

# Corridor 50-51

Dillon to Divide Corridor

## Corridor Purpose and Rationale

The corridor provides a north south pathway for energy transport along Interstate 50. The corridor connects to Corridor 50-203, creating a continuous north-south corridor network across BLM- and USFS-administered lands from Montana into Idaho. Input regarding alignment from Maximus USA, NW Energy, and PacifiCorp 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:

Montana (Beaverhead, Madison, and Silver Bow Co.)

BLM: Butte and Dillon Field Offices  
Regional Review Region: Region 6

### Corridor width, length:

Width 3,500 ft  
5 miles of designated corridor  
33 miles of posted route, including gaps

### Designated Use:

- corridor is multi-modal

### Corridor of concern (N)

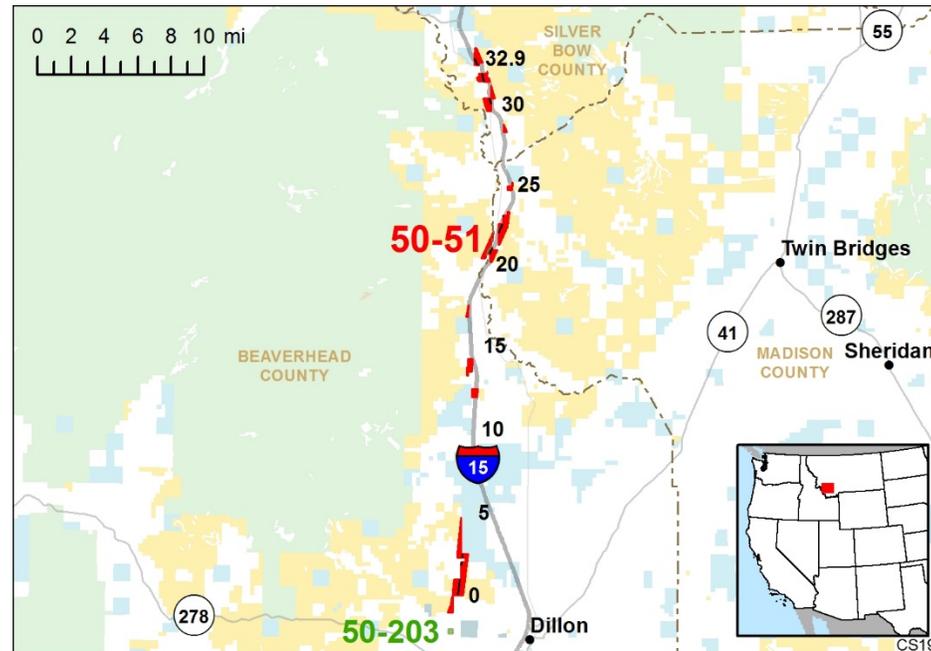


Figure 1. Corridor 50-51

### Corridor history:

- Locally designated prior to 2009 (Y)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
  - 160- and 230-kV transmission lines are within and adjacent to the full length of the corridor.
  - Highway I-15 follows most of the corridor.
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
  - 7 substations are within 5 mi of the corridor
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

