

Corridor 121-221

Rock Springs Bypass Corridor

Corridor Purpose and Rationale

The corridor provides an east-west pathway for energy transport north of Rock Springs, Wyoming. The corridor connects to multiple Section 368 energy corridors to the east and west, creating a continuous corridor network in southern Wyoming across BLM- and USFS-administered lands. 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 Wyoming Pipeline Corridor Initiative (WPCI) is proposed to follow a portion of this segment. WPCI is a proposed pipeline ROW network designed to connect sources of CO₂ to existing oil fields to support further extraction of oil/gas reserves while sequestering CO₂ in the ground.

Corridor location:

Wyoming (Sweetwater Co.)
 BLM: Rock Spring Field Office
 Regional Review Region: Region 4

Corridor width, length:

Width 3,500 ft
 36 miles of designated corridor
 64 miles of posted route, including gaps

Designated Use:

- corridor is multi-modal

Corridor of concern (Y)

GRSG core area and habitat, NHT, BLM SMA.



Figure 1. Corridor 121-221

Corridor history:

- Locally designated prior to 2009 (N)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
 - Rocky Mountain oil pipeline follows a portion of the pipeline.
 - Natural gas pipelines overlap with portions of the corridor.
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
 - 2 substations are within 5 mi of the corridor.
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

¹ Frontier Line, Idaho Power Company, National Grid, PacifiCorp, Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study, Western Utility Group, and Wyoming Natural Gas Pipeline Authority



Figure 2. Corridor 121-221 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

Conflict Map Analysis

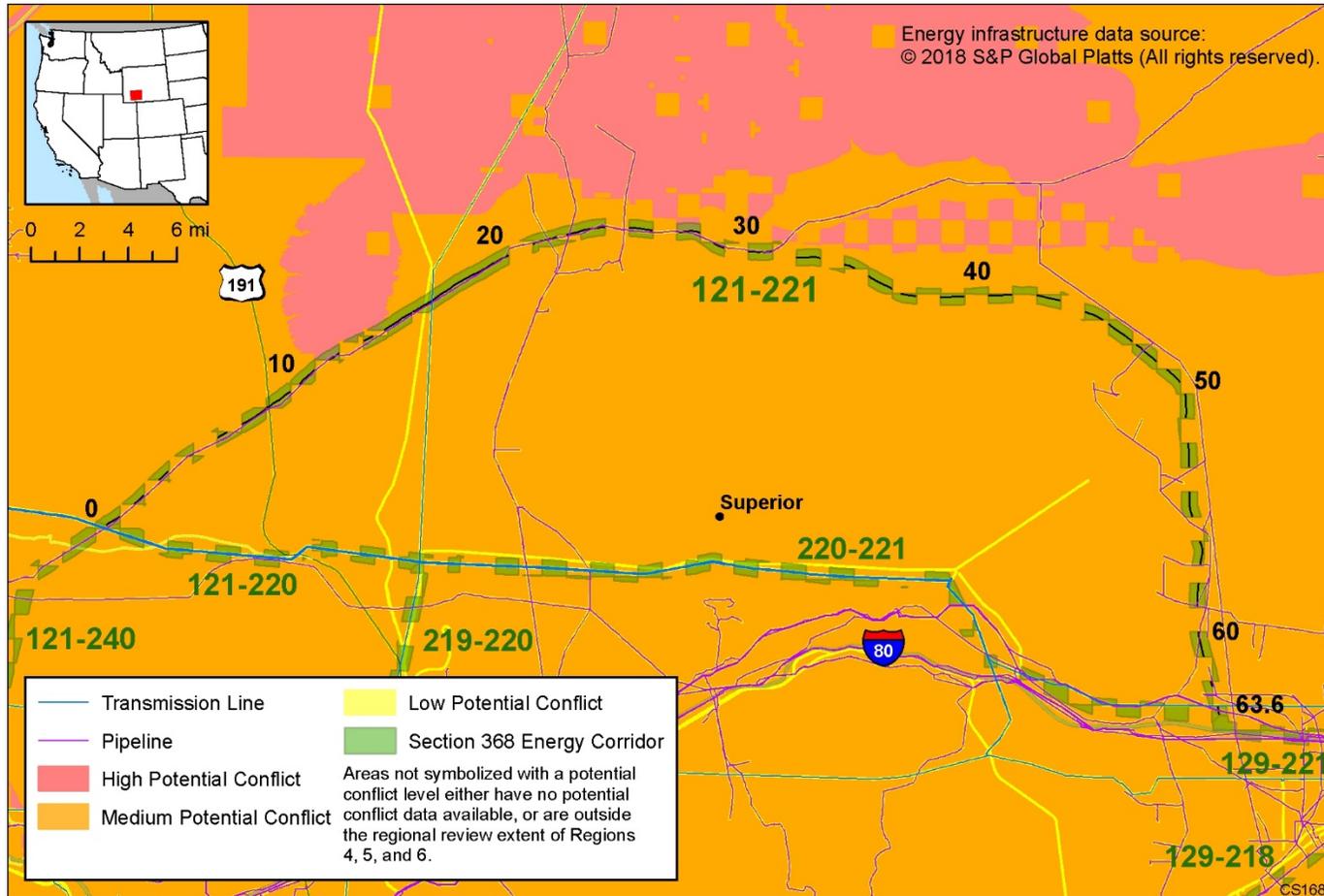


Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 121-221

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/>)

