

Corridor 229-254

Coeur d'Alene to Boulder Corridor

Corridor Purpose and Rationale

The corridor provides an interstate pathway for electricity transmission from Blue Creek substation into Montana. It is the most direct route to energize communities in the Silver Valley. Input regarding alignment from multiple organizations¹ during the WWEC PEIS suggested following this route. An electric transmission line is planned within the corridor from MP 52 to MP 299.8. Montana DEQ and BLM attempted to locate a route within this corridor for the Mountain States Transmission Intertie (MSTI), a 500-kV line from south of Townsend, Montana to Southern Idaho. Because the corridor is centered on the existing 500-kV transmission line, the corridor was found to be too narrow to accommodate another new large transmission line due to WECC reliability standards for collocating large transmission lines. The corridor has a reduced width and is electric only to shift potential visual impacts away from transportation routes and follow existing infrastructure. The corridor is unlikely to accommodate additional infrastructure, other than low voltage transmission lines.

Corridor location:

Idaho (Kootenai and Shoshone Co.)
 Montana (Broadwater, Granite, Jefferson, Mineral, Missoula, and Powell Co)
 BLM: Coeur d'Alene Idaho Field Office; Missoula and Butte Montana Field Offices
 USFS: Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, Idaho Panhandle NF, Lolo NF
 Regional Review Region: Region 6

Corridor width, length:

Width 1,000 ft MP 51 to MP 300
 Width 2,000 ft MP 0 to MP 51
 171 miles of designated corridor
 300 miles of posted route, including gaps

Designated Use:

- corridor is electric only



Figure 1. Corridor 229-254

Corridor of concern (Y)

Critical habitat, NRHP, "suitable" segment under Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, Continental Divide NST, USFS Inventoried Roadless Area

Corridor history:

- Locally designated prior to 2009 (N)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
 - A 115- and four 500-kV transmission lines are within and adjacent to the corridor.
 - A natural gas pipeline is within and adjacent to the corridor.
 - Highway I-90 overlaps and runs parallel to the corridor.
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
 - 1 substation is within the corridor and 54 more substations are within 5 mi.
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

¹ Avista Utilities, American Wind Energy Association, Bonneville Power Administration, Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study, Western Interconnection Transmission Paths, and Western Utility Group

