

APPENDIX A AGENCY COORDINATION REPORT

November 4, 2010

BLACK HILLS POWER

Teckla-Osage-Rapid City 230kV Transmission Line *Agency Coordination Report*

PROJECT NUMBER:
117390

PROJECT CONTACT:
Lynn Askew
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PHONE:
(208) 788-0438



Agency Coordination Report

PREPARED FOR: BLACK HILLS POWER

PREPARED BY: LYNN ASKEW

(208) 788-0438

LASKEW@POWERENG.COM

1.0 AGENCY CONTACTS

POWER Engineers, Inc (POWER) and Black Hills Power (BHP) conducted meetings with state and federal agencies that have interest and/or relevant environmental data on the project study area for the Teckla-Osage-Rapid City 230kV Transmission Line project. The agencies contacted included: United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), Wyoming Game and Fish (WYGF), Black Hills National Forest (BHNF), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Medicine Bow – Routt National Forest (MBRNF), Thunder Basin National Grasslands (TBNG), Wyoming Public Service Commission (WYPSC) and South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (SDPUC). All meeting minutes from Table 1 are attached.

TABLE 1 LIST OF MEETINGS WITH AGENCY CONTACTS			
DATE	AGENCY	CONTACT	PURPOSE
10/20/10	USFWS & WYGF	Meeting	Field visit to Raven Creek Road vicinity to review proposed route within sage grouse core area
9/23/10	USFWS, WYGF & WY Governor's Office	Meeting	Discuss WY Sage Grouse core areas and transmission line routing issues
6/15/10	SDPUC	Letter	Project introduction and open house notification
6/15/10	WYPSC	Letter	Project introduction and open house notification
2/26/10	BLM & WYGF	Meeting	Project introduction and preliminary route evaluation
10/28/09	MBRNF & TBNG	Meeting	Project introduction and preliminary route evaluation
10/27/09	BHNF	Meeting	Project introduction and preliminary route evaluation
7/20/09	BHNF	Meeting	Preliminary project introduction. *No meeting minutes were recorded.



MEETING MINUTES

SUBJECT: Site Visit Meeting

MEETING DATE: October 20, 2010

LOCATION: Raven Creek Road

PROJECT NAME: Black Hills Power - Teckla-Osage-Rapid City
230kV Transmission Line

117390

PROJECT #:

PREPARED BY: Ben Bainbridge

TO:	POWER	Black Hills Power	USFWS	WYGF
	Lynn Askew	Mark Carda	Clark McCreedy	Matt Fry
	Ben Bainbridge	Ron Dahlinger		

AGENDA ITEMS:

The meeting began with a tailgate briefing on the core area surrounding Raven Creek Road. POWER produced a map showing the constraints analysis of the Proposed Project within Wyoming, a map showing existing distribution, roads, township-range-sections, residences, existing leks, and aerial imagery, and the same map with land ownership color-coded. Lynn expressed the desire to enter the core area from the west at its narrowest point, follow existing disturbance in the form of a three phase distribution line for approximately one mile, continue east on the section line when the distribution line veers southward. The proposed route would remain on that section line until the proposed route exits the eastern side of the core area. This would include approximately 1.5 miles of new disturbance across potential habitat that is not previously disturbed by power lines. The area does have trails and agricultural fields along portions of crossing proposed by the new line. Approximately 1.5 miles after the existing distribution line veers south the proposed route would run adjacent to a hay field and be within ¼ mile of Raven Creek Road and other single and three phase distribution lines. Raven Creek Road then veers south and runs along the same section line as the proposed route. Approximately the last one mile would be routed adjacent to Raven Creek Road.

This proposed route would move the project almost two miles to the south of the Popham Lek, and be more visibly obstructed by the surrounding landscape than a route directly adjacent to Raven Creek Road. Additionally, the proposed route would move the project away from the home of Ricky and Colleen Popham on Raven Creek Road. Lynn stated that keeping the route away from the home was an important part of the proposed route, and that while the power to condemn could be used if that were the only option; it is something the project would like to avoid. Matt agreed that condemning property was always a last resort and negative feedback would also reach the Wyoming Game and Fish Department if this approach were necessary.