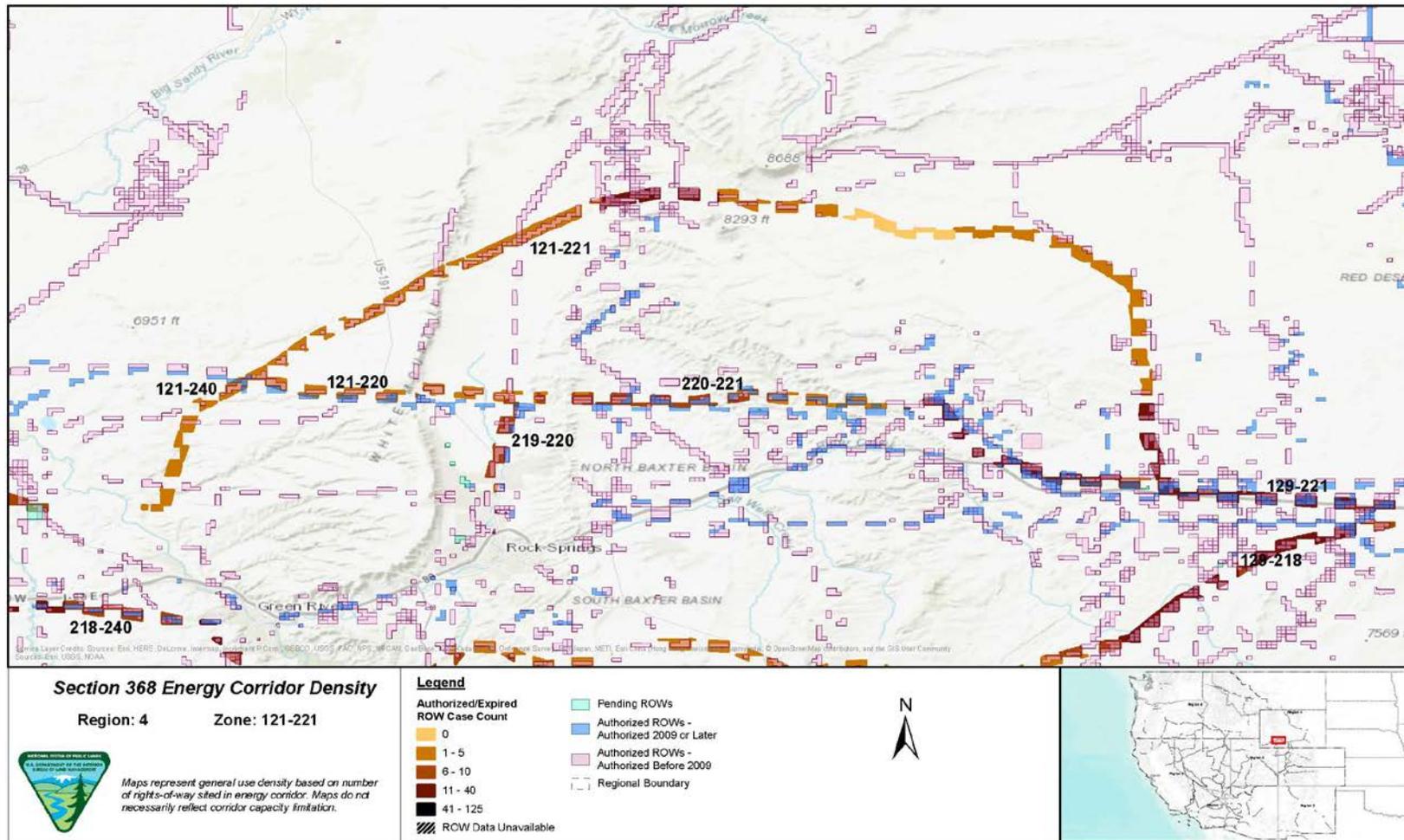


Figure 4. Corridor 121-221, Corridor Density Map

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 121-221 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: Rock Springs Field Office</i> <i>Agency Land Use Plan: Green River RMP (1997)</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. The corridor is located within a utility window identified in the RMP.	MP 11 to MP 14, MP 27 to MP 28, and MP 31	A pipeline is located near the centerline of the corridor that avoids the VRM Class II areas (except around MP 12). Comment on abstract: Rock Springs BLM planning area is undergoing a RMP revision that is not mentioned in the abstract. Plan is at an important stage where the old plan should not be the reference document; rather the siting of this corridor should include new plan components.	There are no transmission lines currently located in the corridor. Areas with the VRM Class II designation may not be compatible with future overhead transmission line development in areas of the corridor that do not have existing infrastructure. Additional underground development could minimize visual impacts. There is available space within the corridor on the opposite side of the pipeline from the VRM Class II areas that would allow the VRM Class II areas to be avoided while still locating new infrastructure within the corridor. Shifting the corridor to the edge of the existing pipeline at this location would avoid the VRM Class II area while maintaining corridor width where possible on federal lands. The Agencies could also consider changing the VRM class designation. The Green River RMP is currently undergoing a plan revision but the planning area is currently being managed under the 1997 plan. If a project is proposed within the corridor in the future, it would need to adhere to the management prescriptions in the RMP that is current at the time when the application is submitted.

CORRIDOR 121-221 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>Greater Sand Dunes ACEC and the corridor intersect – The Greater Sand Dunes ACEC (and lands within 1 mi or visual horizon) are ROW avoidance areas. However, the corridor is located within a utility window identified in the RMP. The management objectives are to preserve and protect the integrity of the unique values in the area: geological features associated with the sand dunes and the Boars Tusk; biological interrelationships supported by the dunes, especially the Steamboat desert elk herd, mule deer herd, and other dependent plants and animals; and a variety of recreation uses.</p>	<p>MP 27 to MP 28</p>	<p>A pipeline is located near the centerline of the corridor that avoids the ACEC.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: ACEC overlaps 175 acres of corridor.</p> <p>Comment on corridor: delete corridor due to resource conflicts and the fact that other corridors run parallel to it.</p>	<p>ROW avoidance areas are not compatible with the corridor’s purpose as a preferred location for infrastructure. There is available space within the corridor on the opposite side of the pipeline from the ACEC that would allow the ACEC to be avoided while still locating infrastructure within the corridor. Shifting the corridor to the edge of the existing pipeline at this location would avoid the ACEC while maintaining corridor width where possible on federal lands.</p>
<p>Killpecker Sand Dunes SRMA and the corridor intersect – The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusions for SRMAs within designated energy corridors.</p>	<p>MP 27 to MP 28</p>	<p>A pipeline is located near the centerline of the corridor that avoids the SRMA.</p>	<p>Although there are no competing land management objectives for SRMAs, there is available space within the corridor on the opposite side of the pipeline from the SRMA that would allow the SRMA to be avoided while still locating infrastructure within the corridor. Shifting the corridor to the edge of the existing pipeline at this location would avoid the SRMA while maintaining corridor width where possible on federal lands.</p>
