

Corridor EIS Archives

From: corridoreiswebmaster@anl.gov
Sent: Sunday, July 09, 2006 4:48 PM
To: corridoreisarchives,
Subject: Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Comment M0065

Attachments: Energy_corridor_map_scoping_comments_M0065.doc



Energy_corridor_ma
p_scoping_co...

Thank you for your comment, Benjamin Lamb.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is M0065. Once the comment response document has been published, please refer to the comment tracking number to locate the response.

Comment Date: July 9, 2006 04:48:05PM CDT

Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Comment: M0065

First Name: Benjamin
Last Name: Lamb
Organization: Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Address: P.O. Box 1387
City: Lander
State: WY
Zip: 82520
Country: USA
Email: blamb@wyomingwildlife.org
Privacy Preference: Don't withhold name or address from public record
Attachment: C:\Documents and Settings\rs\My Documents\Energy corridor map scoping comments.doc

Comment Submitted:
comments attached.

Questions about submitting comments over the Web? Contact us at:
corridoreiswebmaster@anl.gov or call the Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Webmaster at
(630)252-6182.

Ben Lamb
Western Field Director
Wyoming Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 1387
Lander, WY 82520
(307) 335-8633 (phone)
(307) 335-8690 (fax)
blamb@wyomingwildlife.org
www.wyomingwildlife.org

Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability
Room 8H-033
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585
Fax: (202) 586-1472

Re: Comments on the Preliminary Draft Energy Corridor Map for Wyoming

To whom it may concern:

In light of the widespread call for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities, the Wyoming Wildlife Federation appreciates and supports the federal government's efforts to evaluate the reliability, congestion and enhancement of the national electricity grid (*Energy Policy Act of 2005*, Section 368).

The Wyoming Wildlife Federation (WWF) is Wyoming's oldest, and largest Sportsmen's organization, established in 1936. We respectfully offer the following comments on the potential energy corridors map for Wyoming that has been released by the Departments of Energy, Interior, Agriculture, and Defense. See http://corridoreis.anl.gov/documents/docs/WWEC_PrelimDraftMap_Wyoming.pdf.

We feel as though the designation of corridors should be done so along already established transportation routes to the greatest extent possible. Transecting areas of land that are still in tact wildlife habitat diminish the character of the state, and reduce the carrying capacity for all wildlife in the state of Wyoming. We fully support the portions

of the map that have the corridor routes along Interstate 80. Considering the amount of disturbance to wildlife already, putting the transmission corridor as close as possible to I-80 would lessen the impacts to wildlife along the route.

As there are several wind farms along the I-80 route, we would also like to suggest that bringing new wind farms on-line would be more easily accomplished, as it has long been established that lack of transmission capability has been a limiting factor in establishing new wind farms. The WWF believes that increasing the role of renewable energy in the nations thirst for energy will be beneficial for wildlife overall, as it will require fewer coal fired power plants in the long run, keeping the air clean, and reducing the emission of greenhouse gasses.

Our concerns regarding the siting of specific corridors are as follows and to a large extent, mirror those submitted by the Wyoming Outdoor Council:

- The I-80 energy corridor diverges significantly from I-80 itself beginning in the general vicinity of Superior in the Red Desert, continuing straight west a number of miles north of the Interstate. This takes the corridor through large areas of undeveloped countryside, much of it public land and important habitat for Sage grouse and other sensitive species, which could be greatly impacted by introducing a large energy corridor into this area. We believe the corridor should follow I-80 itself to the maximum extent possible.
- Along this same stretch of potential energy corridor, it appears to us that the potential corridor would bisect Seedskafee National Wildlife Refuge. We believe it is inappropriate to designate an energy corridor in a National Wildlife Refuge. At a minimum, any such corridor will need to meet the governing standard for National Wildlife Refuges: there must be assurance that any energy corridor uses are “compatible” with the principle use, namely that other uses cannot interfere with or detract from the principle use, which is the protection of wildlife. But to reiterate, there does not appear to be any need for the energy corridor to cross the refuge.
- This same stretch of corridor, which roughly follows U.S. Highway 30 in western Wyoming, also appears to intersect the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s riparian restoration projection in the Bear River watershed and may possibly intersect the Bureau of Land Management’s Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Clearly lands being evaluated for their important wetlands values should not be harmed by potential energy corridors. And the Raymond Mountain WSA is one of the largest – if not the largest – WSAs in Wyoming, and thus it has special values owing to its size alone, values which should not be diminished by dissecting the area with energy infrastructure. More generally, this stretch of potential corridor in the vicinity of U.S. 30 diverges significantly from the highway in the vicinity of Kemmerer, and we do not believe this should occur; it

should follow U.S. 30 more closely so as to avoid disturbing a vast area of undeveloped land, much of it public land.

- An energy corridor is also portrayed in the Shirley Basin. We believe an energy corridor in this vast, undeveloped basin, which is a center for black-footed ferret recovery efforts, cannot be justified absent compelling needs, such as providing transmission access to planned wind farms. Overhead transmission lines in particular can serve as perches for raptors, which can prey on prairie dogs, vital food for ferrets.
- Several small sections of energy corridor are shown in and near the Thunder Basin National Grassland in Converse and Campbell counties. It is not clear to us what the destinations of these short segments are, perhaps to support development of coal or coal bed methane, but special efforts should be made to protect the values in the National Grassland, which supports substantial numbers of diverse wildlife species.
- A rather lengthy segment of corridor is shown running northwest of U.S. Highway 20 departing from the highway in the general vicinity of Waltman in Natrona County. This corridor appears to follow an existing railroad until it reaches Lysite. If that is indeed the case, we support siting an energy corridor along the railroad, as the area has important habitat for wintering populations of Mule deer and pronghorn.
- The divergence in Washakie and bighorn county will put the corridor in Mule deer winter range. This divergence should be avoided if possible, and remain as close to the established highway right of way as possible.
- The potential energy corridor map shows no corridor being planned in the South Pass area, and we strongly support maintenance of this exclusion. The historical values of the South Pass area are of such overwhelming national significance that no energy corridor should be designated in this area. This area also serves as prime winter habitat for Pronghorn, Mule deer and Elk, and given the amount of disturbance already occurring in the upper green river valley, wintering animals in many herds are facing a crisis of epic proportions regarding where they can and cannot winter. In short, there should be a “No Net Loss” approach to winter habitat throughout the Federal Lands program in order to maintain, increase or develop new wildlife resources.
- The Wyoming Wildlife Federation also believes that all planning efforts regarding siting and construction should be done in consultation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The WGFD is one of the premier Wildlife agencies in the United States, and as the state agency charged with managing the health of Wyoming’s Game herds and wildlife, we feel that it is imperative that they be included in the decision making process.

On behalf of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, Wyoming's oldest and largest sportsmen's and wildlife advocacy organization, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Energy Corridor Map. The federation believes that developing Wyoming's energy resources can be done in such a manner that does not jeopardize our world class wildlife resources, our strong heritage of hunting and fishing, and our state's dedication to true multiple use.

Thank you,

Ben Lamb
Western Field Director
Wyoming Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 1387
Lander, WY 82520
(307) 335-8633 (office)
(307) 335-8690 (fax)
blamb@wyomingwildlife.org
www.wyomingwildlife.org