The group then addressed the leks in the surrounding area. Data previously provided by WYGF showed that the closest lek is the Popham Lek, located just off Raven Creek Road approximately 1.25 miles north of the intersection of Raven Creek Road and the private road feeding the various mining operations to the west, and 1.9 miles north of the proposed route. All other leks were located at least 4.9 miles south of the proposed route and would not be impacted by the proposed project. The lek counts of the Popham Lek are as follows:

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- 2007 – 50 males
- 2008 – 43 males
- 2009 – 29 males

No data is available before 2007.

Matt stated that the surveys performed on the Popham Lek in 2010 were only performed once due to weather and time restrictions, and therefore did not meet the survey protocol for a more definitive count. This one count found 17 males displaying on the Popham Lek in 2010; however, this may have just been a singular morning with poor attendance.

After the tail gate meeting the attendees left the parking area and drove to assess the site. All attendees rode in the same vehicle so as to promote communication during the site visit.

Using real-time GPS navigation, POWER was able to identify exactly when the group entered the core area from the west along Raven Creek Road. The group continued west into the core area to where the road crests a hill providing a view of the Raven Creek drainage. Existing three phase and single phase distribution lines within were noted, as was agricultural fields to the south of the road. Also visible from the road were numerous oil wells, including roads and pumping tanks, and the Popham home and barns.

Lynn pointed out a fence that runs along the section line the proposed route would follow as described above. This gave a more definitive location as to where the proposed route would occur.

The group then drove north on Raven Creek Road, past the Popham Lek, to show the higher suitability habitat to the north of the lek.

Once turned around, the group stopped directly adjacent to the Popham Lek and walked to the lek location. Both Matt and Clark agreed that the limited visibility of the proposed route from the lek was a positive factor.

While on the lek other vertical structure on the landscape visible from the lek was noted. This included two windmills (one north and one south of the lek), existing single phase distribution, a small grain elevator near the Popham house, and a stand of cottonwood trees to the south of the lek.

Matt and Clark asked if routing along the section line and not along Raven Creek Road would require increased disturbance in the form of ripping the ground or installing access roads. Lynn and Mark replied that little vegetation would be removed and a new access road would likely not be required. Construction equipment would simply drive across the landscape to the pole locations. While vegetation would be crushed by construction equipment, these areas would quickly rebound to a natural state. Mark also stated that the ROW would not require the removal or mowing of the existing vegetation for ROW maintenance. If a pole structure would be located on a hillside there may be the need to blade off a small pad for the pole.

Upon return to the vehicle Lynn produced diagrams of the two proposed structure types for use within the core areas. These structures were monopole with brace-post insulators, or monopoles with I-string insulators hung from davit arms off the pole. It was pointed out that the post with the davit arms would probably provide for longer spans, thus fewer structures on the landscape. Matt and Clark asked how many fewer. It

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is unknown at this time, but POWER's design engineers are working on that figure. We will include a preliminary structure spotting for both types of structures in the Core Area Development Plan currently being written.

Lynn also outlined the potential perch discouragers which could be used on the davit arm structure. These included nixalite and a steel cover that narrowed to a dull point (resembling a blade) which would not allow raptors to perch. A cone placed on top of the monopole would eliminate raptors from perching on the monopole.

Neither Matt nor Clark expressed a desire for using one structure over the other or one form of perch discourager over another. Matt later expressed a preference for the "blade" type of perch discourager because it would likely last longer when exposed to the elements than the nixalite perch discourager. This would cause fewer disturbances by maintenance crews repairing and maintaining perch discouragers, thus creating less impact on sage-grouse.

Lynn asked if Clark or Matt had reviewed the annotated outline of the Development and Mitigation Plan, neither had, due to time restrictions. Lynn requested they review the outline and provide comments as soon as possible because POWER would like to begin constructing the document as soon as possible. Matt and Clark both agreed to review the outline and provide comments.

Matt asked if the outline included any preconstruction telemetry monitoring of sage-grouse in the area to determine where birds using the Popham Lek may disperse to after the lekking season. Lynn and Ben replied that this is not in the outline.

