

B2H Boardman to Hemingway NEWSWIRE



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY



Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project

Issue 3 – Summer 2012

Project Overview

The Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line (B2H) Project is a proposal by Idaho Power Company (Idaho Power) to design, construct, operate and maintain a new single-circuit, 500 kilovolt (kV) power line between Boardman, Oregon and Melba, Idaho. The proposed route is approximately 300 miles long and crosses federal, state and private lands in six counties in Oregon and Idaho.

The B2H Project will relieve pressure on the existing transmission system, improve electric reliability, provide additional energy capacity to meet demand in Oregon and Idaho, and provide service to wholesale customers.

The project is advancing through a federal review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) led by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Idaho Power is also engaged in the state review process to obtain a Site Certificate from the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) led by the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE).

What's New

- New alternative routes have been identified and are undergoing detailed review in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS).
- ***BLM, Idaho Power and ODOE will jointly host public information meetings to discuss these new alternatives, the federal and state review processes, and upcoming events in 2013. See back for details.***
- The project was identified as one of seven pilot projects being reviewed by the federal Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT), who is tasked with helping to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of federal agency reviews.
- Idaho Power has resumed seasonal fieldwork activities across the project area, including field surveys for cultural resources, vegetation, wildlife and noise.
- ODOE issued the 2012 Project Order (March 2012), informing Idaho Power of the issues, regulations and impact analysis areas it must address in its Application for Site Certificate.
- Idaho Power is preparing its Application for Site Certificate and related materials to be submitted to ODOE in late 2012.

For Project Information

Project Website

www.boardmantohemingway.com

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Federal Agencies Finalize Issues and Alternatives to Be Further Evaluated in the Draft EIS

In order to fully understand the impacts of Idaho Power's proposal, BLM and U.S. Forest Service (USFS), as federal land managers, are required by law to identify potentially significant issues and a range of reasonable alternatives that may help avoid, minimize or mitigate for significant impacts. To support this analysis, BLM and USFS have reviewed comments received to date, including comments submitted through Idaho Power's Community Advisory Process.

The range of reasonable alternatives in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) will include:

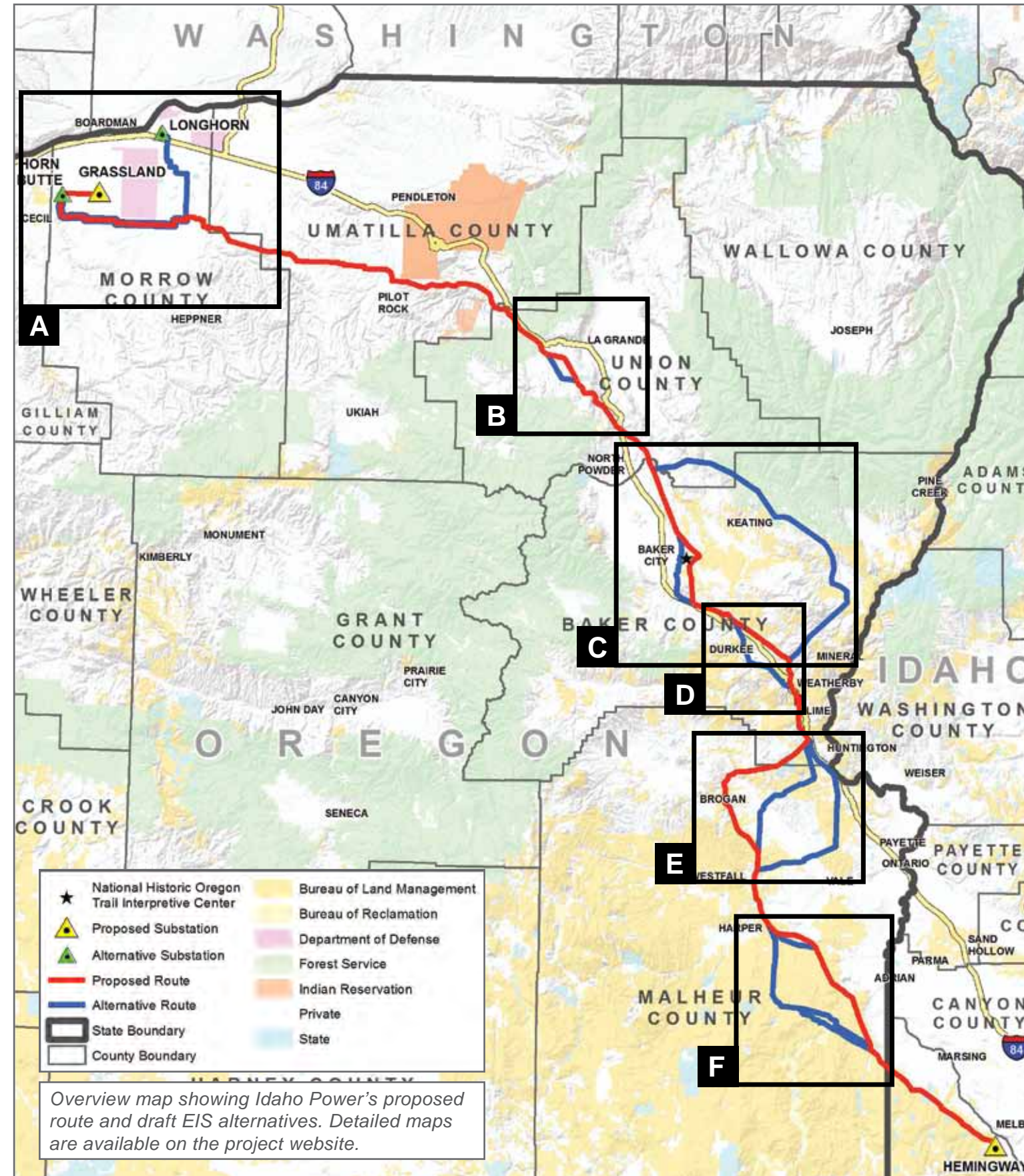
1. Idaho Power's proposed route.
2. Alternative routes that may reduce some impacts to key resources (see map).
3. A "no action" alternative (the future state of the project area in the absence of the proposed project).

