



**Boardman to Hemingway
Transmission Line Project**

**Appendix H—Proposed Plant and
Wildlife Conservation Plan—
Construction Activities**

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1 1.0 INTRODUCTION

2 This document presents the plan proposed by Idaho Power Company (IPC) for the avoidance
3 and minimization of impacts to special-status plant (SSP) and wildlife species as related to
4 construction activities for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project (Project).
5 This plan summarizes the avoidance and minimization conducted during siting and routing of
6 the Project components and outlines specific conservation measures to be implemented if state-
7 or federally-listed species, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sensitive species, or U.S. Forest
8 Service (USFS) special-status species or their habitats are identified within, or adjacent to,
9 the Project right-of-way (ROW). IPC will prepare and submit a separate plan that addresses
10 avoidance and minimization measures related to operations, maintenance,
11 and emergency activities.

12 1.1 Purpose

13 The objectives of this plan are to recognize the substantial effort already invested by IPC in
14 avoiding and minimizing impacts on SSP and wildlife species and to present a comprehensive,
15 Project-specific plant and wildlife conservation plan that does the following:

- 16 • Provides consistency across jurisdictions
- 17 • Meets the intent of the current BLM and USFS management guidance for
18 federal lands
- 19 • Balances cost, practicality, and feasibility of Project implementation with avoiding or
20 minimizing environmental impacts

21 1.2 Contents

22 The components of this plan include the following:

- 23 • **Section 2:** Brief background on the proposed transmission line and substation
24 construction, operations, maintenance, and emergency response procedures
25 (a complete description can be found in the October 2011 Plan of Development
26 [POD], of which this plan is a part).
- 27 • **Section 3:** A list of the special-status species that IPC and the agencies
28 (BLM, USFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [FWS], Idaho Department of Fish and
29 Game [IDFG], and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife [ODFW]) have identified
30 as occurring or potentially occurring within the Project area, and explanations of how
31 the proposed measures are appropriate and will meet the intent of the BLM and
32 USFS land-management plan (LMP) restrictions.
- 33 • **Section 4:** A summary of the avoidance and minimization measures used by IPC
34 in conjunction with the agencies during corridor and ROW routing and substation
35 siting, and the assumptions made during that process
- 36 • **Section 5:** Temporal and spatial restrictions IPC proposes to implement to avoid or
37 minimize direct impacts to special-status species, together with the conditions under
38 which IPC proposes that restrictions could be limited or lifted, including the methods
39 to be used to determine where and when the measures will apply across the Project.

40 2.0 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

41 Appendix B of the POD provides detailed information regarding the components of the
42 transmission system including the transmission structures, communications system, and the
43 substations. It also provides detailed information on construction methods, construction
44 schedule, operation and maintenance, and proposed decommissioning.

1 3.0 SPECIES CONSIDERED FOR THE PLAN

2 The following steps were taken by IPC to determine which species and habitats to consider for
3 avoidance, minimization, and conservation measures:

- 4 • Identified potential habitats and special-status species that may occur along the
5 proposed corridor using available data from federal and state wildlife agencies,
6 the BLM, and the USFS
- 7 • Discussed habitat types and special-status species at kickoff meetings with agency
8 resource specialists to identify which species are of greatest concern in the
9 Project area
- 10 • Refined the list of species and habitats to be addressed in Project plans through
11 several subsequent meetings with state and federal agency resource specialists

12 Table 3-1 presents the special-status species discussed in this Plan. Conservation measures for
13 construction activities for fish species are addressed Appendix E of the POD.. Several additional
14 species were analyzed, and some had protocol-level surveys conducted; however, these are
15 not addressed further in this conservation plan because they are not expected to be adversely
16 affected by the Project due to a lack of occurrence in the Project area, lack of direct impact to
17 the species or its habitats from the Project, or a low level of anticipated impact at the population
18 level. Other species not listed in this table will be analyzed in other Project documents but are
19 not addressed further in this conservation plan because they were not identified as primary
20 concerns for the Project.

