

# Corridor 51-204

Butte to Helena Corridor

## Corridor Purpose and Rationale

The corridor provides a pathway for north-south energy transport in Montana. There is limited federal land, but the corridor connects multiple Section 368 energy corridors, creating a continuous corridor network across BLM- and USFS-administered lands. Input regarding alignment from multiple organizations<sup>1</sup> 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 (Jefferson Co.)  
BLM: Butte Field Office  
USFS: Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF  
Regional Review Region: Region 6

### Corridor width, length:

Width 3,500 ft  
13 miles of designated corridor  
38 miles of posted route, including gaps

### Designated Use:

- corridor is multi-modal

### Corridor of concern (N)

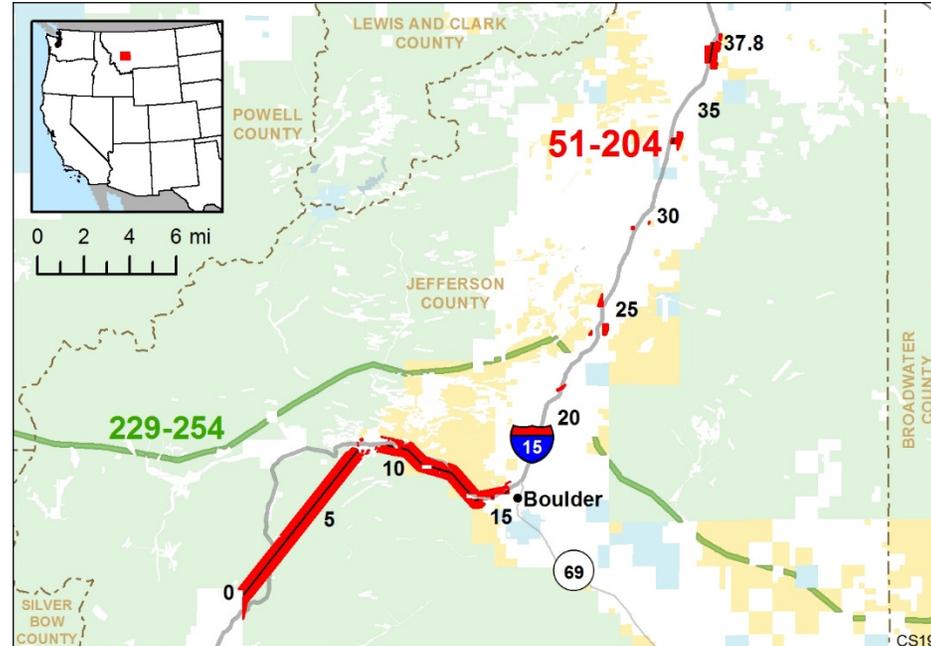


Figure 1. Corridor 51-204

### Corridor history:

- Locally designated prior to 2009 (Y)
- Existing infrastructure (Y)
  - Two 69-kV transmission lines are within and adjacent to portions of the corridor, two 100-kV transmission lines are within a portion of the corridor.
  - A natural gas pipeline is within and adjacent to the corridor.
  - Corridor mostly overlaps Highway I-15.
- Energy potential near the corridor (Y)
  - 18 substations are within 5 mi of the corridor.
- Corridor changes since 2009 (N)

<sup>1</sup> American Wind Energy Association, Avista Utilities, Maximus USA, NW Energy, PacifiCorp, Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study, and Western Utility Group