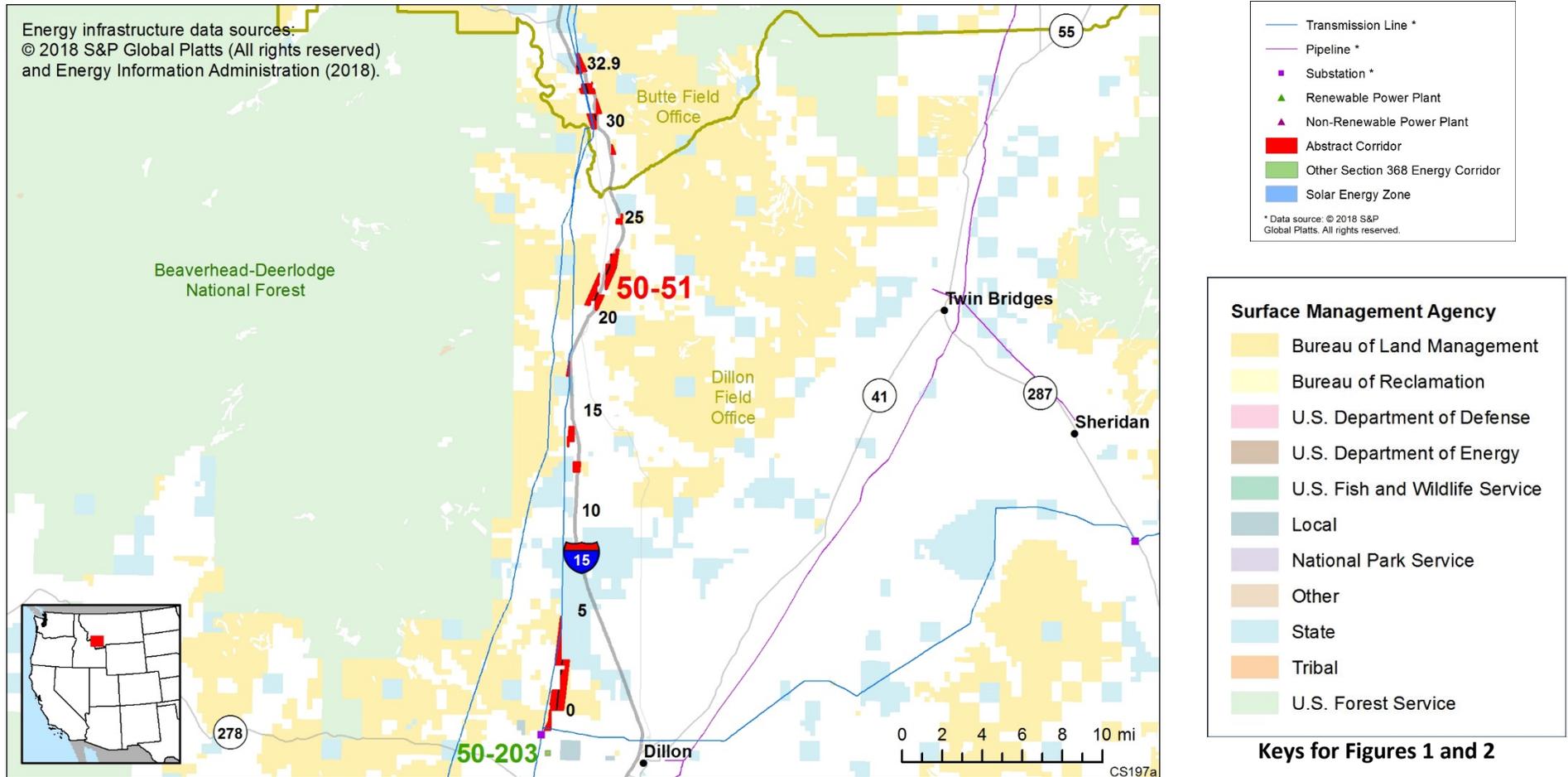