Lynn and Ben also noted that POWER plans to create a data-set showing existing occupied and unoccupied leks in Wyoming in relation to Ventyx transmission line data for 115 kV and larger transmission lines. The purpose of this would be to demonstrate existing lek response in relation to transmission lines. Matt stated that some of this work had been done in the past (possibly in Colorado) but it is limited in its usefulness because it does not take other environmental factors into account. Ben replied that POWER realizes this, and that all the data would show is that a lek existed, a transmission line was constructed, and the lek persisted. Matt agreed that this could potentially be useful information in the Development and Mitigation Plan with a caveat that this would only take one environmental factor into account when numerous environmental factors attribute to lek attendance.

The group left the lek site and continued its drive along the Private Road off Raven Creek Road which accesses numerous oil wells. Topography and general habitat was noted and it was agreed upon that a majority of the proposed route would not be visible from Popham Lek.

Matt asked if POWER had calculated a Project Impact Analysis Area (PIAA) yet for the proposed project. Ben replied that a PIAA had been calculated and inquired as to what with the transmission line would be classified as disturbance for the PIAA 5% disturbance analysis. Matt stated that the disturbance from the transmission line would most likely be limited to actual pole locations, given that new roads would not be constructed.

It should be noted that the PIAA calculated by POWER was done using an older proposed route. A new PIAA using the new proposed route will be calculated.

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Ben then asked how the PIAA 5% disturbance analysis would affect the proposed project if more than 5% of the PIAA is already disturbed. Matt answered that such a finding would typically preclude a project from happening in that area, but since this project is the first of its kind under the new core area executive order, there could be room for mitigation and adjustment to the PIAA analysis.

Ben also asked if Matt or Clark saw any benefit of performing transect brood surveys in the spring of 2011. Matt answered that he did not see any direct benefit of brood surveys and that, because the proposed project is within the core area, brood surveys might create more negative feedback than useful information.

Ben asked if it would be possible to coordinate pre- and post-construction lek surveys with the regional biologist or local working groups. Matt stated that the regional biologist surveys leks as much as time and weather allows for, but as in the case of 2010, is not always able to perform full protocol lek surveys on all leks. Matt stated that it might be worth contacting the regional biologist to explore this possibility, but most likely it would be better for BHP/POWER to provide the surveyors to perform surveys to ensure full protocol is achieved.

Matt also stated that he has had further communication with Aaron Clark of the Governor's office, and Aaron had no problems with the project planning moving forward.

Lynn asked if the proposed project went ahead with what had been discussed during the site visit, would it be something the WYGF and USFWS could support? Both Matt and Clark replied that yes, it could receive the support of the USFWS and WYGF if all measures addressed during the site visit were performed (including raptor perch deterrents and routing away from lek and with existing disturbance), and a suitable Development and Mitigation Plan were prepared. If a Development and Mitigation Plan were to be approved by the USFWS and WYGF then each would produce a letter of approval for inclusion as an appendix in the plan.

At the conclusion of the site visit Clark stated that any deviation from existing row / infrastructure across the core area would require additional discussion with the agencies to ensure compliance with the core area strategy. Agencies will continue to be involved as POWER drafts the Draft Development and Mitigation Plan.

ACTION ITEMS:

ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Draft Mitigation and Development Plan	POWER
Comments on Mitigation and Development Plan outline	WYGF & USFWS



MEETING MINUTES

SUBJECT: Wyoming Sage Grouse Core Areas

2-MEETING DATE: September 23, 2010

LOCATION: USFWS Office – Cheyenne, WY

PROJECT NAME: Black Hills Power Teckla-Osage-Rapid City
230kV Transmission Line Project

PROJECT #: 117390

PREPARED BY: Ben Bainbridge (POWER)

TO:	POWER	BHP	WYGF	USFWS
	Lynn Askew	Mark Carda	Matt Fry	Pat Diebert
	Mike Walbert		Mary Flanderka	Clark McCreedy
	Ben Bainbridge			

WY Governor's Office

Aaron Clark

AGENDA ITEMS:

Lynn began the meeting with introductions and a brief overview of the meeting agenda, followed by a basic project description. Black Hills Power (BHP) is proposing to construct a 230 kV transmission line from the Teckla substation south of Gillette, WY, through the Osage substation in Osage, WY, and terminating in the Lange substation in Rapid City, SD. POWER produced a draft map detailing the overall project area and current potential routes under study. Lynn displayed the map and explained it to the group.