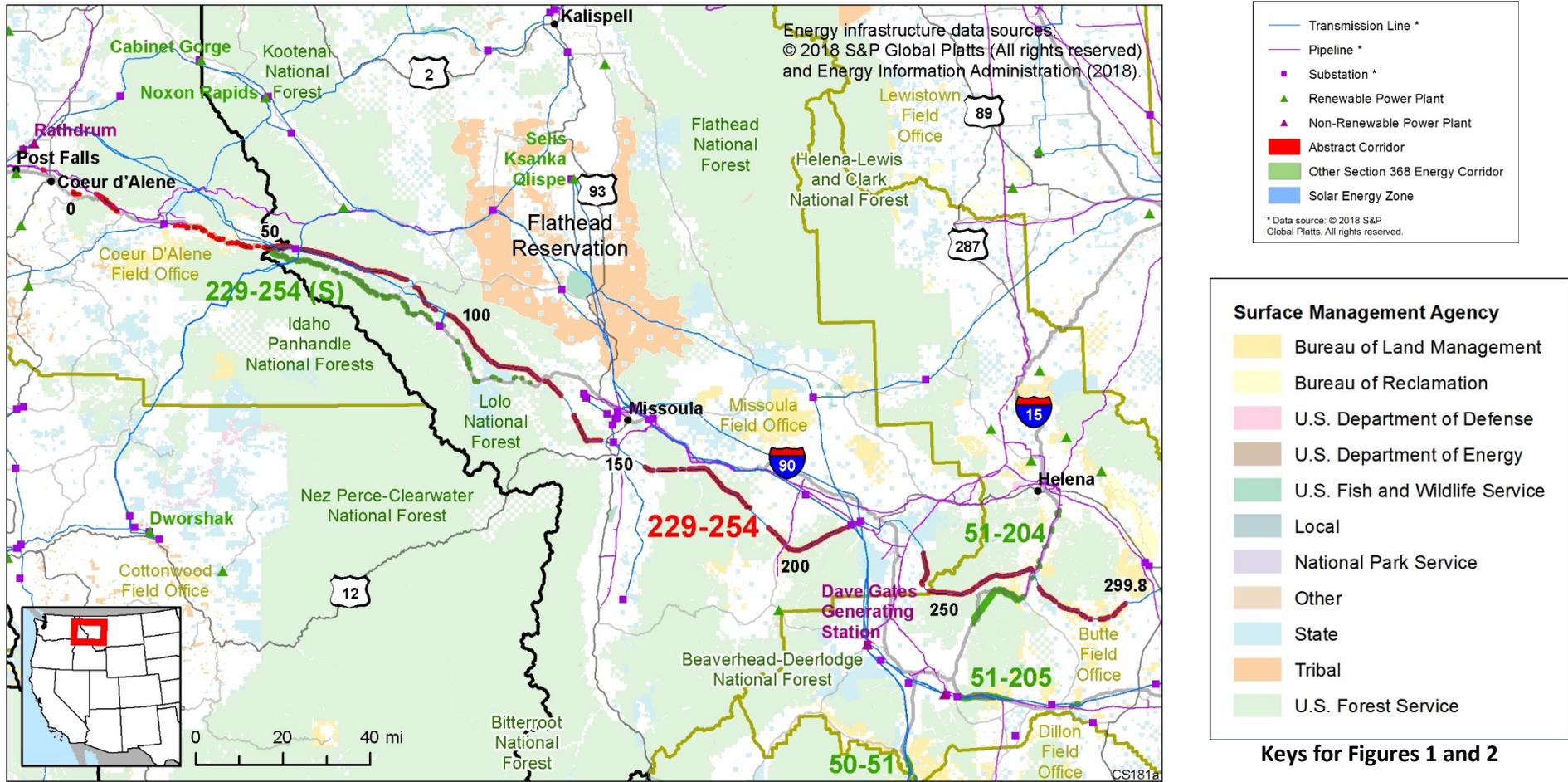


Figure 2. Corridor 229-254 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

Conflict Map Analysis

