portion of the SRMA between MP 6 and MP 12.</p>	<p>The corridor appears to best meet the siting principles. Although there are no competing land management objectives for SRMAs, shifting the corridor to the south starting at MP 1 could avoid the SRMA, but would not maintain the corridor on federal land starting at MP 9, and would lose the benefits of collocating with existing infrastructure.</p>
<p>Visual resources—Manage visual resources in accordance with VRM classifications. VRM Class III objective is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate.</p>	<p>MP 27</p>	<p>Comment on abstract: BLM visual resource management area to the north of the corridor could be considered in conflict with this segment of the corridor. In the past, BLM's visual resource management was one of the highest objectives and should be considered to be reclassified in order to resolve this conflict.</p>	<p>At this location the corridor is collocated with a highway and is adjacent to an existing transmission line. Between MP 27 and MP 28 the corridor is located in a VRM Class III area which allows for moderate change to the characteristic landscape while minimizing visual contrast. In general, collocation is preferred to maximize utility, minimize potential impacts and to promote efficient use of landscape.</p>
<p><i>BLM Jurisdiction: Butte Field Office</i> <i>Agency Land Use Plan: ROD/ARMPA for the Great Basin Region, Including the GRSG Sub-Regions of Idaho and Southwestern Montana, Nevada and Northeastern California, Oregon, and Utah (Sept 2015); Idaho and Southwestern Montana GRSG ARMPA – Attachment 1 (2015)</i></p>			
<p>GRSG GHMA and the corridor intersect — The ARMPA states that existing designated corridors will remain Open in all habitat management areas. Co-locating new infrastructure within the existing corridor and maintaining and upgrading ROWs is preferred over the creation of new ROWs outside of the corridor. The RMP states that new infrastructure can be built within the existing corridor or adjacent to the existing corridor</p>	<p>MP 9 to MP 11</p>	<p>There are no options to shift this corridor to federal lands outside of the GHMA; no federal lands outside of GHMA are adjacent to the corridor between MP 9 and MP 11.</p>	<p>The location appears to best meet the siting principles because collocation is preferred and the corridor is collocated with existing infrastructure.</p>

¹ Mileposts are rounded to the nearest mile.

² Siting Principles include: *Corridors are thoughtfully sited to provide maximum utility and minimum impact on the environment; Corridors promote efficient use of landscape for necessary development; Appropriate and acceptable uses are defined for specific corridors; and Corridors provide connectivity to renewable energy generation to the maximum extent possible, while also considering other generation, in order to balance the renewable sources and to ensure the safety and reliability of electricity transmission.* Projects proposed in the corridor would be reviewed during their ROW application review process and would adhere to Federal laws, regulations, and policy.

Additional Compatibility Concerns

The issues and concerns listed below are not explicitly addressed through agency land use plans or are too general in nature to be addressed without further clarification. Although difficult to quantify, the concerns listed have potential to affect future use and/or development within this designated corridor. The Agencies have provided a preliminary general analysis, shown below. The information below is provided to facilitate further discussion during stakeholder review.

Jurisdictional Concerns:

- MP 10 to MP 27.6 seem to be following the interstate, but the Conflict Map PDF shows the 368 corridor following the existing transmission to the north. Should the MP's not follow the proposed designated corridor? The route shown by MP 10 to MP 27.6, that goes through Whitehall, would be impossible to site (comment on abstract).

Analysis: Section 368 energy corridors are only designated on BLM- and USFS-administered lands. It is possible that future infrastructure could potentially be selectively located within the corridor to minimize intersections with private land and Whitehall.

Ecology:

- MP 11 to MP 26 should be considered a high conflict area for DEQ siting purposes. It is too fragmented to be effectively considered under Montana MFSA Preferred Location Criteria (comment on abstract).

Analysis: Existing IOPs and BMPs would be required. In general, the corridor follows existing infrastructure. The Agencies could consider an IOP for habitat connectivity so that transmission projects within Section 368 energy corridors are sited and designed in a manner that minimizes impacts on habitat connectivity.

Abstract Acronyms and Abbreviations

BLM = Bureau of Land Management; BMP = best management practice; DEQ = Department of Environmental Quality; FO = field office; GHMA = general habitat management area; GIS = geographic information system; GRSG = Greater Sage-grouse; IOP = interagency operating procedure; LMP = land management plan; MP = milepost; NHT = National Historic Trail; NST = National Scenic Trail; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; RFI = request for information; RMP = resource management plan; ROD = Record of Decision; ROW = right-of-way; SIO = scenic integrity objective; SRMA = Special Recreation Management Area; USFS = U.S. Forest Service; VQO = visual quality objective; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.