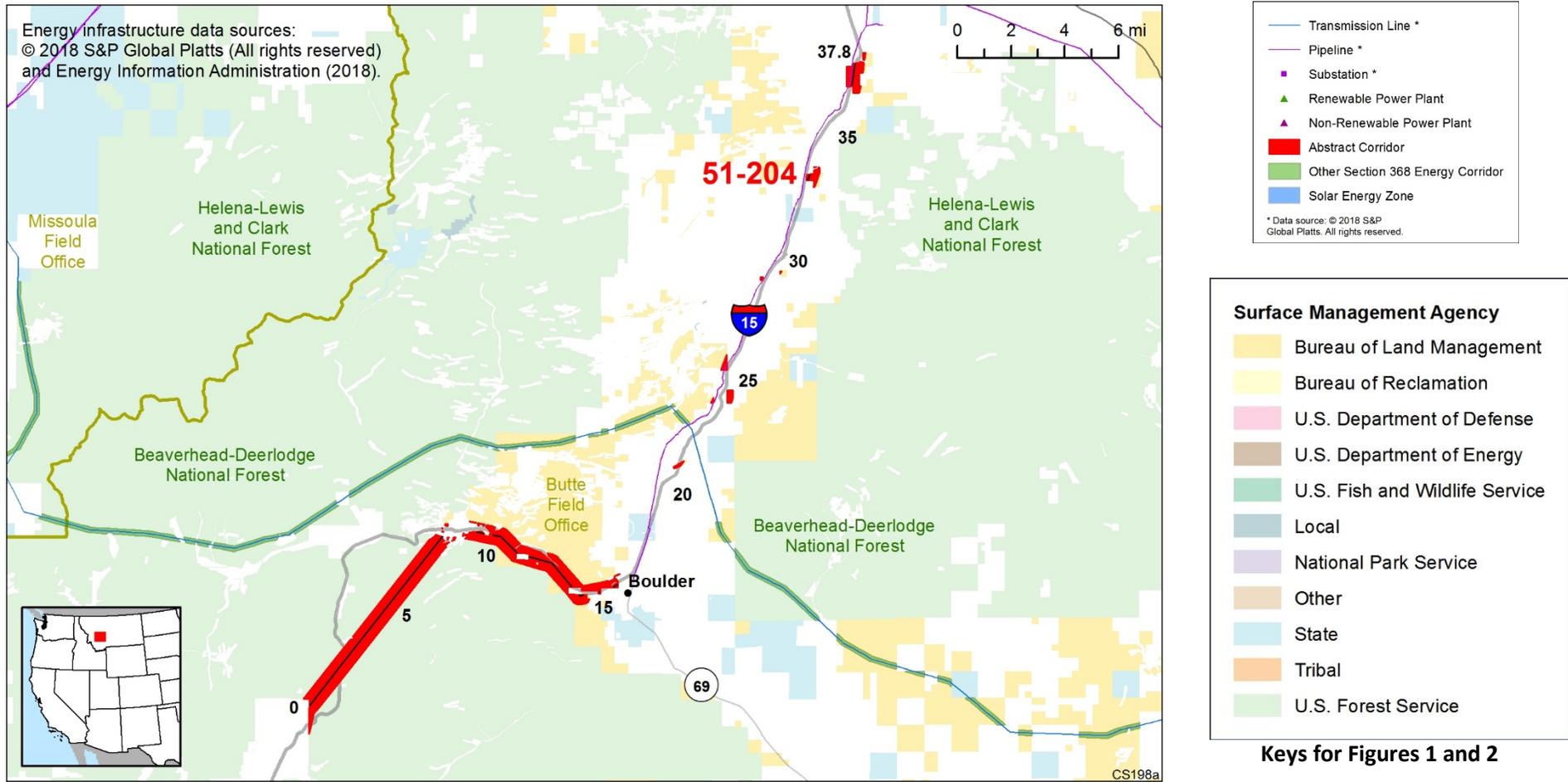