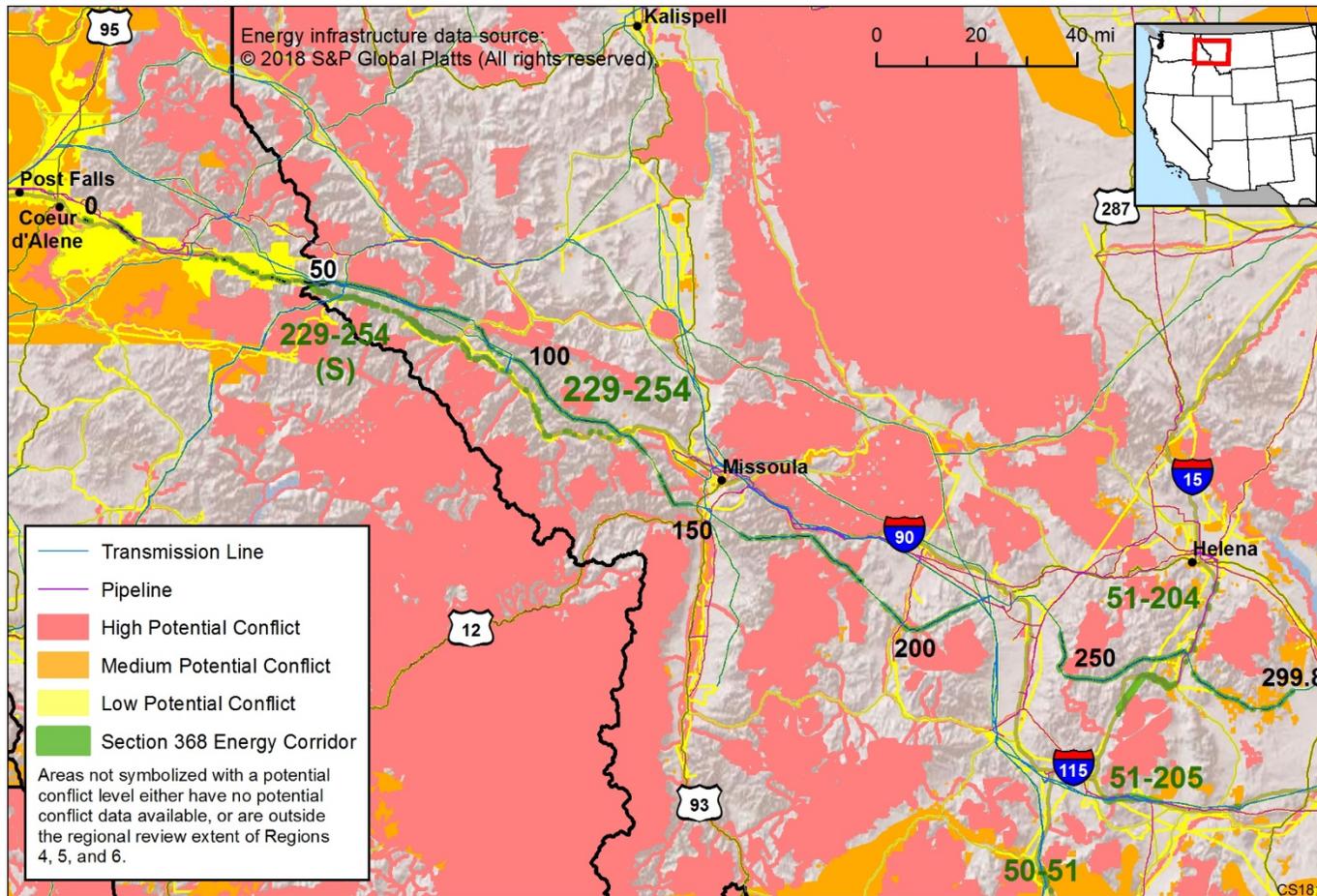


Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 229-254

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/>)

