United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Decision Record

Land Use Plan Amendment
and Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2010-0019-EA
Serial Number: UTU-44897

August 2014

Cameron to Milford – 138 kV Transmission Line Project

Location: Beaver, Mineral Mountains, and Milford, Beaver County, Utah

Applicant/Address: PacifiCorp d/b/a Rocky Mountain Power
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RATIONALE FOR DECISION

I have chosen to authorize the Proposed Action, which will meet the purpose and need while resulting in fewer impacts to the environment. The Cameron to Milford 138 kV transmission line is proposed with a two-fold purpose: providing physical redundancy to the power grid for Milford, Utah and surrounding area, as well as increasing capacity for that area.

The Proposed Action will amend the Cedar Beaver Garfield Antimony Resource Management Plan (CBGA RMP) by changing approximately 594 acres along the edge of an existing 27,494-acre VRM Class II zone to VRM Class IV. This will occur along an area in the Mineral Mountains where the proposed route parallels the existing Pass Road. The change represents two-percent of the total existing VRM Class II zone with the rest of the VRM Class II zone remaining intact.

The need for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) action is established by the BLM's responsibility under Title V, Section 501, of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (43 U.S.C. § 1761) and regulations at 43 CFR §2800 to respond to a request for a right-of-way (ROW) grant while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values and locating the uses in conformance with land-use plans. The purpose of the action is to provide PacifiCorp with access across public land managed by the BLM.

BLM must respond to an application and Plan of Development (POD) for a ROW and either approve or deny the application. Approval of the application and POD would grant the right to construct, operate, and maintain a new 138 kV overhead distribution line on the federal lands. The use of public lands for electric power distribution is in conformance with existing land use plans of the BLM and is consistent with the FLPMA.

The State of Utah Governor’s Office initiated its consistency review of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment on June 18, 2014, and did not identify any inconsistencies concerning state or local plans, policies, and programs in accordance with planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.3-2(e).

The Proposed Action could indirectly impact the Bald Hills greater sage-grouse population. In accordance with BLM Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures (IM 2012-043), mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Design Features of the Proposed Action related to the construction, maintenance, operation, and reclamation activities in occupied Greater Sage-Grouse habitat. The BLM received project concurrence from the State of Utah’s Public Lands Policy Coordination Office on January 2, 2013. Therefore, the Cameron to Milford 138 kV Transmission Line is consistent with BLM Instruction Memorandum 2012-043 Greater Sage-grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures as presented in detail in Appendix H of the EA.
Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. Historic properties are properties that are included in the National Register for Historic Properties or that meet the criteria for the National Register. A Cultural Report was submitted to the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for consultation and concurrence on May 20, 2011. The Utah SHPO concurred with the determination of eligibility and effects for this project on May 26, 2011. On July 9, 2014 the BLM and SHPO executed a Memorandum of Agreement agreeing to the methods proposed in the Historic Property Treatment Plan (treatment plan) developed for the project.

Consultation as required by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 and the NHPA was conducted with the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah and Hopi Tribe. Government-to-Government Tribal consultation for this project took place at a meeting with the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Cultural Resource Specialist, on June 4, 2010. Additional consultation with the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah regarding the cultural resources inventory report and treatment plan took place on March 16, 2011, May 11, 2011, and August 5, 2011. Letters were also mailed to the Hopi Tribe on March 17, 2011 and May 11, 2011. The Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah had no objection to the project going forward. The Hopi Tribe responded with no concerns about the inventory report or treatment plan.

**AUTHORITIES**
The authority for this decision is contained in Title II, Section 202 and Title V, Section 501, of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act FLPMA (43 U.S.C. §1761) and regulations found at 43 CFR §§1600 and 2800.

