

Corridor 24-228

Ion Highway to Boise

Corridor Purpose and Rationale

The corridor provides a pathway for energy transport from Oregon to Boise, Idaho, following Highway 95. Input regarding alignment from the Bonneville Power Administration, Idaho Power Company, and Western Utility Group 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.

Corridor location:

Idaho (Owyhee Co.)
Oregon (Malheur Co.)
BLM: Jordan, Malheur, and Owyhee Field Offices
Regional Review Region: Region 6

Corridor width, length:

Width 3,500 ft
56 miles of designated corridor
95 miles of posted route, including gaps

Designated Use:

- corridor is multi-modal

Corridor of concern (Y)

Pygmy Rabbit habitat, GRS habitat, NRHP property

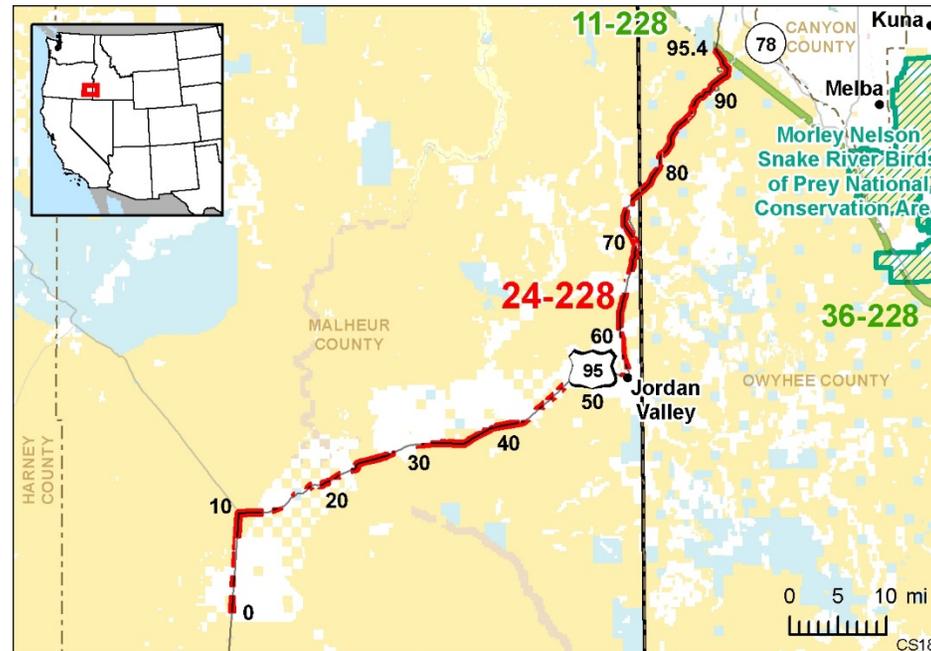


Figure 1. Corridor 24-228

Corridor history:

- Locally designated prior to 2009 (Y)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
 - A 69-kV transmission line is within and adjacent to a portion of the corridor.
 - Ion Highway is within the entire length of the corridor.
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
 - 1 substation is within the corridor and 4 more substations are within 5 mi of the corridor.
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