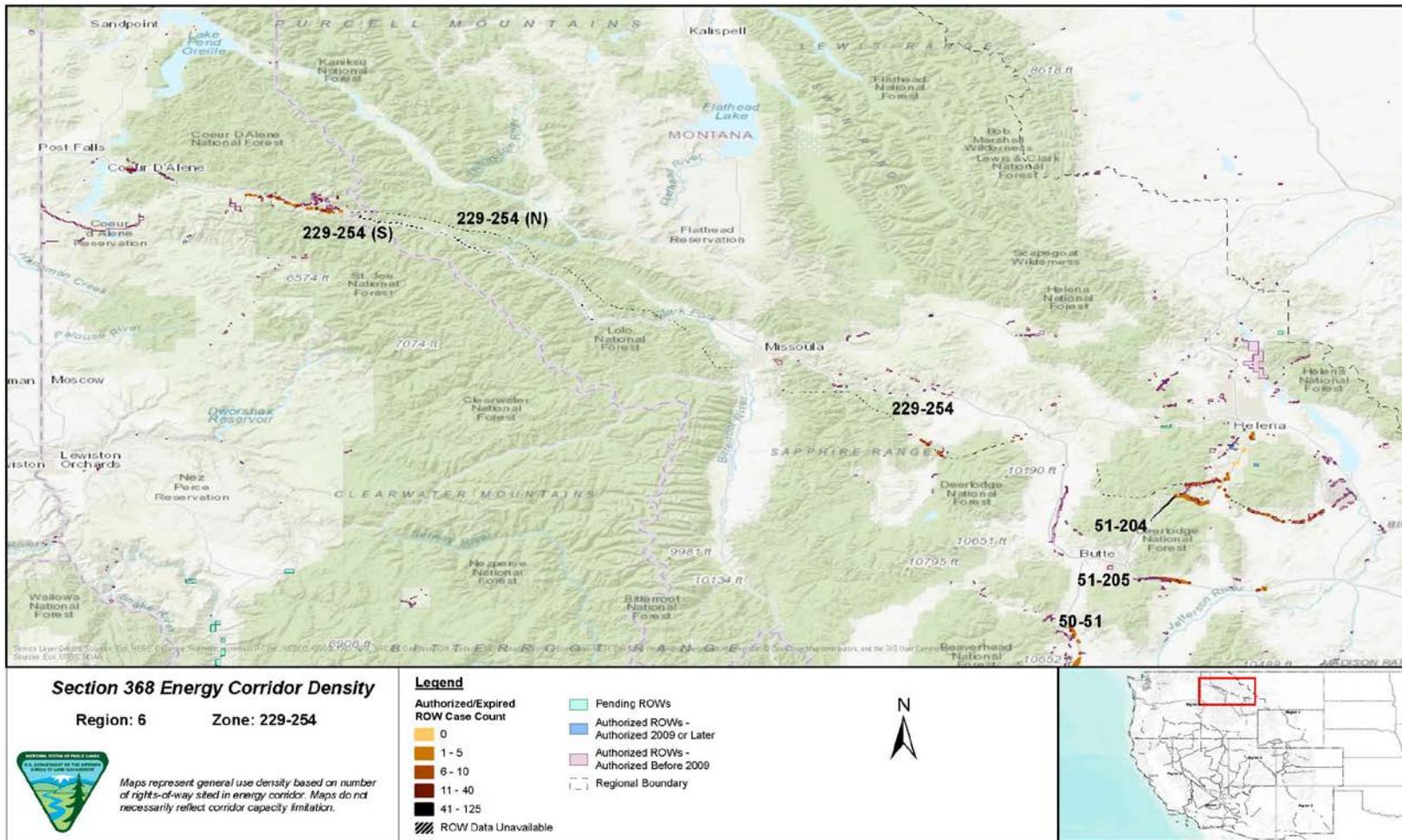


Figure 4. Corridor 229-254, Corridor Density Map

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 pink; 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.

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POTENTIAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES or CONCERNS TO EXAMINE	MILEPOST (MP)¹	STAKEHOLDER INPUT and OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION	POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS BASED ON SITING PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS²
<i>BLM Jurisdiction: Coeur d'Alene Field Office</i>			
<i>Agency Land Use Plan: Coeur d'Alene RMP (2007)</i>			
VRM Class II area and the corridor intersect – The objective of VRM Class II designation is to retain the existing character of the landscape.	MP 0 to MP 1	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	Areas within the VRM Class II designation may not be compatible with future overhead transmission line development; however, the corridor is collocated with an existing transmission line. To avoid the VRM Class II area, the corridor could be shifted to the north so that the southern boundary of the corridor aligns with the existing transmission line. This would shift the corridor onto private lands and would remove the corridor designation at this location.
Coeur D'Alene Lake SRMA and the corridor intersect – The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusions for SRMAs.	MP 0 to MP 2	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with an existing transmission line. The SRMA does not preclude future development within the corridor. There are no options to shift this corridor to federal lands outside of the SRMA.
Silver Valley SRMA and the corridor intersect – The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusions for SRMAs.	MP 28 to MP 49	One to two transmission lines and I-90 occur within or closely parallel to the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure. The SRMA does not preclude future development within the corridor. There are no options to shift this corridor to federal lands outside of the SRMA.
<i>USFS Jurisdiction: Idaho Panhandle National Forest</i>			
<i>Agency Land Use Plan: Idaho Panhandle National Forests LMP (2015)</i>			
SIO Moderate intersect and is adjacent to the corridor – For management of areas under this SIO	MP 5 to MP 7,	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing

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class, any deviations from existing conditions must remain visually subordinate to the landscape character being viewed. (Corresponds to VQO Partial Retention)	MP 11, and MP 52 to MP 54		infrastructure (transmission line). There are no viable options to shift this corridor at these locations.
ROS Roded Modified and the corridor intersect – Within this ROS class, vegetative and landform alterations typically dominate the landscape. There is little on-site control of users except for gated roads. There is a moderate to high degree of motorized use within the area.	MP 6 to MP 7	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (transmission line) within an area having a low degree of naturalness.
SIO Low and the corridor intersect – For management of areas under this SIO class, deviations from existing conditions should be compatible or complimentary to the character within. (Corresponds to VQO Modification)	MP 6 and MP 10 to MP 12	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (transmission line and, in portions, I-90). There are no viable options to shift this corridor at these locations.
SIO High and the corridor intersect – Management of areas under this SIO class 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 VQO Retention)	MP 7 to MP 12 and MP 49 to MP 52	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (existing transmission line and/or I-90). There are no options to shift this corridor to federal lands outside of the SIO High class area at these locations.
ROS Urban and the corridor intersect – Areas under this ROS class may be substantially urbanized (very low degree of naturalness and, there can be a very high degree of motorized use).	MP 7 to MP 12, MP 49 to MP 52	An existing transmission line or interstate occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (transmission line or I-90) within an area having a very low degree of naturalness.
ROS Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized and the corridor intersect – Areas under this ROS class are managed such that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is not permitted.	MP 10 to MP 11, MP 52 to MP 54	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (transmission line). There are no viable options to shift this corridor at these locations.
USFS Jurisdiction: Lolo National Forest Agency Land Use Plan: Lolo National Forest Plan (1986)			
ROS Roded Natural and the corridor intersect – Areas under this ROS class may have resource modification and utilization practices evident, but	MP 54 to MP 83, MP 86 to MP 124, MP 125 to MP 130,	One to two existing transmission lines occur within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing

