From: Laura_Romin@fws.gov
To: tashcrof@blm.gov; qfbahr@blm.gov
Cc: Larry_Crist@fws.gov
Subject: Re: Sage-Grouse LUP Ammendment ROW corridor designations
Date: Friday, October 19, 2012 9:54:24 AM
Attachments: UT-SG-DraftAlt_ROW_Corridor_Map_Comment Table_FWS Utah ES_10292012.docx

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Tyler, Quincy - attached our our comments.

Laura.

(See attached file: UT-SG-DraftAlt_ROW_Corridor_Map_Comment Table_FWS Utah ES_10292012.docx)

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10/17/2012 02:04 PM

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cc

Subject Sage-Grouse LUP Ammendment ROW corridor designations

Everyone,

Attached is a copy of three draft maps that display how we are proposing to address ROW corridors within the sage-grouse land use plan amendment EIS. Also included is a table that includes the ROW and corridor decisions being considered under alternative B, C, and D. These maps were not available for review and comment when the alternatives were distributed to the Cooperating Agencies (CA). Based on the importance of this decision, we would appreciate your feedback.

Under Alternative B, consistent with National Technical Team (NTT) Report guidance, we have undesignated ROW corridors crossing priority sage-grouse habitat that that are void of any authorized ROWs.

Alternative C, we have undesignated all ROW corridors crossing occupied sage-grouse habitat.

Alternative D, we have 1) retained corridors that have existing authorized aboveground ROWs; 2) retained corridors that have existing underground ROWs, but restricted future development in those corridors to underground ROWs only; 3) undesignated ROW corridors crossing priority sage-grouse habitat that are void of any authorized ROWs; and 4) designated new corridors in priority sage-grouse habitat around some existing lines, including existing high voltage lines.

The purpose of the fourth measure is to provide a pathway for development of new transmission infrastructure, so long as it is adjacent to existing lines, through priority sage-grouse habitat.

When reviewing the attached maps, please note that under Alternatives B and D, the BLM is not designating or un-designating new ROW corridors in general sage-grouse habitat. This is because general habitat would be open to new linear ROWs, subject to stipulations.

Also, the BLM is still in the process of delineating priority habitat vs. general habitat for Alternatives B and D. If the BLM decides to make an area general habitat that is currently labeled as priority habitat, we will adjust the ROW corridor decisions accordingly.

Included below are some items to consider when you are making comments:

1) We are not asking for comments on the identification of priority vs. general habitat. We have already received comments from you on habitat maps are in the process of reviewing those comments.

2) We are not asking for comments on the attached management decisions. We have already received comments from you on habitat maps are in the process of reviewing those comments. The management actions have been attached to help with interpretation of the maps.

3) We are asking for comments that you have in regards to designation and un-designation of specific corridors, and in particular, we are interested in your comments on Alternative D. Please let us know if there are additional existing lines that we may need to designate corridors based on transmission needs. Please be specific in your comments. The inclusion of maps or GIS data would be very useful. To be efficient, it is critical that comments clearly identify what is

wrong and provide a specific solution for correcting the problem.

4) We have not determined the width of newly designated corridors. On the maps we have included a ¼ mile and 1 mile buffer. We welcome your recommendations on width. If you provide a recommendation, please let us know why.

5) Comments should be provided to both me and Quincy Bahr using the attached comment table by COB on October 26th. Comments need to be consolidated when returned by Field Offices or Cooperating Agencies.

Tyler Ashcroft
Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Bureau of Land Management
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[attachment "UT_SG_DraftAlts_ROW_corridors_extract.docx" deleted by Laura Romin/R6/FWS/DOI] [attachment "UT_UtilityCorridors-Alt_D_11x17_101712.pdf" deleted by Laura Romin/R6/FWS/DOI] [attachment "UT_UtilityCorridors-Alt_B_11x17_101012.pdf" deleted by Laura Romin/R6/FWS/DOI] [attachment "UT_UtilityCorridors-Alt_C_11x17_101712.pdf" deleted by Laura Romin/R6/FWS/DOI] [attachment "UT-SG-DraftAlt_ROW_Corridor_Map_Comment_Table.docx" deleted by Laura Romin/R6/FWS/DOI]

Draft ROW Corridors Comment Table

Review Period: October 17- October 26

Commenter Name	Comment	Integration
USFWS – Ecological Services Field Office	**Under Alternative D, the designation of new corridors in the Box Elder, Rich, Parker Mountain, and Panguitch population areas appear on the map to bisect important sage-grouse habitat. We understand that you designated these corridors based on the existence or existing lines, including high voltage lines. It is difficult to assess the potential impacts to sage-grouse of new ROW corridors or provide comments to you based on the map provided for Alternative D. Therefore our comment here is intended to assist you in continued your evaluation of impacts and selection of a final Alternative: When evaluating the impacts of all of Alternative D, particularly the inclusion of new corridors, the following should be considered:** **1) New corridors should only be designated where it will not result in disturbance exceeding a 5% cap for the population area. This may affect your decision in determining the appropriate widths of the corridor.** **2) A new corridor should never be wide enough that it encroaches on the 4-mile exclusion area buffer of a greater sage-grouse lek.** **3) Your email summary indicated that the new corridors are identified in Alternative D "around existing lines." To ensure conservation of greater sage-grouse, new corrridors should only be designated where there are already large, high voltage lines. New corridors should not be designated if only small voltage lines exist in an area. In addition, the requirements within any new corridors should not allow for larger lines to be constructed. Only transmission lines smaller than existing transmission lines should be allowed.**	