<p>Four Trails Feasibility Study Trail and the corridor intersect – The RMP does not reference the Four Trails Feasibility Study Trail since it pre-dates the 2009 legislation designating the Study Trail (Public Law 111-11).The corridor is located within a utility window identified in the RMP.</p>	<p>MP 57</p>	<p>Intersection of corridor with the Four Trails Feasibility Study Trail is approximately perpendicular.</p> <p>The Act (Public Law 111-11; 2009) directs the Secretary of the Interior to revise the original feasibility studies of the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express NHTs.</p> <p>BLM Manual 6280 directs the BLM to maintain the values, characteristics, and settings for which the trail is being studied or for which the trail was recommended as suitable.</p>	<p>The corridor intersection here appears to best meet the siting principles. There are no management prescriptions preventing development within the corridor. While the corridor cannot be re-routed to avoid the Study Trail, the corridor location appears to best meet the siting principles because the intersection of the corridor and the Study Trail is approximately perpendicular (minimizing impact on trail values) and the corridor is collocated with existing infrastructure.</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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POTENTIAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES or CONCERNS TO EXAMINE	MILEPOST (MP)¹	STAKEHOLDER INPUT and OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION	POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS BASED ON SITING PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS²
<p>BLM Jurisdiction: Rock Springs Field Office Agency Land Use Plan: Wyoming GRSG ARMPA – March 2019</p>			
<p>GRSG PHMA (ROW avoidance area) and the corridor intersect - The 2019 ROD/ARMPA indicates that collocating new infrastructure within existing ROWs and maintaining and upgrading ROWs is preferred over the creation of new ROWs or the construction of new facilities in all management areas. Existing designated corridors, including Section 368 energy corridors, will remain open in all habitat management areas.</p>	<p>MP 0 to MP 8, MP 11 to MP 21, and MP 27 to MP 59</p>	<p>RFI comment: Delete/replace this the 79% overlap with GRSG PACs.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: delete the corridor due to the resource conflicts and the fact that other corridors run parallel to it.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: move corridor 5 mi. north to follow WPCI ROW 4 corridor and existing pipelines to avoid GRSG PHMA.</p>	<p>ROW avoidance areas are not compatible with the corridor’s purpose as a preferred location for infrastructure. However, the corridor is collocated with the pipeline. At MP 45 to MP 55, there is no infrastructure in the corridor. A shift in the corridor to the east to collocate with a pipeline could minimize disturbance of PHMA. In addition, a shift of the corridor to the north between MP 31 and MP 45 to follow existing infrastructure would avoid PHMA.</p>
<p>GRSG GHMA and the corridor intersect - The 2019 ROD/ARMPA indicates that collocating new infrastructure within existing ROWs and maintaining and upgrading ROWs is preferred over the creation of new ROWs or the construction of new facilities in all management areas. Existing designated corridors, including Section 368 energy corridors, will remain open in all habitat management areas.</p>	<p>MP 8 to MP 12, MP 21 to MP 26, and MP 60 to MP 63</p>	<p>Comment on abstract: delete the corridor due to the resource conflicts and the fact that other corridors run parallel to it.</p>	<p>The location appears to best meet the siting principles because the corridor is collocated with a pipeline. The GHMA encompasses a broad area around the corridor which cannot be avoided.</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. The information below is provided to facilitate further discussion during stakeholder review.