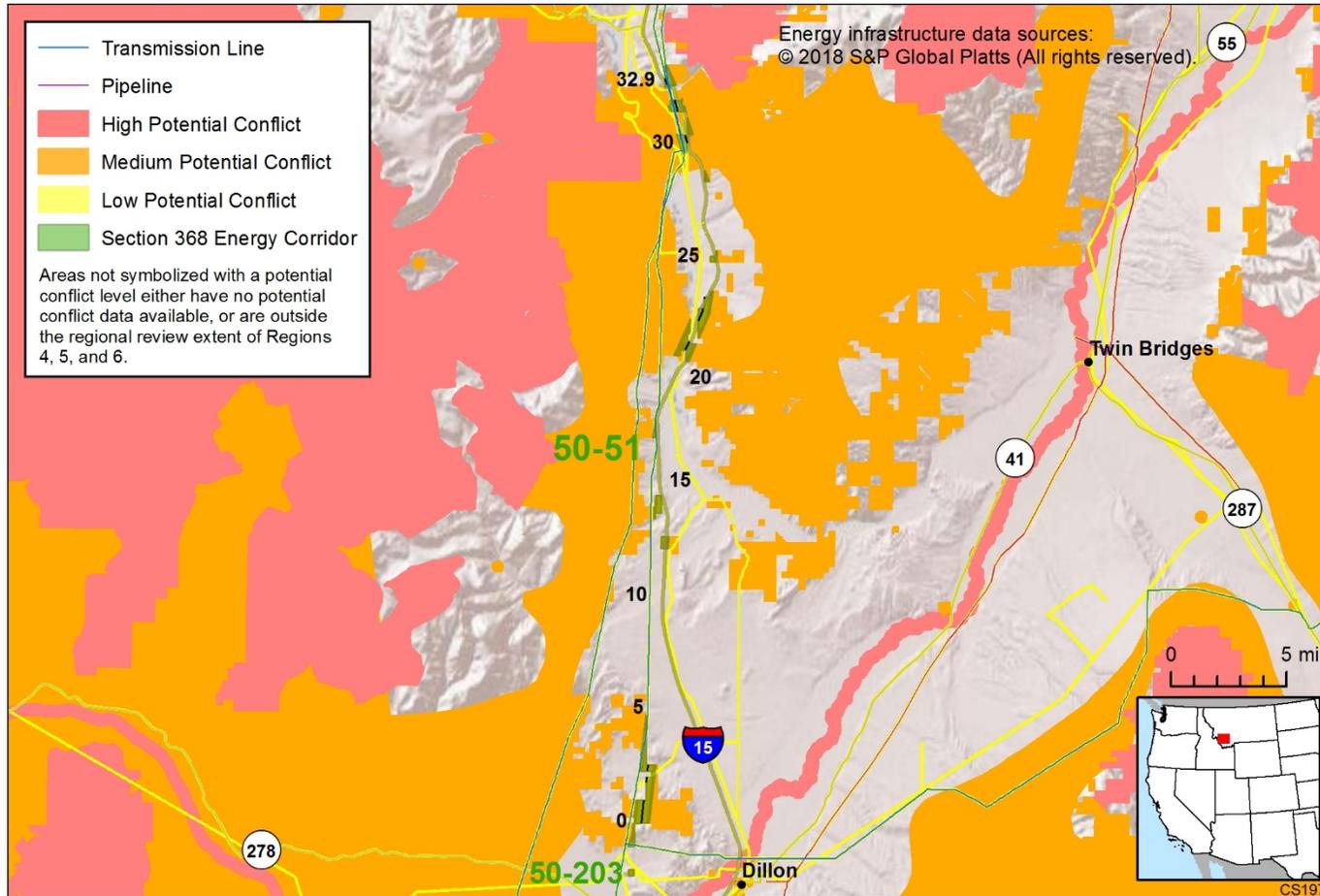