21 **Table 3-1.** Species Protected in the Plant and Wildlife Conservation Plan

Species	Regulatory Status within Project Area
Mammals	
California bighorn sheep (<i>Ovis canadensis californiana</i>)	ID BLM sensitive
Elk (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	OR USFS Wallow-Whitman MIS
Mule deer (<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>)	None
Avian	
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	FWS de-listed OR and ID 2007; MBTA; BGEPA
Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	MBTA; BGEPA
All other raptors	MBTA
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	ID BLM sensitive; MBTA
Ferruginous hawk (<i>Buteo regalis</i>)	ID BLM sensitive; MBTA
All other raptors	MBTA
All other avian	MBTA
Plants	
Howell's spectacular thelypody (<i>Thelypodium howellii</i> ssp. <i>spectabilis</i>)	FWS OR threatened
Slickspot peppergrass (<i>Lepidium pappileferum</i>)	FWS ID threatened

Notes:

BGEPA = Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940

ID = Idaho

MBTA = Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918

MIS = Management Indicator Species

OR = Oregon

1 **4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATION PLAN**

2 This section explains how IPC approached avoidance and minimization of impacts through data
3 collection and careful routing and siting of the proposed facilities.

4 **4.1 Avoidance and Minimization Development and Implementation**

5 This section presents the avoidance of sensitive plant and wildlife resources and minimization of
6 the Project footprint that have been and will be employed, data collection and analysis, and field
7 surveys for the various stages of Project development. The stages of Project development
8 addressed include the proposed route and substation siting process and
9 construction scheduling.

10 **4.1.1 Proposed Route and Substation Siting**

11 IPC reviewed maps of the area to identify significant constraints and opportunities for selecting
12 routes between the new Grassland Substation proposed for construction near Boardman,
13 Oregon, and the existing Hemingway Substation proposed for expansion near Murphy, Idaho.
14 Constraints included a wide array of natural resources and man-made features, such as the
15 Oregon Trail, sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) leks, airports, urban areas, rural
16 residences, agricultural features (center pivot irrigation, feedlots, dairies), visual resource
17 management areas (VRM), areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), and mountainous
18 terrain. In the study area, the most extensive opportunities are existing transportation corridors
19 (Interstate 84), electric transmission lines, and agency-designated energy corridors. The
20 proposed route parallels existing transmission lines where possible but, as required, maintains a
21 1,500-foot reliability separation. In evaluating alternatives, consideration was also given to
22 paralleling the Hemingway to Summer Lake 500-kV line and to the location of the West-wide
23 Energy Corridor and BLM- and USFS-designated utility corridors.

24 IPC's originally proposed route was presented to the public during scoping meetings conducted
25 by the BLM and the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) in October 2008. Because of
26 the level of public interest, route suggestions, and opposition to the originally proposed route,
27 IPC initiated a process to engage residents, property owners, business leaders, and local
28 officials in siting the Project. Through the community advisory process (CAP)—described in
29 more detail in the POD—IPC partnered with communities from northeast Oregon to southwest
30 Idaho to identify proposed and alternative routes for the Project.

31 The CAP that resulted in IPC's new proposed route took place in 2009 and early 2010.
32 Project advisory teams (PATs) representing 5 geographic areas were convened for the purpose
33 of identifying, developing, and recommending proposed and alternative routes for the Project.
34 The PATs developed approximately 48 routes and route segments that were later analyzed
35 based on their constructability, difficulty to permit, and cost. The analysis provided IPC with
36 3 route alternatives that best fit these criteria.

37 Routes were identified with the goals of maximizing the use of opportunities and minimizing
38 crossings of areas with higher-level constraints. IPC evaluated each route for a variety of
39 environmental and engineering factors to identify the proposed and alternative routes.
40 This approach included the development and use of an attribute matrix, which established the
41 relative importance of each attribute and, as appropriate, analysis tools. Analysis tools included
42 geographic information system (GIS)-based routing and weighting, aerial photography,
43 topographic maps, and limited field reconnaissance.

44 Specifically, IPC acquired GIS data and qualitative input from the agencies regarding known
45 and potential locations of special-status species and their habitats in the Project area.
46 These data were used to develop the list of special-status species of concern in the
47 Project area.