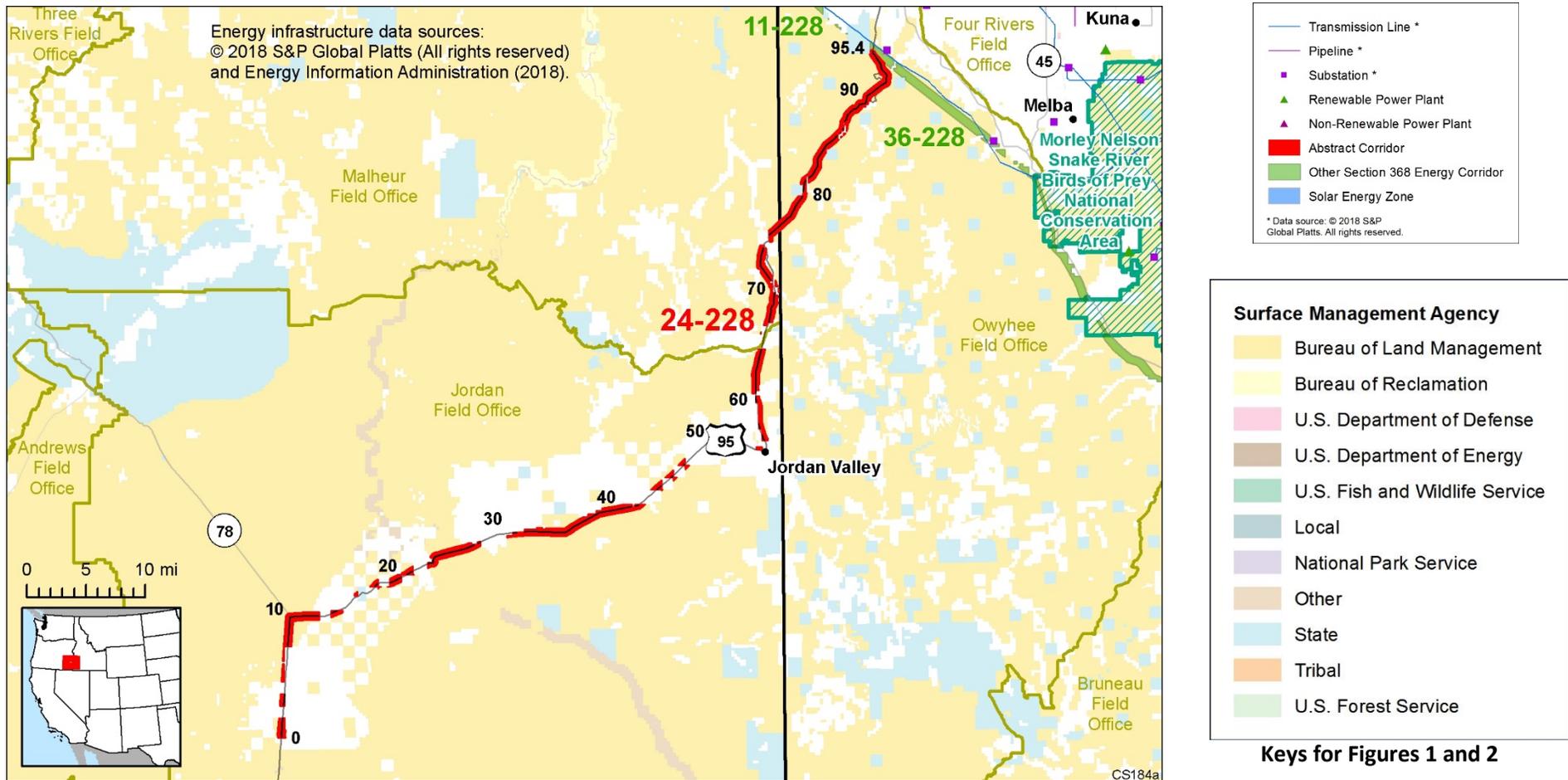


Figure 2. Corridor 24-228 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

Conflict Map Analysis