Figure 2. Corridor 50-51 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

## Conflict Map Analysis



**Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 50-51**

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](http://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/>)

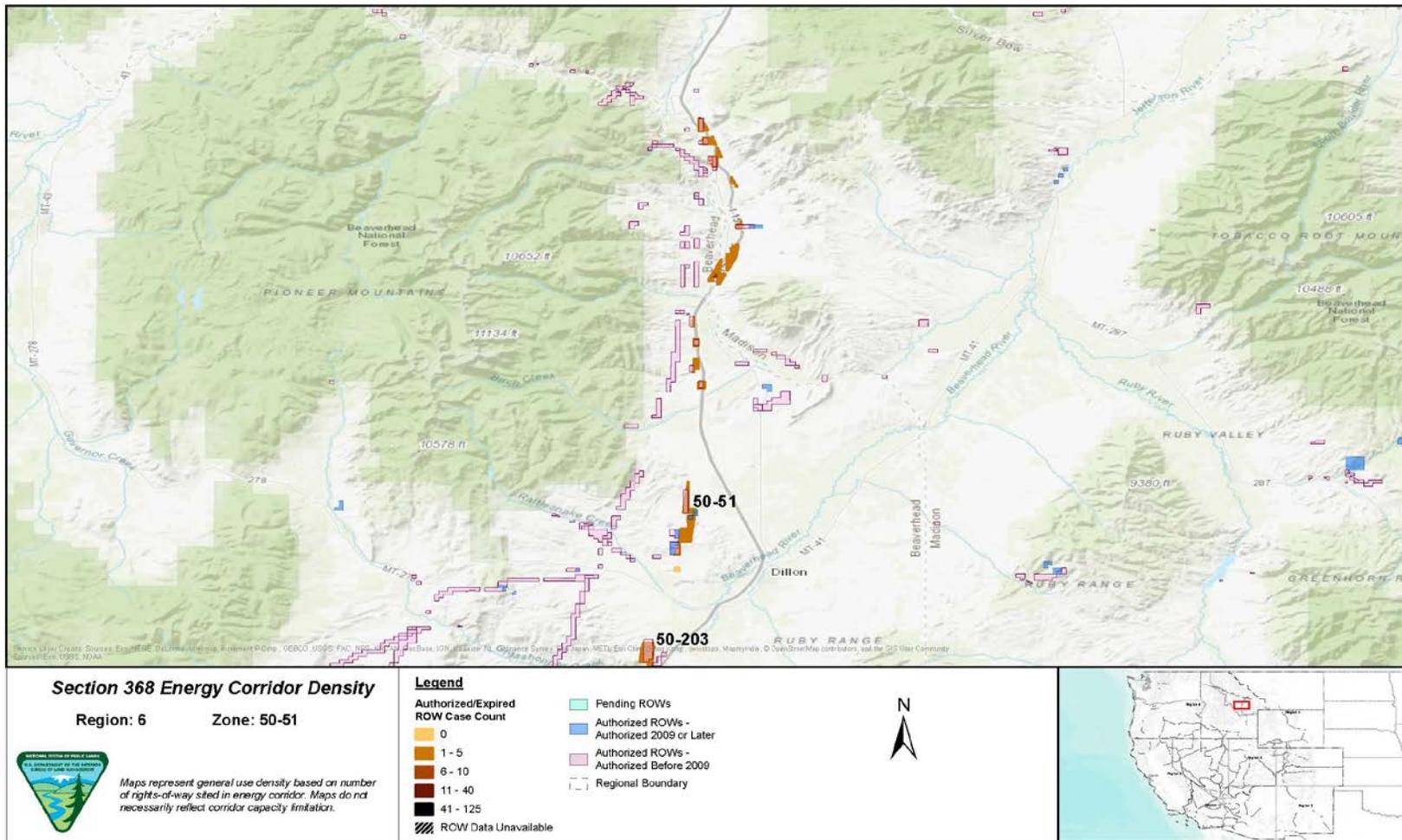


Figure 4. Corridor 50-51, Corridor Density Map

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.