Aaron asked if the proposed project was a reliability based project. Lynn and Mark explained that it was a reliability based project. If one of the existing transmission lines serving the Black Hills/Rapid City region is out of service and there is the loss of a second transmission line BHP cannot reliably service their customers and there is the chance of load shedding being required.

Lynn explained POWER's role as owner's engineer and environmental representative. POWER will be producing a Proponent's Environmental Report (at the EIS level). An EIS will be completed with the Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG) and Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) as co-leads on the EIS. A third party contractor, ENValue, has been selected and approved by BHP and the Forest Service to prepare the EIS. Contacts with the Thunder Basin National Grassland (Amy Ormseth) and Black Hills National Forest (Dave Slepnikoff) have been established. Lynn detailed how POWER completed an initial routing study for the study area where POWER's resource specialists analyzed management plans from TBNG and BHNF, various sensitive species information, visual impacts, land ownership, and regional governments, and interpreted those aspects into various degrees of sensitivity, including an exclusion zone in the southern portion of the study area. Please note that these exclusion zones were created by POWER's resource specialists for the purposes of the initial routing study, not necessarily defined as exclusion by the TBNG or BHNF. The routing study is being finalized and will include public input from meetings in the Newcastle, WY and Rapid City, SD areas and agency interpretations of the new Wyoming Executive Order for sage grouse core areas.

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POWER displayed the maps detailing the first draft of proposed routes from the initial routing study. These maps showed the effort undertaken to miss the 2008 core areas and 2009 leks (from 2009 lek survey data). The original routing effort passed in between two large core areas and made a detour to avoid passing near another lek located outside the core area. Matt mentioned that there will be construction timing constraints from March 15 through June 30.

Next a large constraints map for the state of WY showing the proposed routes, 2010 Core Areas, and coal mining leases was displayed showing the connection of the two large core areas with a four mile wide corridor. Lynn then detailed the constraints for routing along Highway 450 through the coal mining areas of the Study Area. Up to eight miles of the proposed route along Highway 450 would need to be moved after construction within the life of the proposed project. Lynn stated that if the route along Highway 450 is chosen there would NOT be a way to avoid moving the line at some point in the future. This is a heavy financial burden to BHP's rate payers and BHP is looking to avoid this situation.

Aaron asked if following the railroad spur through the mine would be feasible. Lynn answered that it would be feasible but would still require moving the line when the Black Thunder mine removes the railroad spur to mine that area. Based on discussions with Black Thunder, life of mine plans call for mining out this area.

Lynn detailed the proposed project's desire to pass through the core area along Raven Creek Rd., an existing disturbance bisecting the core area with electrical distribution lines running within the disturbance corridor. This location provides substantial existing disturbance and crosses the core area in its narrowest part. Lynn inquired, given the new Executive Order, is this a possibility? An aerial photograph of the core area along Raven Creek Rd. was displayed. When considered together, Raven Creek Rd. and another private road feeding various coal bed methane and oil leases spans the narrowest portion of the core area (approximately four miles). Both roads are established gravel roads with a road prism. Electrical distribution lines parallel the road, or pass close to, Raven Creek Rd and the private road throughout the core area.

The proposed project would use a monopole configuration with perch inhibitors on the top of each pole to limit potential raptor perches. The closest lek to Raven Creek Rd is the Popham Lek, at approximately 0.8 miles to the north. Matt will supply the latest lek data to POWER for their use to determine the number of birds using the lek. Topography may limit the line of sight from the lek to the proposed route for a portion of the core area. Mark stated that a design which eliminated the need for guy-wires on angle structures could be implemented to lessen the likelihood of sage grouse collision with a guy wire.

Aaron explained that following Raven Creek Rd. would not follow the stipulations set forth in the 2010 Executive Order 2010-4. Under the Executive Order, new transmission lines should be routed within one half (1/2) mile of an existing transmission line of at least 115 kV. However, a development/mitigation plan which would demonstrate no impact on sage-grouse may be created through consultation with WYGF and USFWS. This core area development and mitigation plan with approval from WYGF and USFWS may then be approved by the Public Service Commission to order the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). This procedure is explained in Attachment B "Permitting Process and Stipulations for Development in Sage-Grouse Core Areas" under the Specific Stipulations heading, page B7.