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<p>harmonized with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities.</p>	<p>MP 135 to MP 145, MP 157 to MP 169, and MP 170 to MP 179</p>		<p>infrastructure (1 or 2 transmission lines). There are no viable options to shift this corridor at these locations.</p>
<p>Bull Trout (ESA-listed threatened) critical habitat and the corridor intersect – The land use plan pre-dates the listing of this species and does not have specific guidance or objectives.</p>	<p>MP 73, MP 129, MP 139, and MP 169</p>	<p>The USFWS issued the Final Critical Habitat Rule for Bull Trout in 2010.</p> <p>The Recovery Plan for the Conterminous United States Population of Bull Trout was finalized in 2015. No management prescriptions related to utility corridors were identified for this species.</p> <p>Land use plan direction for aquatic habitat and the reasonable and prudent measures identified by the USFWS during consultation will be incorporated in project plans to minimize habitat fragmentation and degradation.</p> <p>RFI comment: re-route to avoid critical habitat. Consult closely with state fish and game agencies and WGA to implement the full mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, minimization, and compensation for CHAT resources at "Very High" risk. Consult with USFWS to avoid adverse modification to Bull Trout designated critical habitat.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: reduce high impacts and reconsider portions of</p>	<p>The corridor would be difficult to move to avoid Bull Trout critical habitat. The location appears to best meet the siting principles because the corridor intersects the critical habitat at a perpendicular angle, the corridor is collocated with an existing transmission line, and there is an absence of more preferable alternatives.</p>

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		this corridor to avoid Bull Trout habitat and to minimize disturbance to other sensitive wildlife species. Support shifting the corridor to avoid the roadless area landscape but also to avoid the Bull Trout habitat.	
ROS Rural and the corridor intersect – Areas under this ROS class may be substantially modified. Resource modification and utilization practices are to enhance recreation activities and to maintain vegetative cover and soil. There is a very low degree of naturalness and high degree of motorized use.	MP 83, MP 86, MP 125 to MP 126, and MP 169 to MP 170	One to two existing transmission lines occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (1 or 2 transmission lines) within an area having a very low degree of naturalness.
ROS Semi-Primitive Motorized and the corridor intersect – Areas under this ROS class are managed such that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is permitted.	MP 86	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (transmission line). There are no viable options to shift this corridor at this location.
<p>USFS Jurisdiction: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Agency Land Use Plan: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest LMP (2009)</p>			
SIO Moderate and the corridor intersect – For management of areas under this SIO class, any deviations from existing conditions must remain visually subordinate to the landscape character being viewed. (Corresponds to VQO Partial Retention)	MP 180 to MP 185, MP 194, MP 195 to MP 196, MP 198 to MP 199, MP 200 to MP 201, MP 202 to MP 212, MP 213, MP 236 to MP 242, MP 242 to MP 244, and MP 260 to MP 264	An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.	The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (transmission line). There are no viable options to shift this corridor at these locations
Silver King Roadless Area and the corridor intersect – Generally, inventoried roadless areas do not contain structures such as electrical transmission corridors. The WWEC ROD amended the LMP to include Corridor 229-254 as a designated corridor.	MP 181 to MP 182	At this location the corridor is centered on an existing transmission line.	It appears that the Roadless Area could be avoided by shifting the corridor to USFS lands to the southwest, such

