

Corridor EIS Archives

From: corridoreiswebmaster@anl.gov
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2006 3:48 PM
To: Corridor EIS Archives
Subject: Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Comment M0105

Attachments: West_Energy_Corridors_Plan_Comments_-10July2006_M0105.doc



West_Energy_Corri
dors_Plan_Com...

Thank you for your comment, Gary Werner.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is M0105. Once the comment response document has been published, please refer to the comment tracking number to locate the response.

Comment Date: July 10, 2006 03:47:45PM CDT

Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Comment: M0105

First Name: Gary

Last Name: Werner

Organization: Partnership for the National Trails System

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City: Madison

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Privacy Preference: Don't withhold name or address from public record

Attachment: C:\AGary's Work\PFNTS\Standing Committees\Public Policy\West Energy Corridors Plan Comments -10July2006.doc

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.

Partnership for the National Trails System

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July 10, 2006

Ms. Julia Souder
U.S. Department of Energy 8h-033
1000 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

RE: PROPOSED WEST-WIDE ENERGY CORRIDORS ACROSS PUBLIC LANDS

Dear Ms. Souder:

Writing on behalf of the Partnership for the National Trails System, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the West-wide Energy Corridor planning now underway by the Departments of Energy, Agriculture, Interior, and Defense to designate energy corridors across western public lands as required by the 2005 Energy Act. The Partnership for the National Trails System is a tax-exempt, non-profit federation of 29 non-profit organizations that work in direct partnership with Federal and state agencies to help sustain and manage the 24 national scenic and historic trails. The Partnership exists to foster information exchange among the trail organizations, to provide skill-building training for volunteers and staff, to coordinate their public policy advocacy, and to advise Federal agency managers about issues relating to the National Trails System.

The proposed energy corridors shown on the Preliminary Map appear to have an impact on the following **National Historic Trails**: Lewis and Clark, Nez Perce, Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, Pony Express, Old Spanish, Juan Bautista de Anza, and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro; and on these **National Scenic Trails**: Continental Divide and Pacific Crest. However, the limited information currently available makes it nearly impossible to make very specific comments regarding the likely impacts on the trails listed above. I offer several general comments instead.

- 1) The Department of Energy (DOE) in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA Forest Service (FS) should prepare more detailed maps at better scales depicting the alignment of proposed energy corridors in relation to all the routes of the national scenic and historic trails listed above before making final decisions about the location of those corridors. With more detailed maps we will be happy to provide more specific comments regarding the impacts on specific sites along the national scenic and historic trails.
- 2) The DOE, BLM, and FS should identify lands that are “unsuitable for transmission corridors,” such as national monuments, sensitive habitats, existing conservation lands, and at least the “high potential sites and segments” of the national historic trails and the routes of the national scenic trails. New transmission corridors should not be sited through these areas. The extraordinary, as yet relatively untouched viewsheds of historic

trail sites and segments and the routes of the scenic trails should be included in these protected areas. Examples of these critical sites include South Pass and the Sublette Cutoff on the California and Oregon National Historic Trails, and the Casa Colorado and San Rafael Swell segments of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.

The quality of the experience for trail users, whether visiting critical sites along a national historic trail or seeking the solitude of back country on a national scenic trail is directly related to the character of the surrounding landscape. The quality – the authenticity – of the experience is greatest to the extent that the surrounding landscape, the viewshed, reflects the conditions of the land when Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery explored it or when wagon trains of Oregon-bound settlers rolled over it. The authenticity of the landscape surrounding it is a key component of the integrity of either a national historic or national scenic trail.

- 3) Existing energy corridors throughout the western states have impacted physical traces of national historic trails and the routes of national scenic trails and have disrupted the viewsheds of both types of trail. Expanding existing energy corridors and adding new ones inevitably will increase the number of trails touched by the physical corridors and destroy more miles of viewshed. The Partnership strongly urges that energy corridors already in place be used to site new transmission facilities before any new corridors are developed.
- 4) Energy transmission crossings of national scenic and historic trails should be made with careful attention to sensitive traces of the trails as well as their viewsheds. Towers should be kept to minimal heights and close attention should be paid to the materials used and to the color of towers and cables. These facilities should “disappear” when viewed from a distance. Section 106 and NEPA review must be fully implemented for any corridor expansions and additions to insure protection of the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the trails and mitigation of adverse effects on them. Best management practices must be used for corridor construction and restoration.

As mentioned above the limited information currently available precludes making a list of the many specific areas of national scenic and historic trails that may be affected by proposed energy corridors. As more and better information becomes available we will be able to provide comments on specific sites and segments of specific trails. On behalf of the Partnership for the National Trails System I request that we be notified about planning of West-wide Energy Corridors, be consulted in a timely manner about the effect of expansion of energy corridors on national scenic and historic trails, and be given sufficient opportunity to respond to any and all energy corridor proposals.

We look forward to reviewing and commenting on the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) when it is released. Please include these comments in your planning records.

Sincerely,

Gary Werner
Executive Director
NATTRAILS@aol.com