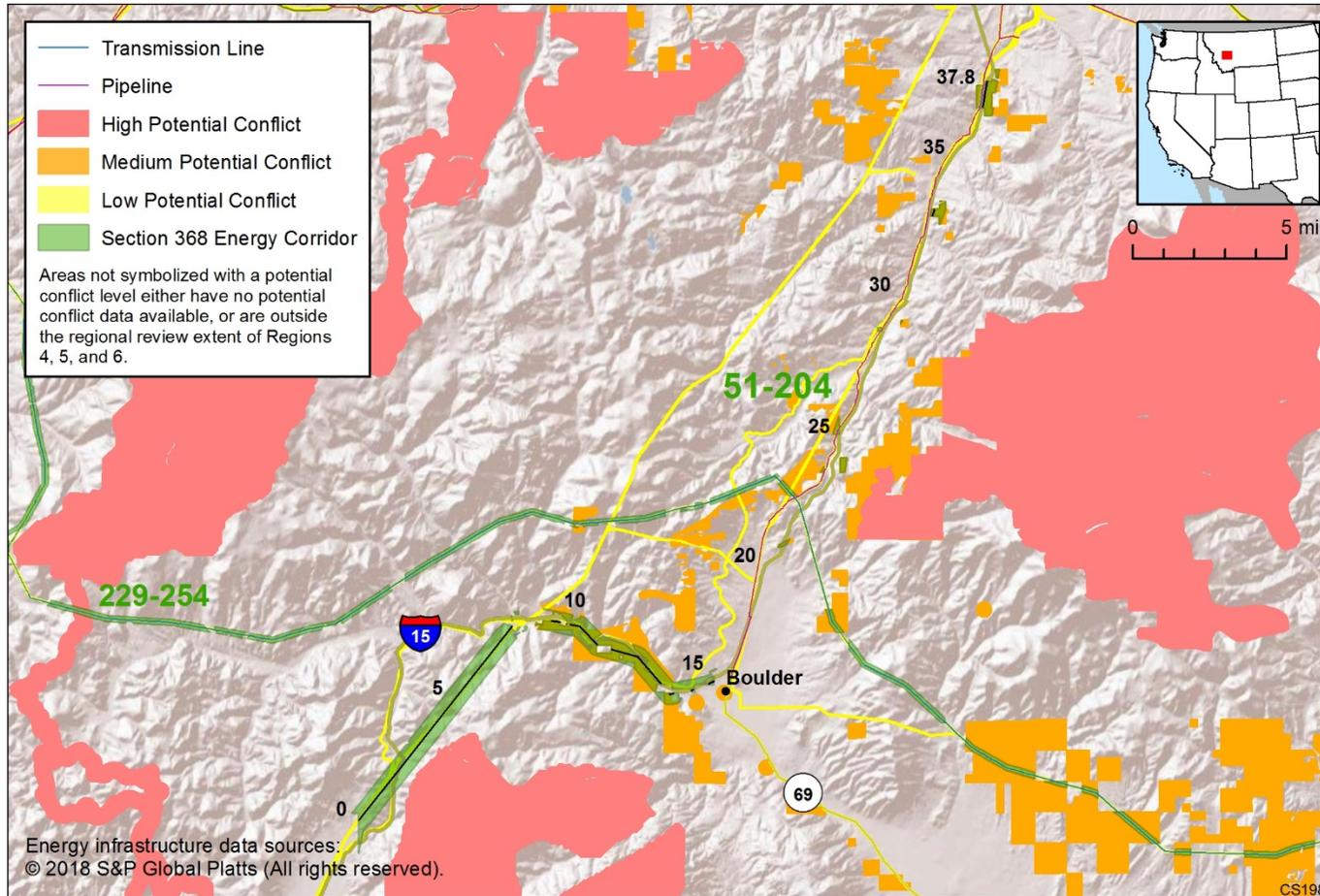