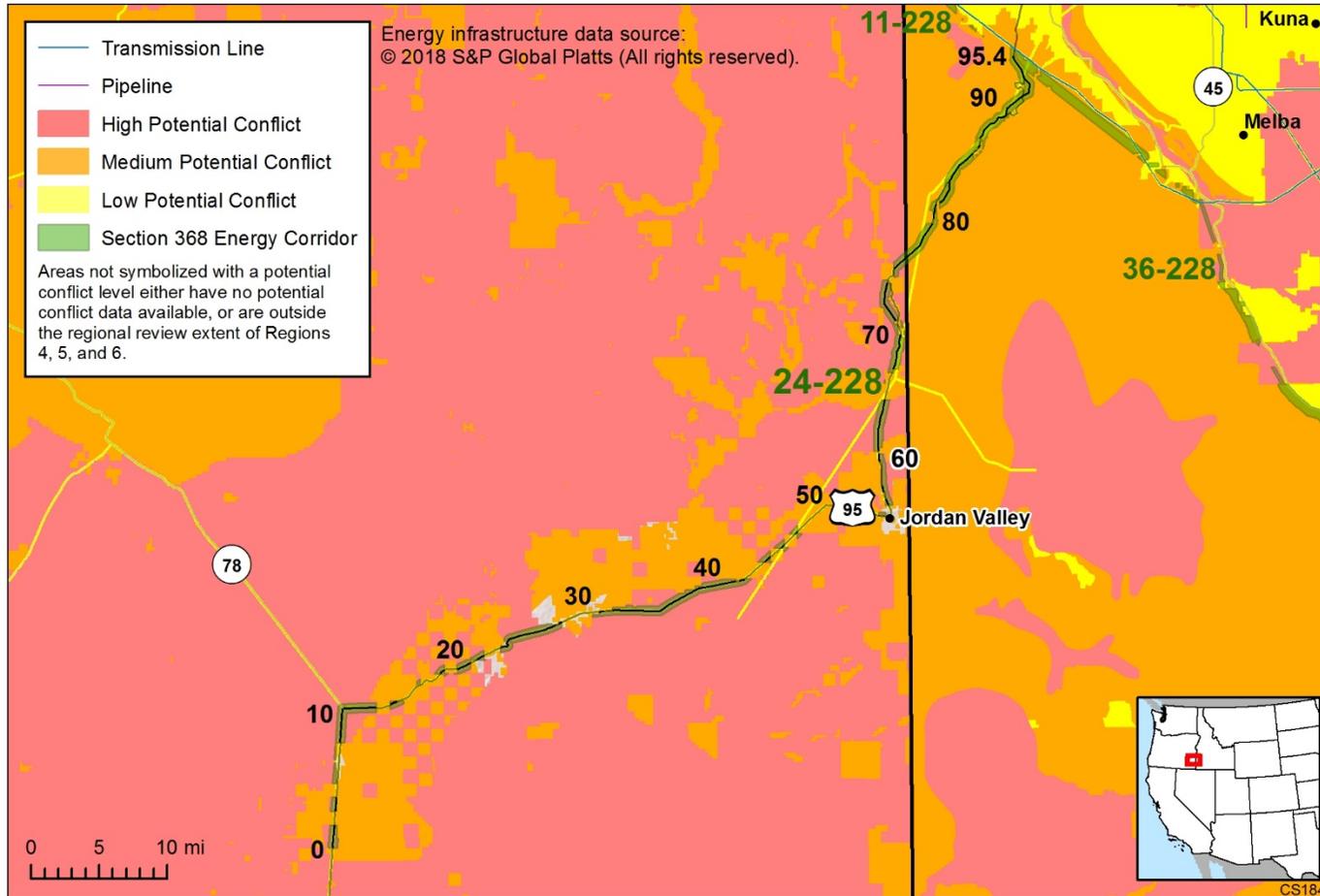


Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 24-228

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/>)