**DECISION**
The Proposed Action is to construct, operate, and maintain a 138 kV overhead, single circuit, primary transmission line and expand the Cameron Substation on private land near Beaver, Utah. The requested ROW would total 15.3 miles in length, of which 12.0 miles, covering 122.8 acres, would be on BLM administered land. The route would extend from the Cameron Substation near Beaver, Utah, in a northwesterly direction over the Mineral Mountains, terminating at PacifiCorp’s Milford Substation. The ROW would begin at PacifiCorp’s existing interconnected system, approximately 2.9 miles northwest of Adamsville, Utah. It would extend west, north of Pass Road, where it would intersect with Pass Road, near the base of the Mineral Mountains. Over the Mineral Mountains, the ROW would roughly follow Pass Road. On the west side of the Mineral Mountains, the majority of the ROW would be parallel to and south of Pass Road, and would intersect Pass Road near Milford. The transmission line would also parallel an existing power line along the majority of this portion of the route.

The route of the Proposed Action alignment would physically separate the proposed 138 kV transmission line from the existing 46 kV system such that simultaneous damage to both systems would be unlikely, resulting in redundancy in the system.

It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action as described in the EA (DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2010-0019-EA). This decision is contingent on fulfilling applicable environmental commitments.
described in the Proposed Action of the EA. The project will be subject to the attached ROW Grant Terms and Conditions, Special Stipulations, and POD. The ROW grant will authorize the use of public lands for a term of 30 years, which is subject to renewal.

In conjunction with the decision to issue a ROW grant for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Cameron to Milford 138 kV transmission line, the decision is hereby made to amend the CBGA RMP by changing approximately 594 acres along the edge of an existing 27,494-acre VRM Class II zone to VRM Class IV.

**COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING**

Monitoring, as described in the POD pages 14-17, would be conducted to insure compliance with this Decision Record and attached supporting documents.

**TERMS / CONDITIONS / STIPULATIONS**

The ROW Grant Terms and Conditions, the POD (Appendix B of the ROW Grant) and Special Stipulations (Appendix C of ROW Grant), were developed during project planning involving all participants in the scoping process and the interdisciplinary team that reviewed the project. All documents are attached.

**PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY**

The Proposed Action affects areas managed by the BLM. The BLM Cedar City Field Office manages portions of the area based on decisions in the CBGA RMP, approved on October 1, 1986. Development of utility infrastructure is recognized as an appropriate use of public lands in the CBGA RMP. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the approved CBGA RMP management objective to “provide more effective public land management and to improve land use, productivity and utility through: a) accommodation of community expansion and economic development needs; b) improved land ownership patterns; and c) providing for the authorization of legitimate uses of public lands by processing use authorization such as rights-of-way, leases, permits, and State land selections in response to demonstrated public need.” The project is specifically provided for in Decision 3.1, which states that applications for use authorizations such as rights-of-way, leases, and permits be processed on a case-by-case basis.

The CGBA RMP management objective for visual resources is to “Plan, modify, and implement resource management activities in a manner which will minimize impacts to visual resources. Apply special emphasis in environmental assessment and project design to projects in the scene area (foreground visual zone) in order to meet [Visual Resource Management] objectives.” The Proposed Action would place the transmission line in the foreground of some areas designated in the CBGA RMP as VRM Class II. Placement of such facilities would not be consistent with Class II objectives (CBGA RMP Decision F.1; BLM 1986). Therefore, parts of the Proposed Action would not conform to the CBGA RMP. A plan amendment is required to change the VRM Class assigned to portions of the project area so that the entire Proposed Action would be in conformance with the CBGA RMP.

Implementation of the Proposed Action would require a plan amendment to the CBGA RMP. That alternative would amend the CBGA RMP by changing approximately 594 acres (two-percent) of an existing 27,494-acre Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II zone to VRM
Class IV. This would occur along an area in the Mineral Mountains where the proposed route parallels the existing Pass Road, which is a Beaver County recorded B Road.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**
In addition to the Proposed Action, the EA considered three alternatives, including the No Action Alternative.