Figure 2. Corridor 51-204 and nearby electric transmission lines and pipelines

## Conflict Map Analysis



**Figure 3. Map of Conflict Areas in Vicinity of Corridor 51-204**

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/>)

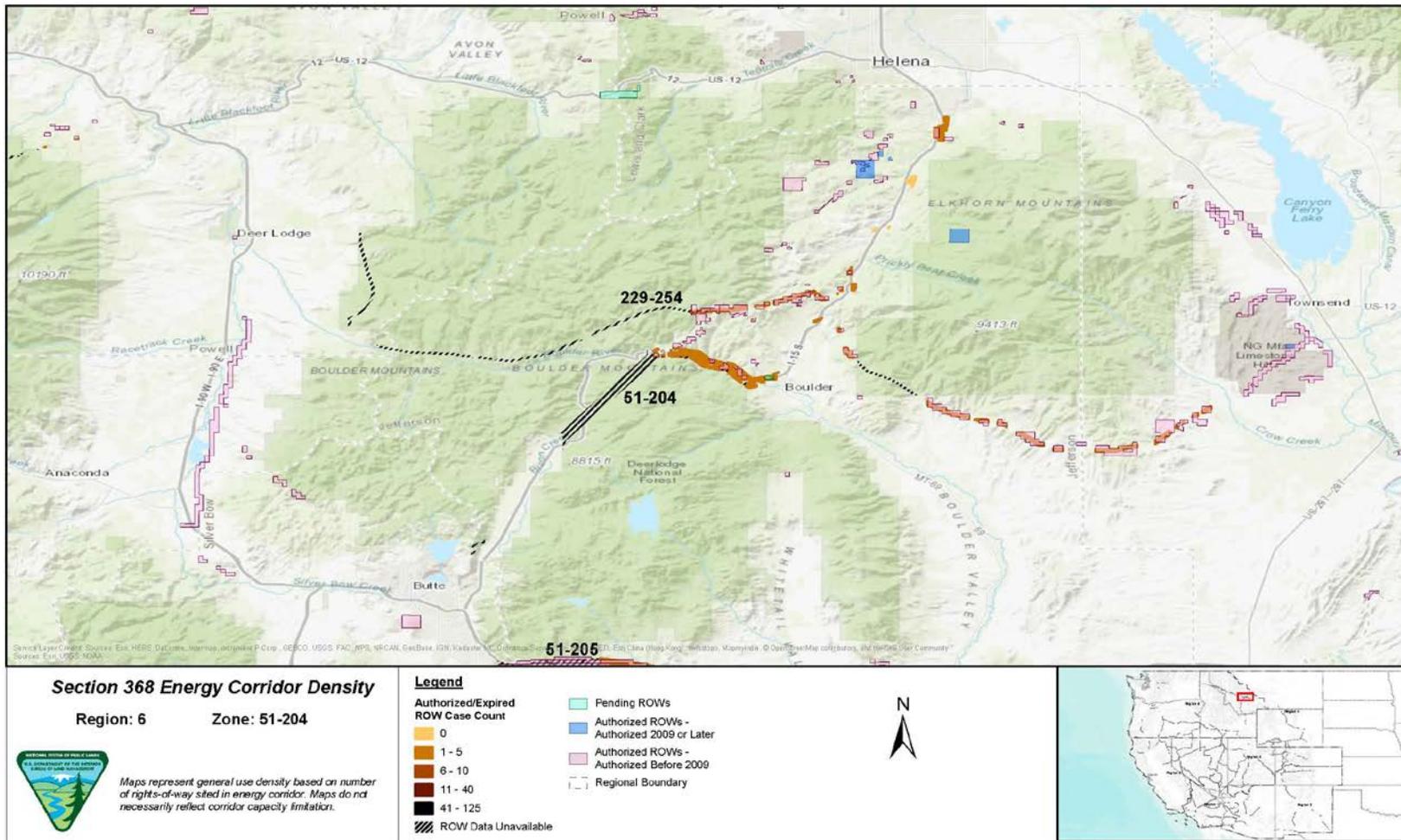


Figure 4. Corridor 51-204, Corridor Density Map

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 51-204 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>USFS Jurisdiction: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest</i>			
<i>Agency Land Use Plan: Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF LMP (2009)</i>			
SIO High and the corridor intersect - Management of areas under the High SIO designation 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 a VQO of Retention.)	MP 0 to MP 3, MP 7 to MP 9, and MP 14	Transmission lines are within the corridor from MP 0 to MP 9 and I-15 is within the corridor from MP 9 to MP 14.	The corridor appears to best meet the siting principles as it is collocated with transmission lines or I-15. Due to the width of the High SIO designated area at MP 0 to MP 2, there is no ready option within the corridor for future infrastructure to avoid it. There is room within the corridor for future infrastructure to potentially avoid the High SIO area at other locations where it and the corridor intersect. There is also the potential to shift the corridor to the north at MP 14 to avoid the High SIO (locate within a VRM Class III area).
SIO Moderate and the corridor intersect – Management of areas under the Moderate SIO designation requires that deviations from existing conditions must remain visually subordinate to the landscape character being viewed. (Corresponds to a VQO of Partial Retention.)	MP 2 to MP 10 and MP 12 to MP 13	Transmission lines are within the corridor from MP 0 to MP 9 and I-15 is within the corridor from MP 9 to MP 14.	The corridor appears to best meet the siting principles as it is collocated with transmission lines or I-15. Due to the width of the Moderate SIO designated area at MP 2 to MP 10, there is no ready option within the corridor for future infrastructure to avoid it. There is room within the corridor for future infrastructure to potentially avoid the Moderate SIO area at MP 12 to MP 13 or to shift the corridor to the north (locate within a VRM Class III area).
<i>BLM Jurisdiction: Butte Field Office</i>			
<i>Agency Land Use Plan: Butte RMP (2009)</i>			
Elkhorn Mountains ACEC and the corridor intersect - The ACEC is open to new ROWs (with some exceptions). The ACEC was designated for important cultural/historic sites, diverse upland	MP 24 and MP 37 to MP 38	At MP 24, I-15 and a gas pipeline are within the corridor and two transmission lines are west of the corridor; at MP 37 to MP 38 all of	The corridor is collocated with transmission lines or I-15 along its length. Although the ACEC is open to new ROWs, the Agencies could consider following the existing 100 kV transmission lines north at MP 9 to avoid the ACEC. This