Some of the significant issues for the project are described to the right. While alternatives are intended to address specific issues in these areas, they will be studied more extensively to understand their impacts to other resources, including private property. The public is invited to attend public information meetings in August (see back for dates and locations) to learn more about these alternatives and how they will be analyzed in the draft EIS.

A range of reasonable alternatives allows decision-makers to compare potential impacts and make a more informed decision. The federal agencies will identify a preferred alternative which could include Idaho Power's proposed route, a combination of the proposed route and alternatives, or the "no action" alternative.

This newsletter was developed by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and the Oregon Department of Energy to keep you informed about the proposed Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.

Issue Areas and Alternatives



A Boardman area

Issues: Department of Defense flight paths and airspace, exclusive farm use (EFU) and other private lands, Oregon National Historic Trail, Washington ground squirrel habitat, wind and other energy projects

B La Grande area

Issues: Big game winter range, EFU and other private lands, Ladd Marsh, terrain

C Baker Valley area

Issues: Big game winter range, bighorn sheep habitat, consistency with federal resource management plans, eagle nests, EFU and other private lands, federally-designated visual resources and conservation areas, fisheries, Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, historic mining, National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Oregon National Historic Trail, timber impacts, wetlands

D Durkee area

Issues: Bighorn sheep habitat, eagle nests, EFU and other private lands, federally-designated visual resources and conservation areas, Greater Sage-Grouse habitat

E Brogan area


Issues: Big game winter range, burrowing owl habitat, eagle nests, EFU and other private lands, existing pipeline infrastructure, federally-designated sensitive plants, Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, various other wildlife habitat

F Owyhee River area

Issues: Consistency with federal resource management plans, Department of Defense flight paths and airspace, eagle nests, EFU and other private lands, federally-designated special status species, federally-designated visual resources and conservation areas, Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, lands with wilderness characteristics, rare or sensitive species, Wild and Scenic River eligibility for the Owyhee River

The **B2H e-mail list** is the best way to ensure you don't miss any news on the project.

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 The newsletter is printed on paper using 40% post consumer waste.

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Join Us at a Public Information Meeting!

BLM, Idaho Power and ODOE are hosting open houses along the B2H route. **Please stop by any time between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. for updates on:**

- Alternatives under consideration
- Next steps for the federal and state review processes
- Upcoming documents for public review
- Future public comment opportunities

Pilot Rock, OR – August 6

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Pilot Rock Community Center
285 Northwest Cedar Place

Boardman, OR – August 7

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Port of Morrow Riverfront Center
2 Marine Drive

La Grande, OR – August 13

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Blue Mountain Conference Center
404 12th Street

Baker City, OR – August 14

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Best Western Sunridge Inn and
Conference Center
1 Sunridge Lane

Marsing, ID – August 15

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
American Legion Conference Center
126 2nd Avenue West

Ontario, OR – August 16

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Four Rivers Cultural Center
676 Southwest 5th Avenue