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<p>Section 368 energy corridors are priority areas open to ROWs to maximize energy transmission while minimizing impacts on other resources.</p>		<p>The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (2001) prohibits road construction, reconstruction, and timber harvest in inventoried roadless areas.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: corridor overlaps with USFS Silver King IRA in Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest for 64 acres.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: avoid the the Silver King IRA.</p>	<p>that the northeast boundary of the corridor was at the existing transmission line.</p> <p>Agencies could consider a coordination IOP related to Roadless Areas to help minimize conflicts with the Roadless Rule.</p>
<p>Bull Trout (ESA-listed threatened) critical habitat and the corridor intersect – The land use plan pre-dates the identification of Bull Trout critical habitat and therefore does not have specific guidance or objectives.</p>	<p>MP 183, MP 200, and MP 201</p>	<p>The USFWS issued the Final Critical Habitat Rule for Bull Trout in 2010.</p> <p>The Recovery Plan for the Conterminous United States Population of Bull Trout was finalized in 2015. No management prescriptions related to utility corridors were identified for this species.</p> <p>Land use plan direction for aquatic habitat and the reasonable and prudent measures identified by the USFWS during consultation will be incorporated in project plans to minimize habitat fragmentation and degradation.</p> <p>RFI comment: re-route to avoid critical habitat. Consult closely with state fish and game agencies and WGA to implement the full mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, minimization,</p>	<p>The corridor would be difficult to re-route to avoid Bull Trout critical habitat. The location appears to best meet the siting principles because the corridor intersects the critical habitat at generally perpendicular angles, the corridor is collocated with an existing transmission line, and there is an absence of more preferable alternatives. Consultation with USFWS would be required for any future projects to avoid adverse impacts to Bull Trout.</p>

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		<p>and compensation for CHAT resources at "Very High" risk. Consult with USFWS to avoid adverse modification to Bull Trout designated critical habitat.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: reduce high impacts and reconsider portions of this corridor to avoid Bull Trout habitat and to minimize disturbance to other sensitive wildlife species. Support shifting the corridor to avoid the roadless area landscape, as recommended, but also to avoid the Bull Trout habitat.</p>	
<p>SIO High and the corridor intersect – Management of areas under this SIO class 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 VQO Retention)</p>	<p>MP 194, MP 196 to MP 197, MP 199 to MP 200, MP 201 to MP 202, MP 242, and MP 246 to MP 260</p>	<p>An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.</p>	<p>The corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because of collocation with existing infrastructure (existing transmission line). There are no options to shift this corridor to federal lands outside of the SIO High class area at most of these locations. Corridor shifts to the southwest at MP 194 and to the west at MP 242 to avoid the SIO High areas are possible.</p>
<p>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, national scenic trails 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</p>	<p>MP 247</p>	<p>The Continental Divide NST Comprehensive Plan was finalized in 2009. The NST is managed according to the National Trails Act.</p> <p>An existing transmission line occurs within the corridor.</p>	<p>At the crossing at MP 247 the corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles, because the perpendicular crossing with the corridor and the existing infrastructure (transmission line) minimize impacts on the NST.</p> <p>Agencies could consider a new IOP for NSTs and NHTs to enhance BMPs for proposed development within the energy corridor.</p>

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completely and at such scale that they are not evident.)			
BLM Jurisdiction: Missoula Field Office Agency Land Use Plan: Garnet RMP (1986)			
No issues related to resource intersections with the corridor in the Missoula FO have been identified.		Comment on abstract: Missoula RMP has started their plan revision in 2018, which is not mentioned in the Abstract and should be. Recommend a more thorough review, including Field Office staff involvement, in the corridor segment that accesses the planning area.	The Missoula RMP is currently undergoing a plan revision but the planning area is currently being managed under the 1986 plan. If a project is proposed in this area, project-specific NEPA will be required.
BLM Jurisdiction: Butte Field Office Agency Land Use Plan: Butte RMP (2009)			
Elkhorn Mountains ACEC and the corridor intersect – The RMP states that the ACEC is mostly open to new ROWs.	MP 276 to MP 277 and MP 282 to MP 300	An existing transmission line is located within the corridor. Comment on abstract: Elkhorn Mountains ACEC overlaps 1,268 acres of corridor. The potential impacts of on ecological values of the Elkhorn Mountains ACEC should be fully mitigated.	The corridor has a narrowed width of 1,000 ft and is restricted to electric only. The reduced width and mode limitations established to shift potential visual impacts away from transportation routes and follow existing infrastructure. The corridor appears to best meet the siting principles. The corridor is collocated with existing infrastructure. It cannot be re-located to avoid the ACEC. BMPs and IOPs would be required for any future projects to mitigate potential impacts on the ACEC. Section 368 energy corridors are priority areas open to ROWs to maximize energy transmission while minimizing impacts on other resources.

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. The information below is provided to facilitate further discussion during stakeholder review.

Corridor Utility:

- The Agencies, transmission developers and utilities should focus on increasing the capacity of the existing lines in the corridor before building additional lines (comment on abstract).

Analysis: In general, collocation and upgrading of existing transmission lines are preferred to maximize utility, minimize potential impacts and to promote efficient use of landscape.