Lynn then showed photos taken from Raven Creek Rd at various locations within the core area. Pat asked if the proposed route along Raven Creek Rd would follow the road or distribution lines in the vicinity of the road but not necessarily paralleling the road. Lynn answered that the proposed route would most likely

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follow Raven Creek Rd, but we are open to locating the line in the best place possible for no impacts. If the line is located away from Raven Creek Rd and the private road, construction access would possibly be a concern if habitat were disturbed.

Matt stated that no sage-grouse winter range is near the proposed project proposed route along Raven Creek Rd.

Mary proposed the possibility of mitigating fragmentation impacts from the proposed line by removing other distribution lines in the area which provide electricity to expired or soon to expire coal bed methane wells.

Clark McCreedy joined the meeting as a NEPA specialist for the USFWS.

Lynn drew a potential pole design on the white-board showing how the proposed project would use monopoles and raptor perch discouragers to limit potential perches. Post insulators are not conducive to perching raptors due to the surface of the material used not providing good footing for raptors, and they do not provide a suitable surface for raptors to land on, in addition there is a slight vibration when energized. Pat stated that she is concerned about perching raptors negative effects on sage-grouse.

Aaron requested a design of the anti-perching methods which may be used for the proposed project.

Lynn stated the proposed project's desire is to only survey for sage-grouse along the preferred alternative, not all three route alternatives. Aaron responded that surveys of all routes may be required for a full data set to compare between proposed route alternatives.

Mark stated that construction of the proposed project is scheduled to begin in 2013, with no anticipated need for another circuit.

Ben will consult with Matt and Mary to develop a preconstruction monitoring plan to include in the development/mitigation plan. It is clear that this type of development/mitigation plan has never been attempted under the Executive Order, and that this project will be the first of its kind.

Mary once again proposed that it may be a possibility to mitigate and reduce habitat fragmentation of sage-grouse habitat by the proposed project by removing older, non-functional distribution lines to spent coal bed methane wells throughout the landscape; if there are any of these spent wells in the area.

Lynn concluded the meeting by thanking all for coming. He stated that the point of the meeting was to ascertain if the proposed project was feasible in light of Executive Order 2010-4. Matt, Pat, and Aaron all agreed that yes, it is feasible under Executive order 2010-4.

Aaron also stated that raptor proofing the transmission line on the proposed route may also be necessary when the proposed route passes along the southern boundary of core area to the west of the narrow four mile portion of core area.

Pat stated that the project could potentially fund graduate student research regarding lek attendance pre-construction and post-construction on lek in the vicinity of the proposed route.

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ACTION ITEMS:

ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Create visualization simulation of proposed route from Popham Lek	POWER
Provide POWER with latest lek information and number of birds which attend Popham Lek	Matt Fry (WYGF)
Provide documentation as to why southern exclusion area was rated as such by POWER resource specialists	POWER
Determine width of Raven Creek Road ROW and provide to group	POWER
Creation of a development/ mitigation plan to provide to WYGF and USFWS which includes preconstruction monitoring plan and potential pole designs to limit raptor perches	POWER
Obtain distribution line locations within the vicinity of the core area crossing and map them accurately	BHP/ POWER
Set up visit to the proposed route along Raven Creek Road on Wednesday October 20 th	POWER

BLACK HILLS POWER, INC.

P.O. BOX 1400

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<http://www.blackhillscorp.com>

Ron Dahlinger
Director, Engineering

TELEPHONE
(605) 721-2220

MAIL: ron.dahlinger@blackhillscorp.com
FAX: (605) 721-2323

June 15, 2010

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
Attention: Mr. Brian Rounds
Utility Analyst
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
500 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

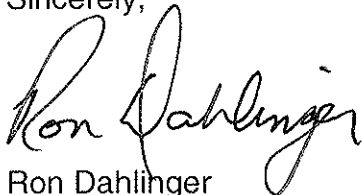
Dear Mr. Rounds:

Black Hills Power is planning to engineer and construct a 230kv transmission line from the Teckla substation, approximately 50 miles south of Gillette, Wyoming, to Osage, Wyoming and then to Rapid City, South Dakota. The total length of this line will be approximately 135 miles. We plan to have the project ready for construction to start in 2013 in Wyoming and complete the line to Osage by 2014. The line from Osage to Rapid City is planned for starting construction in 2013 and completing construction by 2015. We have developed a line routing plan with alternates to evaluate. The first step in this evaluation will be for Black Hills Power to host an open house in Wyoming and one in South Dakota for area landowners to provide input for the routing process.