Potential Corridor Revisions:

- Reclassify from a multi-modal corridor to an underground corridor only. This corridor parallels a significant portion of the Tri-territory Scenic Loop Tour and is in close proximity to many natural and scenic features including Boars Tusk, the Kill pecker Sand Dunes, Table Mountains, sage grouse core areas and others. By eliminating the above ground component of this corridor and the related potential construction of electrical transmission lines and towers, the scenic views and natural features of this corridor will receive better protection. Designating this corridor as underground only will recognize its existing use as a pipeline corridor and will help support the WPCI. If this recommended change is made, any above ground electrical energy facilities that were planned for this corridor could be placed within Corridors 121-220 and 220-221 where the existing Jim Bridger Transmission Line is located and the Gateway West Transmission Line is planned (comment on abstract).

Analysis: The Agencies could consider designating the corridor as underground-only for pipeline use because there are other corridors in the vicinity that could be used for future placement of electrical facilities.

Ecology:

- Corridor intersects the globally significant Red Desert IBA at MP 15 to MP 24. This large expanse of relatively intact sagebrush habitat provides important breeding, foraging, nesting, wintering, or migratory stop-over habitat for sagebrush obligate avian species such as GRSG (comment on abstract).
- Colorado River cutthroat trout is a sensitive species recognized by the 2006 Conservation Agreement and updated 2013 Conservation Assessment for Colorado River cutthroat signed by the Wyoming BLM, Washington Game and Fish Department, USFS, US Fish and Wildlife Colorado, and Wyoming Trout Unlimited. With six stream crossings containing Colorado River cutthroat species along this route and numerous habitat restoration projects for both Colorado River cutthroat and big game, requests the corridor route for this segment be reconsidered and updated to reflect the latest research, findings, management plan updates, and mitigation measures to ensure the best possible protection for fish and wildlife species in this fragile ecosystem (comment on abstract).
- Corridor traces along Southern border of Red Desert Global IBA from MP 15 to MP 24. This large expanse of relatively intact sagebrush habitat provides important breeding, foraging, nesting, wintering, or migratory stop-over habitat for sagebrush obligate avian species such as GRSG. Delete the corridor due to the resource conflicts and the fact that other corridors run parallel to it (comment on abstract).
- Greater Little Mountain Area, a unique high desert landscape home to numerous big game species, native Colorado River cutthroat trout, wild recreational trout, and numerous federal and state sensitive and threatened and endangered species, and species of greatest conservation need. With the ongoing plan revision for the Rock Springs RMP, the Greater Little Mountain Area has been singled out as an area in need of special management considerations (comment on abstract).

Analysis: The corridor meets the sighting principles by following an existing transmission line route that does not intersect the IBA. In general, collocation is preferred to maximize utility, minimize potential impacts and to promote efficient use of landscape. Existing IOPs and BMPs would be required and 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 Critical Environmental Concern; ARMPA = Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment; BLM = Bureau of Land Management; BMP = best management practice; FO = Field Office; GHMA = general habitat management area; GIS = geographic information system; GRSG = Greater Sage-grouse; IBA = important bird area; IOP = interagency operating procedure; MP = milepost; NHT = National Historic Trail; NST = National Scenic Trail; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; PHMA = priority habitat management area; RFI = request for information; RMP = resource management plan; ROD = Record of Decision; ROW = right-of-way; SRMA = Special Recreation Management Area; USFS = U.S. Forest Service; VRM = visual resource management; WPCI = Wyoming Pipeline Corridor Initiative; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.