1 Certain plant and wildlife resources were identified as constraints to be avoided,
2 including the following:

- 3 • A 785-foot buffer around occupied Washington ground-squirrel (*Uroditellus*
4 *washingtoni*) burrows
- 5 • A 2-mile buffer around occupied greater sage-grouse leks (*Centrocercus*
6 *urophasianus*)
- 7 • A 300-foot buffer around streams that contain bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*),
8 cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii*), redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*
9 *gairdneri*), Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho salmon
10 (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), or steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
- 11 • BLM's ACECs and wilderness study areas
- 12 • IDFG and ODFW bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) range
- 13 • ODFW mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and elk (*Cervus canadensis*) winter range
- 14 • IDFG big-game crucial winter range
- 15 • Pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) habitat in the Idaho, Boise BLM District

16 Other plant and wildlife resources (such as high-quality sagebrush habitats and big-game winter
17 range and calving and fawning areas) were not necessarily avoided during routing and siting but
18 were considered a constraint and taken into consideration during design of the proposed
19 Project. Proximity of the corridor to urban areas, agricultural areas, and rural residences was
20 taken into consideration during the routing and siting.

21 The analysis used to select the alternative routes is presented in the August 2010 Siting Study
22 (IPC 2010). The siting study also presented the reasoning for the selection of the proposed
23 route over the alternatives. In general, the proposed route requires fewer miles of new corridor,
24 parallels more existing corridors, requires fewer acres of vegetation clearing, is significantly less
25 difficult to construct, and would not require creating a new utility corridor through National Forest
26 (NF) lands.

27 **4.1.2 Planned ROW Refinement**

28 IPC is conducting a comprehensive, Project-wide biological survey that identifies locations of
29 special-status species and their potential habitats and attempts to qualify habitat conditions in
30 general. A preliminary desktop analysis of habitats and consultation with state and federal
31 biologists identified areas where species-specific surveys are necessary to either inform ROW
32 refinement or specify where and when conservation measures apply. This process is detailed in
33 the Biological Survey Work Plan (Tetra Tech 2011).

34 Based on the desktop analysis and through consultation, IPC will conduct surveys,
35 where necessary, prior to construction and in the appropriate season to meet agency survey
36 and timing requirements for several biological resources. These surveys will include
37 the following:

- 38 • Greater sage-grouse lek survey
- 39 • Washington ground-squirrel burrow survey
- 40 • Concurrent northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) and three-toed woodpecker
41 (*Picoides tridactylus*) survey
- 42 • Concurrent great gray owl (*Strix nebulosa*) and flammulated owl (*Otus flammeolus*)
43 survey
- 44 • Project-wide raptor nest inventory
- 45 • Pre-construction Columbia spotted frog (*Rana luteiventris*) surveys

- 1 • Pygmy rabbit, burrowing owl, and all other special-status species and habitats
- 2 through a terrestrial visual encounter survey of the entire route and all
- 3 associated features
- 4 • Special-status plants
- 5 • Wetland delineations

6 In addition to the avoidance and minimization accomplished through routing, IPC has developed
7 conservation measures which are presented in Appendix E of the POD

8 **4.1.3 Construction Scheduling and Monitoring**

9 Avoidance can be spatial and/or temporal. Where disturbance during construction is of concern,
10 construction is proposed to be limited to periods of species' absence or reduced presence.
11 In addition to limited operating seasons, which categorically restrict construction,
12 environmental monitoring is also proposed where construction may be permitted, but its
13 conformance with minimization measures should be monitored and enforced.

14 Environmental oversight will be conducted for construction activities. Monitoring entails being
15 present during these activities, communicating with contractors, taking daily notes, ensuring all
16 impacts occur within the designated limits, ensuring the requirements of the Project
17 environmental protection measures (EPM) that IPC has incorporated as part of the Project are
18 being met, and using best professional judgment to ensure Project activities do not adversely
19 affect special-status plant and wildlife species. A biological monitor has the authority to issue
20 stop-work orders when agreed conditions protecting wildlife or plant species are being violated
21 by the construction contractor. A biological monitor will work with the construction contractor, the
22 regulatory agencies, and IPC to ensure EPMs are enforced and to resolve non-compliances.
23 The details of IPC's environmental compliance program, including roles and responsibilities,
24 pre-construction surveys, monitoring, and reporting, will be detailed in the construction POD.