The open house in South Dakota is scheduled for June 29th at 6:00 PM at the Ramkota in Rapid City as shown on the enclosed informational bulletin. We are going to advertise this open house in area newspapers.

You are welcome to attend this meeting. If you do plan to have someone attend, please let us know who will be coming.

Sincerely,



Ron Dahlinger

Attachments: Informational bulletin
Project Map

Teckla – Osage – Rapid City 230kV Transmission Project

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The proposed Teckla – Osage – Rapid City 230kv Transmission Line will:

- Strengthen the integrated Black Hills and Wyoming transmission network
- Improve transmission system reliability by creating additional operating flexibility
- Help meet future demand growth for electricity and economic development in the region

PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed Teckla – Osage – Rapid City 230kv line will run from the existing Teckla Substation (50 miles south of Gillette, Wyoming) to the existing Osage Substation at Osage, Wyoming and then to the Lange Substation in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Depending on the final route, the proposed project would:

- Be about 135 miles long
- Be constructed mainly of wood or steel H-frame structures and possibly some tubular steel single pole structures in the Rapid City area; average height of structures is estimated to be 65-75 feet
- Require a right-of-way width of 125 feet

PERMITTING

The project will require approval from the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, the Wyoming Public Service Commission and the US Forest Service.

TO LEARN MORE

Black Hills Power will host an open house to introduce the proposed project to landowners and other interested members of the public. Staff from Black Hills Power will be available to answer the public's questions and receive public comments about the proposed project. Maps of the proposed routes are available on the BHP web site: <http://www.blackhillspower.com/transmission/projects>

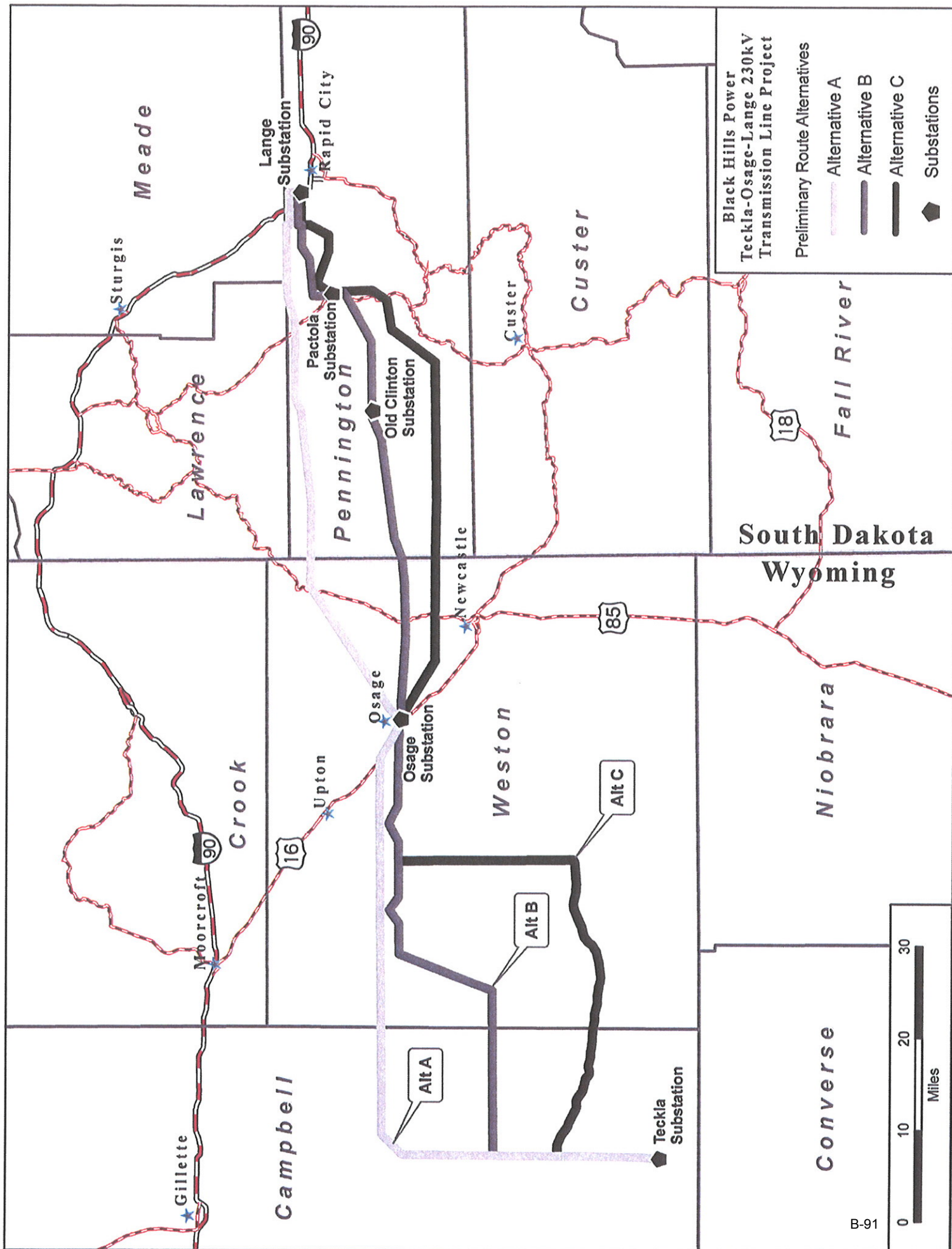
Tuesday, June 29, 2010
6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Ramkota Hotel Best Western
2111 N Lacrosse St.
Rapid City, SD