Topography Concern:

- Terrain would be a major consideration for additional development. There is a pinch point at 4th of July Pass.
- The entire corridor for this section needs additional reviews based on the significant levels of fish, wildlife, wild and scenic river, inventoried roadless areas, recreational interests and the presence of extremely rough terrain not suitable for transmission line access (comment on abstract).

Analysis: Terrain and existing uses would require coordination and analysis. The corridor is collocated with an existing transmission line along its entire route (highway and/or transmission line for southern route). In general, collocation is preferred to maximize utility, minimize potential impacts and to promote efficient use of landscape.

Jurisdictional Concerns:

- Recommend shifting MP 122, MP 192, MP 211, MP 251 to MP 252 to the south and recommend shifting MP 11, MP 68 to MP 69, MP 128 to MP 129, MP 142 to MP 145, MP 255 to MP 256, MP 264 to MP 267 and MP 294 to the north to avoid a pinch point due to private land. Existing infrastructure would become the border of the corridor instead of the centerline.
- State park is adjacent to corridor at MP 111.
- Trail of the Coeur d'Alene State Park intersects and is adjacent to corridor MP 31, MP 33, MP 37 to MP 38, and MP 42 to MP 45.
- The corridor also crosses through the Wallace Forest Conservation Area (also known as the Blue Creek Bay Recreation Area). Further development through this area would be challenging because of the conditions under which the property was acquired was to be used as a recreation area.

Analysis: Agencies could consider slight corridor adjustments to avoid non-federal lands.

- The Lewis and Clark NHT is located on private lands between MP 146 and 148. The logical extension of the corridor between the designated corridor segments would cross and could potentially impact the NHT.

Analysis: Section 368 energy corridors cannot be designated on private land. If future development was located along the private land segments, the intersection of a future transmission line or pipeline with the NHT would be perpendicular (minimizing impact on trail values). Agencies could consider a new IOP for NSTs and NHTs to enhance BMPs for proposed development within the energy corridor.

Cultural Resources:

- Re-route to avoid NRHP properties (RFI comment). This corridor is identified as a Corridor of Concern in the Settlement Agreement; the following resource of concern is identified: National Register of Historic Places properties. The Agencies must address this issue through avoidance, minimization and compensatory mitigation (comment on abstract).

Analysis: Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of an undertaking on cultural resources listed on the NRHP. The designated corridor does not intersect any NRHP sites. There are NRHP sites located near the corridor or on private land between designated corridor segments.

Specially Designated Area:

- Re-route to avoid “suitable” segment under Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (RFI comment). This corridor is identified as a Corridor of Concern in the Settlement Agreement; the following resource of concern is identified: “suitable” segment under Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. The Agencies must address this issue through avoidance, minimization and compensatory mitigation (comment on abstract).

Analysis: The corridor does not appear to intersect a WSR suitable segment.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:

- Citizens’ Wilderness Proposal: Elkhorns (RFI comment).

Analysis: The BLM’s current inventory findings will be used in land use planning analyses related to the revision, deletion, or addition to the energy corridors. At such time that citizen’s inventory information is formally submitted, the BLM will compare its official Agency inventory information with the submitted materials, determine if the conclusion reached in previous BLM inventories remains valid, and update findings regarding the lands ability to qualify as wilderness in character.

Ecology:

- MP 273 to MP 300 in the Elkhorn Mountains area runs through elk and mule deer winter range (area is also yearlong range for both species) - as noted there already is a 500-KV transmission line present in the corridor. MP 277 to MP 281 crosses the USFS Elkhorns Wildlife Management Unit which is the only USFS designated Wildlife Management Unit in the nation (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

ACEC = Area of Environmental Concern; BLM = Bureau of Land Management; BMP = best management practice; CHAT = Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool; DEQ = Department of Environmental Quality; FO = field office; GIS = geographic information system; IOP = interagency operating procedure; LMP = land management plan; MP = milepost; NHPA = National Historic Preservation Act; NHT = National Historic Trail; NRHP = National Register of Historic Places; NST = National Scenic Trail; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; RFI = request for information; RMP = resource management plan; ROS = recreation opportunity spectrum; ROW = right-of-way; SIO = scenic integrity objective; SRMA = Special Recreation Management Area; USFS = U.S. Forest Service; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; VQO = visual quality objective; VRM = visual resource management; WECC = Western Electricity Coordinating Council; WGA = Western Governors' Association; WSR = Wild and Scenic River; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.