The No Action Alternative would not authorize a new transmission line in any of the routes described below. This alternative was not selected because the existing 46 kV system would remain fundamentally unreliable due to the combination of excessive demand, fluctuating generation at the Blundell Geothermal Power Plant and lack of redundancy in electric transmission lines. The system would continue as one of the five poorest-performing in Utah, with over three million customer minutes lost over three years. PacifiCorp would be unable to meet current obligations or accommodate additional residential or commercial growth in Milford and western Beaver County. PacifiCorp would continue to be unable to meet requests for load increases received from existing local industries. Increased electric load that would result from any future industrial expansion could not be supported.

Alternative 1, the southern route, deviates from the Proposed Action route, shifting the transmission line to the south around the base of Bradshaw Mountain, then turns north briefly paralleling State Route 21, and eventually reconnects with the Proposed Action route approximately 2.5 miles from the Milford Substation. Under Alternative 1, the requested ROW would total 19.6 miles in length, of which 12.3 miles, covering 115.2 acres, would be on BLM-administered land.

The Alternative 1 route would provide redundancy similar to the Proposed Action, which would physically separate the proposed 138 kV transmission line from the existing 46 kV system such that simultaneous damage to both systems would be unlikely, resulting in redundancy in the system.

Alternative 2, the Cove Fort to Milford route, would cross the Mineral Mountains north of the Proposed Action route. Under Alternative 2, an existing 46 kV transmission line between the Cove Fort Substation and the Blundell Geothermal Plant would be replaced by a 138 kV transmission line, which could be constructed within the existing ROW in segments, allowing for the portions of the line under construction to be de-energized. In addition, the line would be extended to the Milford Substation and a new substation would be constructed in the Cove Fort vicinity.

Under Alternative 2, the ROW for the proposed primary 138kV transmission line would total 22 miles in length, of which approximately 16 miles, covering 116 acres, would be on BLM-administered land. In 2007, a wildfire damaged or destroyed approximately four miles of the existing 46 kV transmission line. This stretch of the transmission line was rebuilt, replacing 39 structures with new infrastructure that would support 138 kV transmission, and would not need to be replaced. The existing transmission line extends southwest from a small substation at Cove Fort, Utah. After crossing the northern extent of the Mineral Mountains, the existing 46 kV
transmission line connects to the Blundell Geothermal Plant and continues southwest from Blundell to the Milford Substation.

Under Alternative 2, the existing 46 kV transmission line would be replaced between the Cove Fort and Milford substations. Approximately 11 miles of the route would be parallel to the existing 46 kV transmission line connecting the Blundell Geothermal Plant with the Milford Substation. This portion of the Alternative route would not provide redundancy in the system because an event, such as wildfire, could damage both the 138 kV system, as well as the portion of the 46 kV system connecting Blundell with the Milford Substation. At the present, the 46 kV system cannot meet peak power demand without assistance from Blundell. Therefore, Alternative 2 would only provide partial redundancy.

Currently, two primary lines serve the community of Milford: a 46 kV line paralleling the Minersville Highway, and a 46 kV line, which extends from the Cove Fort substation to the Milford substation. Physical redundancy is required to deliver increased service reliability to Milford and western Beaver County. Under the Proposed Action, this would be accomplished by routing the proposed new 138 kV transmission line to achieve physical separation between the existing 46 kV system (which includes the two primary lines (paths) on north and south) and the proposed 138 kV system so that an event (such as wildfire) will not be likely to damage both systems. Should the 138 kV system be damaged to the point of being inoperable, the two 46 kV lines could be utilized as a backup to provide electricity to the extent that the system could meet the electrical demand at the time of the outage.

Of the action alternatives considered in the EA, only the Proposed Action and Alternative 1 would physically separate the proposed 138 kV transmission line from the existing 46 kV system such that simultaneous damage to two systems would be unlikely, thus providing redundancy in the grid. The EA identifies the short and long-term impacts to resources and the design features that have been incorporated into the project to mitigate those impacts for each alternative. Of the alternatives that would meet the purpose and need, the Proposed Action, following an existing road, would have less impact on resources, including soils, vegetation, and sensitive species compared to Alternative 1. It would, however, have greater impacts on the visual quality along Pass Road.