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<p>and aquatic habitat for wildlife and fish, and unique National management area.</p> <p>The WVEC ROD amended the 1984 Headwaters RMP. Decisions from that ROD are carried forward in the Butte RMP. Multimodal corridors identified in the WVEC ROD (including Corridor 51-204) represent preferred locations on BLM lands for future electric transmission lines and oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines.</p>		<p>these infrastructures are within the corridor.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: avoid the ACEC as it would be consistent with the BLM’s emphasis on managing the area as an ecological unit for the purpose of sustaining biological diversity and ecosystem processes.</p> <p>Comment on abstract: Elkhorn Mountains ACEC overlaps 292 acres of corridor.</p>	<p>may also provide a better connection to Corridor 229-254 by continuing northerly instead of following the interstate. The Agencies could also consider narrowing the corridor to 1,000 ft.</p>
<p><b>BLM Jurisdiction:</b> Butte Field Office  <b>Agency Land Use Plan:</b> 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)</p>			
<p>The corridor does not intersect with GHMA or PHMA.</p>			
<p><b>USFS Jurisdiction:</b> Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest  <b>Agency Land Use Plan:</b> GRSG ROD for Idaho and Southwest Montana, Nevada, Utah (Sept 2015); Attachment A – GRSG Idaho Plan Amendment (2015)</p>			
<p>The corridor does not intersect with GHMA or PHMA.</p>			

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

**Ecology:**

- Rather than follow the highway (Interstate 15) ROW through the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, propose to cross through a section of the forest. An option should be considered that includes routing the corridor along Interstate 15. Recommend a more thorough and field level evaluation of this route for potential fish and wildlife concerns (comment on abstract).
- MP 16 to MP 37 should be considered a high conflict area for DEQ siting purposes. It is too fragmented to be effectively considered under Montana MFSA Preferred Location Criteria (comment on abstract).

*Analysis:* Existing IOPs and BMPs would be required. The Agencies could consider narrowing the corridor to 1,000 ft and realigning with existing infrastructure (pipeline and transmission line). In addition, 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 Critical Environmental Concern; ARMPA = Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment; BLM = Bureau of Land Management; DEQ = Department of Environmental Quality; FO = field office; GHMA = general habitat management area; GIS = geographic information system; GRSG = Greater sage-grouse; IOP = interagency operating procedure; MP = milepost; NF = National Forest; PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; PHMA = priority habitat management area; RFI = request for information; RMP = resource management plan; ROW = right-of-way; SIO = scenic integrity objective; USFS = U.S. Forest Service; VQO = visual quality objective; VRM = visual resource management; WWEC = West-wide Energy Corridor.