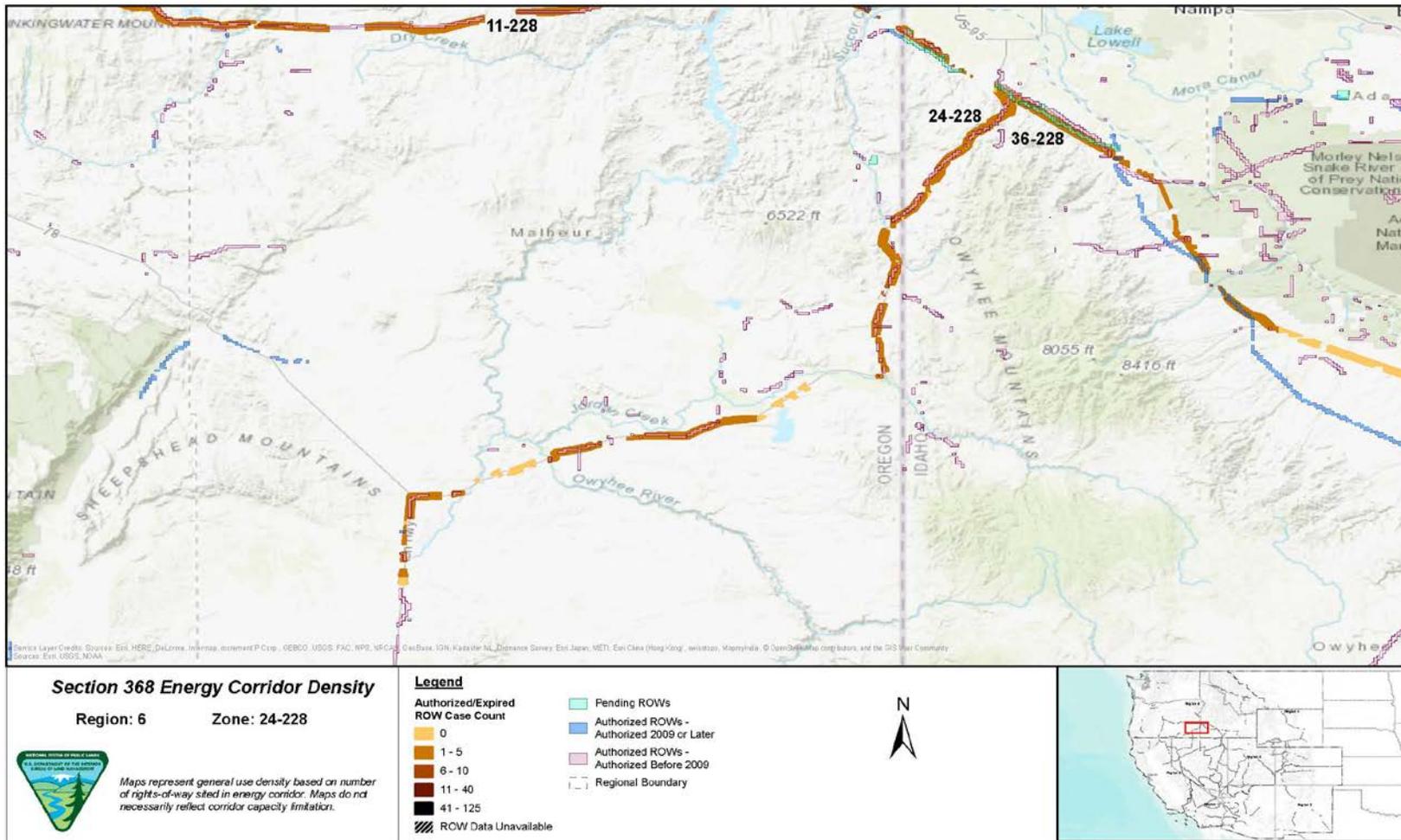


Figure 4. Corridor 24-228, Corridor Density Map

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.

CORRIDOR 24-228 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>BLM Jurisdiction: Vale District Office</i>			
<i>Agency Land Use Plan: Southeastern Oregon RMP (2002)</i>			
Lands with undetermined status for wilderness characteristics intersect and are adjacent to the corridor.	MP 7 to MP 13, MP 23 to MP 28, MP 31 to MP 37, MP 40 to 43, MP 61 to MP 64, and MP 67 to MP 76	BLM Manual Section 6320 (Considering lands with wilderness characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process), 3/15, 2012, provides policy and guidance for considering lands with wilderness characteristics in land use planning under FLPMA.	<p>The corridor location appears to best meet siting principles. The corridor is collocated with I-95 for its entire length. In several areas, there is either room within the corridor for future infrastructure to avoid potential lands with wilderness characteristics or for the corridor to be slightly shifted to avoid those lands. In other areas, the corridor cannot be shifted to avoid the potential lands with wilderness characteristics because those lands are located along both sides of the corridor.</p> <p>The BLM retains broad discretion regarding the multiple use management of lands possessing wilderness characteristics without Wilderness or WSA designations.</p> <p>Agencies could consider a new IOP to assist with avoiding and/or minimizing impacts to developing energy infrastructure on lands with wilderness characteristics.</p>
<i>BLM Jurisdiction: Owyhee Field Office</i>			
<i>Agency Land Use Plan: Owyhee RMP (1999)</i>			
Blackstock SRMA and the corridor intersect -The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusions areas with SRMAs.	MP 82 to MP 85		Although there are no competing land management objectives for SRMAs, there is available space within the corridor between the highway and the transmission line that would allow the SRMA to be avoided while still locating infrastructure within the corridor. Shifting the