25 **4.2 Development of Conservation Measures**

26 After taking into consideration wildlife and plant resources, as well as other important resources
27 during siting and routing, IPC recognized the need for additional measures to minimize the
28 impact from construction of the Project. IPC used the following steps to develop the measures
29 found in Section 5:

- 30 • Identified and reviewed the BLM and USFS LMPs applicable to the Project area
- 31 (Table H-2)
- 32 • For each LMP, recorded the surface-use stipulations specific to each species
- 33 of concern
- 34 • Identified inconsistencies in requirements among jurisdictions
- 35 • Determined exception or waiver criteria if applicable
- 36 • Used FWS avoidance recommendations when applicable
- 37 • Incorporated ODFW species-specific management recommendations
- 38 • Evaluated the stipulations on a resource-by-resource basis and developed the
- 39 proposed Project-wide temporal and spatial restrictions and exception criteria

40 **4.2.1 Land-Management Plans**

41 Within the Project area, one of the BLM and both of the USFS land and resource management
42 plans (LMP) are becoming outdated, and overall the specific temporal and spatial restrictions for
43 a given species are inconsistent across these jurisdictions (Table 4-1). Three of the plans are
44 currently under revision. In addition, among all the plans, restrictions and stipulation language
45 are inconsistent across jurisdictions, requiring interpretation and clarification from the
46 land-management agencies. Resource management plans (RMP) from both Idaho and Oregon

1 have phrases, such as “avoidance where possible,” “request,” “recommend,” “review on a case
2 by case basis,” and “exceptions may be made,” indicating many of the stipulations and
3 restrictions need to be reviewed on a species-by-species basis within each field office.

4 **Table 4-1. Land-Management Plans for the Project**

Jurisdiction	Plan Name	Plan Date/Status
Oregon		
Malheur BLM Resource Area	Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan	2002
Baker BLM Resource Area	Baker Resource Management Plan	1989/Under Revision
Umatilla NF	Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan	1990/Under Revision
Wallowa-Whitman NF	Wallowa–Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan	1990/Under Revision
Idaho		
BLM Boise District, Owyhee Field Office (FO)	Owyhee Resource Management Plan	1999

5 **4.2.2 Stipulation Selection**

6 Many of the stipulations are designed to assume species presence and, in the case of seasonal
7 restrictions, to broadly bracket the interval of time in which there could be adverse impacts. IPC
8 has included conditions for those stipulations that allow for flexibility on a case-by-case basis
9 based on species’ occupancy and other local conditions.

10 Finally, IPC did not include all measures found in all LMPs. Measures not included are those
11 which are not specific enough to define a measurable stipulation, measures that describe
12 general goals for the federal lands but do not address new projects specifically, measures that
13 address habitat management and treatment versus discrete temporal and spatial restrictions on
14 project activities, cases in which the expectations of one LMP extend well beyond that of the
15 other plans, and measures not practical from a project design and development perspective.

16 **4.2.3 Land Ownership**

17 A majority of the proposed route crosses private lands. The private lands portion of the Project
18 may have similar temporal and spatial restrictions as applied on federal lands where applicable.
19 Exceptions to this strategy are as follows:

- 20 • The proposed substation and communication stations located on private land
- 21 • Stipulations only applicable to NF lands
- 22 • Variances on private property at the request of the property owner

23 **4.2.4 Species-Specific and Site-Specific Variation**

24 The proposed Project conservation measures are framed with the understanding that the
25 applicability of each measure is dependent on species-specific and site-specific criteria. IPC has
26 designed an intensive plan of habitat assessments, field surveys, and field monitoring to identify
27 the specific conditions under which each proposed measure must be implemented.

28 This approach provides for the protection of the species of concern while not unnecessarily
29 limiting Project activities. The proposed conservation plan varies by species, based on factors
30 such as the following:

- 31 • The anticipated prevalence of the species in the Project area

- 1 • The sensitivity of the species to the activities that will be conducted in the
- 2 Project area
- 3 • The listing status of the species
- 4 • The LMP guidance and requirements regarding the presence of the species or
- 5 its habitats
- 6 • The quality and extent of the existing data related to the species

7 The proposed species conservation measures are presented in Appendix E of the POD.
8 Ultimately, the specific Project mileposts and schedule for which each measure applies will be
9 identified. The construction POD will contain a plan that will provide the site-specific means of
10 complying with the listed measures.

11 **5.0 PROPOSED PLANT AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PLAN**

12 The conservation measures that IPC proposes to implement to avoid or minimize impacts to
13 special status species in the Project area are presented in Appendix E of the POD. These
14 measures address the special status species that have been identified by IPC and the Agencies
15 as occurring or potentially occurring in the Project area, and presents the following information
16 for each species:

- 17 • Proposed methods of data collection;
- 18 • Proposed temporal and spatial surface use stipulations; and
- 19 • Proposed exceptions to the proposed surface use stipulations.

21 **6.0 LITERATURE CITED**

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29 Management, Washington, D.C.

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