Two alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis in the EA. The first was an existing transmission line between Cameron and Milford via a route corresponding to State Route 21 currently serving the Milford area. Under this alternative, 138 kV service would be provided via a new transmission line separate from the existing 46 kV transmission line along State Route 21. This alternative would provide 138 kV service either through replaced infrastructure in the existing ROW or via a 138 kV line across the highway from the existing 46 kV system. This would mean there would be no alternate source of power for the Milford area in case of outage; or via a 138 kV line across the highway from the existing 46 kV system, in which case, both lines would be vulnerable to the same threat, such as wildfire.

The first alternative would avoid impacts to substantial summer mule deer habitat and would disturb 13 acres of crucial winter habitat, which would be half or less of the disturbance acreage in the analyzed alternatives. However, it would:
- Result in at least twice as much short-term disturbance as the alternatives analyzed in detail in this EA.
- Cross 17.6 miles of low intensity Utah prairie dog survey area, which would be over three times the distance of the portion of the Alternative 1 route crossing the low intensity survey area; the Proposed Action and Alternative 2 routes would not cross the low intensity survey area.
- Cross 11.6 miles of occupied greater sage-grouse habitat, which would be more than ten times the length of the portion of the Proposed Action route, and three times the length of the portion of the Alternative 1 route that crosses occupied habitat.

For these reasons, the alternative of constructing a transmission line in a new ROW along State Route 21 was eliminated from further analysis.

The second alternative route, the South Central, was explored, but ultimately not brought forward for detailed analysis. The ROW for the South Central route alternative deviates from the proposed ROW for approximately five miles through the Mineral Mountains. The ROW for the South Central route would be 0.5-mile longer than the proposed ROW; this would result in an increase of 15 acres of short-term disturbance. An estimated additional 2.7 miles of overland travel access routes would be required under this alternative, disturbing 4.8 acres more than the Proposed Action. The lands that the ROW for the South Central route would cross are rugged and steep in places. This alternative would likely require more pole foundations to be hand dug and helicopters used for pole placement than the Proposed Action because the transmission line would be located at higher elevations than the Proposed Action. The transmission line would be sky lined from some vantage points, and more visible. The visual impact of the transmission line and its associated ground disturbance would be greater under this alternative. For these reasons, the South Central route was dismissed from detailed analysis.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
During preparation of the EA, public notification of the project was provided on January 7, 2011, via the Environmental Notification Bulletin Board, a BLM internet web site used to notify the public of potential projects on BLM-administered lands in Utah. One comment letter was received. The Notice of Intent to prepare an EA was published in the Federal Register on August 24, 2012 (FR 77[165]:51559-51560). Two comment letters were received during the 30-day public scoping period. An onsite tour of the proposed ROW was announced to the public on September 19, 2012 and conducted on October 3, 2012. No new comments were received during the tour. The EA was made available for public review from October 29, 2013 to November 27, 2013. Two comment letters were received during the 30-day public comment period. All letters and other comments received from the public in addition to a matrix of the BLM responses to comments are included in the EA. The responses identify by page number where the EA was changed to provide clarification, based on the comments received.

The BLM received no protest letters during the 30-day protest period provided for the Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment in accordance with the regulation at 43 CFR 160.5.2.
APPEAL
The decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer (August 25, 2014) and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at 176 East DL Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

If you wish to file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
2. The likelihood of the appellant’s success on the merits,
3. The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted, and
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the Authorized Officer.

A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons and all pertinent documents must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Regional Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 6201 Federal Building, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84138-1180, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the Authorized Officer and/or IBLA.

Authorized Officer

Date

Attachments
1. DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2010-0019-EA
2. Right-of-Way Grant Terms and Conditions
3. Special Stipulations
4. Plan of Development