CORRIDOR 24-228 REVIEW			
POTENTIAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES or CONCERNS TO EXAMINE	MILEPOST (MP)¹	STAKEHOLDER INPUT and OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION	POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS BASED ON SITING PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS²
			corridor to the edge of the highway or the transmission line at this location would avoid the SRMA while maintaining the corridor width on federal lands.
Squaw Creek Addition SRMA and the corridor intersect - The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusion areas with SRMAs.	MP 90 to MP 95	The corridor is routed within the SRMA to avoid the Squaw Creek RNA ACEC.	There are no competing land management objectives for SRMAs, and while the corridor intersects the SRMA it is routed to avoid the Squaw Creek RNA ACEC. However, the path through the ACEC follows the path of an existing 69-kV transmission line. The Agencies could consider shifting the corridor west of the ACEC to avoid both the ACEC and the SRMAs while maintaining the corridor width on federal lands.
Owyhee Front SRMA and the corridor intersect - The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusions areas with SRMAs.	MP 92 to MP 93	The corridor is routed within the SRMA to avoid the Squaw Creek RNA ACEC.	
BLM Jurisdiction: Vale District Office, Owyhee Field Office			
Agency Land Use Plan: Idaho GRSG ROD and ARMPA – Attachment 1 (2015); Oregon GRSG ARMPA – March 2019			
GRSG GHMA and the corridor intersect - The 2019 ARMPA states that designated existing utility corridors in GHMA will remain open to utility ROWs. Collocating new infrastructure within existing ROWs and maintaining and upgrading ROWs is preferred over the creation of new ROWs. Collocation in designated corridors can be built within the existing corridor or adjacent to the existing corridor.	MP 0 to MP 20, MP 23 to MP 35, and MP 40 to MP 57	RFI comment: re-route or exclude new infrastructure ROWs and avoid all new energy infrastructure development within GRSG PACs (58% overlap). Use full mitigation hierarchy to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts within four miles of important GRSG breeding areas. Comment on abstract: delete corridor.	Collocation is preferred and the corridor is collocated with I-95. The GHMA encompasses a broad area of the corridor that cannot be avoided.
GRSG PHMA (ROW avoidance area) and the corridor intersect - The 2019 ARMPA states that collocating new infrastructure within existing ROWs and maintaining and upgrading ROWs is preferred over the creation of new ROWs. Collocation in designated corridors can be built within the existing corridor or adjacent to the existing corridor.	MP 35 to MP 42, MP 48 to MP 49, and MP 59 to MP 79	RFI comment: corridor crosses areas of priority (58% overlap with PACs) and general sage-grouse habitat. Significant modifications would be necessary to avoid GRSG habitat. Re-route or exclude new infrastructure ROWs and avoid all new energy infrastructure development within GRSG PACs. Use full mitigation hierarchy to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts within four	ROW avoidance areas are not compatible with the corridor’s purpose as a preferred location for infrastructure. However, collocation is preferred and the corridor is collocated with I-95. The PHMA encompasses a broad area of the corridor that cannot be avoided.

CORRIDOR 24-228 REVIEW			
POTENTIAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES or CONCERNS TO EXAMINE	MILEPOST (MP)¹	STAKEHOLDER INPUT and OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION	POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS BASED ON SITING PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS²
		miles of important GRSG breeding areas. Comment on abstract: delete corridor.	
GRSG IHMA (ROW avoidance area) and the corridor intersect - The ARMPA states that existing designated corridors will remain Open in all habitat management areas. Collocating new infrastructure within existing ROWs and maintaining and upgrading ROWs is preferred over the creation of new ROWs. Collocation in designated corridors can be built within the existing corridor or adjacent to the existing corridor	MP 77 to MP 95	RFI comment: re-route or exclude new infrastructure ROWs and avoid all new energy infrastructure development within GRSG PACs (58% overlap). Use full mitigation hierarchy to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts within four miles of important GRSG breeding areas. Comment on abstract: delete corridor.	ROW avoidance areas are not compatible with the corridor’s purpose as a preferred location for infrastructure. However, collocation is preferred and the corridor is collocated with I-95. The IHMA encompasses a broad area of the corridor that cannot be avoided.