<b>CORRIDOR 50-51 REVIEW</b>			
<b>POTENTIAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES or CONCERNS TO EXAMINE</b>	<b>MILEPOST (MP)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>STAKEHOLDER INPUT and OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION</b>	<b>POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS BASED ON SITING PRINCIPLE ANALYSIS<sup>2</sup></b>
<i>BLM Jurisdiction: Dillon Field Office</i> <i>Agency Land Use Plan: Dillon RMP (2006)</i>			
South Pioneers SRMA and Lower Big Hole SRMA and the corridor intersect - The RMP does not prescribe ROW avoidance or exclusions for SRMAs within designated energy corridors.	MP 0 to MP 5 and MP 20 to MP 31		There are no competing land management objectives for SRMAs and opportunity to avoid the SRMAs while still locating infrastructure within the corridor is limited. Shifting the corridor is not practicable while maintaining the corridor width on federal land due to the extent of State and private lands in the area of the corridor.
WSR Study River segment of the Big Hole River and the corridor intersect - The RMP states that no river segments within the Dillon FO are suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.	MP 21 to MP 22	Comment on abstract: shift the corridor to avoid the WSR Study River segments given the watershed and aquatic values associated with the Big Hole river.  Comment on abstract: updates and amendments to BLM RMPs should also be reviewed.	Although the RMP concluded that there are no river segments within the Dillon FO suitable for inclusion as a WSR, shifting the corridor to the east (1-15 would be the west edge of the corridor) would avoid the WSR Study River segment while increasing the corridor width on federal lands.  An existing IOP requires proposed projects to mitigate the disturbance to WSRs and their vicinity.
<i>BLM Jurisdiction: Dillon Field Office</i> <i>Agency Land Use Plan: ROD/ARMPA for the Great Basin Region, Including the GRSG Sub-Regions of Idaho and Southwestern Montana, Nevada and Northeastern California, Oregon, and Utah (Sept 2015); Idaho and Southwestern Montana GRSG ARMPA – Attachment 1(2015)</i>			
GRSG GHMA and the corridor intersect — The ARMPA states that existing designated corridors in GHMA 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.	MP 29 to MP 32		The location appears to best meet the siting principles because collocation is preferred and the corridor is collocated with an interstate and two transmission lines. The GHMA encompasses a broad area both west and east of the corridor which cannot be avoided. Required Design Features identified in the ARMPA would be required for

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Collocation in designated corridors can be built within the existing corridor or adjacent to the existing corridor.			future development within the corridor where it intersects PHMAs.

<sup>1</sup> Mileposts are rounded to the nearest mile.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

**Jurisdictional concerns:**

- The corridor should be considered a high conflict area for DEQ siting purposes from MP 4 to MP 29. General feedback from the communities was that they wanted it farther away from residences and the interstate where it would not be visible. Forcing these locations in the valley will result in greater public opposition due to visuals and repeated infrastructure impacts to a small number of landowners due to the fragmentation of the corridor (comment on abstract).

*Analysis:* The corridor is collocated with an existing transmission line and highway. Between MP 8 and MP 12 the corridor is located in a VRM Class III area which allows for moderate change to the characteristic landscape while minimizing visual contrast. In general, collocation is preferred to maximize utility, minimize potential impacts and to promote efficient use of landscape. Section 368 energy corridors cannot be designated on private land, although the BLM will coordinate with local government when reviewing any future ROW proposals within the corridor.

**Cultural:**

- Cultural resources could be a concern in the Dillon FO.

*Analysis:* Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of an undertaking on cultural resources.

**Visual:**

- Visual resources could be a concern in the Dillon FO.

*Analysis:* Adherence to existing IOPs for visual resources would be required.

**Ecology:**

- Delete/replace this segment. This segment scores "Very High" risk for both CHAT and Imperiled Species (RFI comment).
- Additional concerns related to ecology could include wildlife migration corridor, wildlife loss of habitat and wildlife displacement.

*Analysis:* 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.

**Recreation:**

- This segment of the corridor includes a crossing of the Big Hole River. This river is a popular recreational fishery in Montana and requires a more thorough analysis and route consideration. Updates and amendments to BLM RMPs should also be reviewed (comment on abstract).

*Analysis:* Section 368 energy corridors were designated to provide long-distance pathways for electrical transmission and pipelines while minimizing impacts from proliferation of energy ROWs across Federal lands. Corridors are often collocated with existing infrastructure to minimize impacts on resources, including recreation. Adherence to existing IOPs for surface water would be required. In addition, the Agencies could consider shifting the corridor to the east to avoid the WSR Study River segment while increasing the corridor width on federal lands.

## Abstract Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARMPA = Approved Resource Management Plan; BLM = Bureau of Land Management; BMP = best management practice; CHAT = Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool; FO = Field Office; GHMA = general habitat management area; GIS = geographic information system; GRSG = Greater Sage-grouse; IOP = interagency operating procedure; MP = milepost; 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; WSR = Wild and Scenic River; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.