PROJECT CONTACT

Mark Carda
PO Box 1400
Rapid City, SD 57709
Mark.carda@blackhillscorp.com
Phone: (605) 721-2274

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Ron Dahlinger
Director, Engineering

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EMAIL: ron.dahlinger@blackhillscorp.com
FAX: (605) 721-2323

June 15, 2010

Wyoming Public Service Commission
Attention: Mr. Chris Petrie
Secretary & Chief Counsel
2525 Warren Avenue
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

Dear Mr. Petrie:

Black Hills Power is planning to engineer and construct a 230kv transmission line from the Teckla substation, approximately 50 miles south of Gillette, Wyoming, to Osage, Wyoming and then to Rapid City, South Dakota. The total length of this line will be approximately 130 miles. We plan to have the project ready for construction to start in 2013 and complete the line to Osage by 2014 and to Rapid City by 2015. We have developed a line routing plan with alternates to evaluate. The first step in this evaluation will be for Black Hills Power to host an open house in Wyoming and one in South Dakota for area landowners to provide input for the routing process.

The open house in Wyoming is scheduled for June 28th at 6:00 PM at the Weston Senior Center in Newcastle. We are going to advertise this open house in area newspapers and send the enclosed bulletin and map to potential affected landowners as well.

You are welcome to attend this meeting. If you do plan to have someone attend, please let me know who will be coming.

Sincerely,



Ron Dahlinger

Cc: Marci Norby
Attachments: Informational Bulletin and Project Map

Teckla – Osage – Rapid City 230kV Transmission Project

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

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The project will require approval from the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, the Wyoming Public Service Commission and the US Forest Service.