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.

Potential Corridor Revision:

- Corridor 24-228 may not be viable due to significant resource conflicts along Corridors 7-24 and 16-24 to which 24-228 would connect (RFI comment, comment on abstract).

Analysis: The intent of the regional reviews is to review all Section 368 energy corridor and provide potential corridor deletions, revisions, and additions. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide potential corridor revisions to ensure that the Section 368 energy corridors meet the siting principles identified in the Settlement Agreement.

Jurisdictional Concerns:

- Crooked Creek State Natural Area is adjacent to the corridor at MP 17.

Analysis: Section 368 energy corridors are only designated on BLM- and USFS-administered lands. The Agencies could consider shifting the corridor to the southeast at this location to avoid the Crooked Creek State Natural Area but then the corridor would not be collocated with existing infrastructure (i.e., Ion Highway).

Cultural Resources:

- The corridor crosses NRHP property (Oregon). Re-route to avoid NRHP property (RFI comment).

Analysis: The Pelota Fronton NRHP site is located on private lands and therefore is not within the designated corridor. Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of an undertaking on cultural resources listed on the NRHP.

Specially Designated Areas:

- The corridor passes through the BLM Alvord Desert WSA. This corridor should not be proposed inside the Alvord Desert WSA (RFI comment).

Analysis: The corridor begins near the boundary of the Alvord Desert WSA but does not intersect the WSA. The corridor follows Highway 95, which forms much of the eastern boundary of the Alvord Desert WSA. The location of the WSA prevents Corridor 24-228 from connecting to Corridors 7-24 and 16-24, preventing a continuous corridor network through southern Oregon.

Lands with wilderness characteristics:

- Citizens' Wilderness Proposal: Owyhee River Canyon Addition and Saddle Butte (RFI comment).
- Delete corridor (comment on abstract).

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. Agencies could consider an IOP to provide guidance on the review process for applications within corridors with incomplete inventories. The potential IOP would assist with avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics.

Ecology:

- Re-route to avoid "Very High" risk to the number and magnitude of flowline crossings by WWEC segments. Where flowlines must unavoidably be crossed, minimize impacts to connectivity (RFI comment).
- Re-route to avoid pygmy rabbit habitat (Idaho) (RFI comment). Delete corridor due to pygmy rabbit (comment on abstract).

- All possible considerations should be given to the Owyhee River crossing, a watershed not mentioned in the review of areas of interest in the abstract (comment on abstract).

Analysis: Existing IOPs and BMPs would be required, including an IOP for surface water, although 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.

Military and Civilian Aviation:

- MTR – VR and the corridor intersect from MP 0 to MP 3 and MP 8 to MP 21.
- SUA and the corridor intersect from MP 18 to MP 25.
- MTR – IR and the corridor intersect from MP 38 to MP 55 and MP 60 to MP 64.

Analysis: Adherence to existing IOP regarding coordination with DoD would be required. Agencies could consider a revision to the existing IOP to include height restrictions for corridors in the vicinity of DoD training routes.

Abstract Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACEC = area of critical environmental concern; ARMPA = Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment; BLM = Bureau of Land Management; BMP = best management practice; DoD = Department of Defense; FLPMA = Federal Land Policy and Management Act; GHMA = general habitat management area; GIS = geographic information system; GRSG = Greater Sage-grouse; IHMA = important habitat management area; IOP = interagency operating procedure; IR = instrument route; MP = milepost; MTR = Military Training Route; NRHP = National Register of Historic Places; PAC = priority area for conservation; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; PHMA = priority habitat management area; RFI = request for information; RMP = resource management plan; RNA = Recreation Natural Area; ROD = Record of Decision; ROW = right-of-way; SRMA = Special Recreation Management Area; SUA = special use airspace; USFS = U.S. Forest Service; VR = visual route; WSA = Wilderness Study Area; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.