TO LEARN MORE

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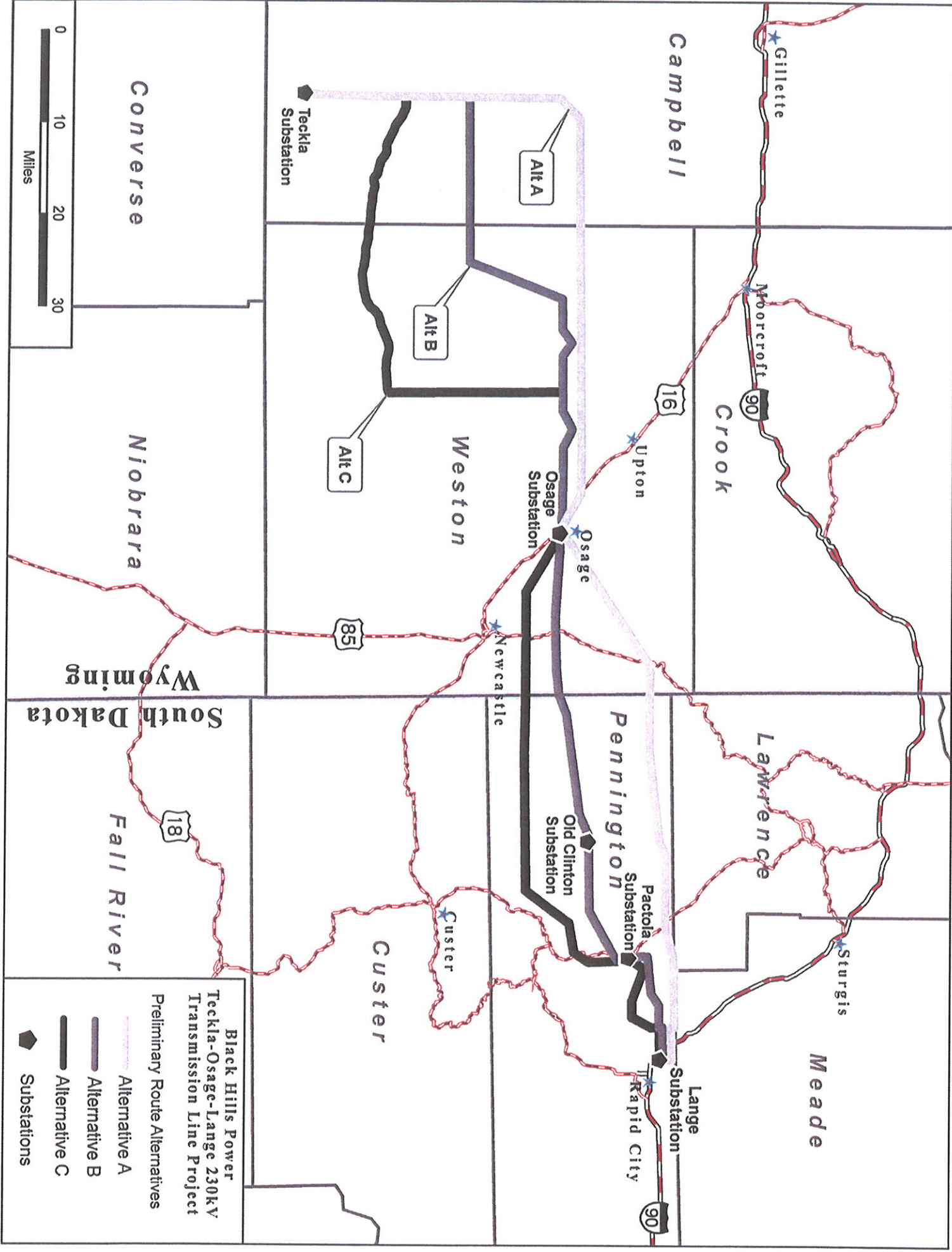
Monday, June 28, 2010
6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Weston Senior Center
627 Pine Street
Newcastle, WY

PROJECT CONTACT

Mark Carda
PO Box 1400
Rapid City, SD 57709
Mark.carda@blackhillscorp.com
Phone: (605) 721-2274

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MEETING MINUTES

SUBJECT: Project Introduction/Preliminary Route Evaluation- BLM and Wyoming Game and Fish

MEETING DATE: February 26, 2010

LOCATION: BLM Office- Newcastle, WY

PROJECT NAME: Teckla-Osage-Lange 230kV T-line

PROJECT #: 117390

PREPARED BY: Kevin Lincoln

TO: **POWER Engineers** **Black Hills Power**

Lynn Askew

Mark Carda

Mike Walbert

Linda Erdman

ATTENDEES:

Mike Worden- BLM Acting Field Office Manager
Bill Carson- BLM Realty Specialist
Nathaniel West- BLM Wildlife Biologist
Heather Obrien- WY Game & Fish Wildlife Biologist
Mark Carda- BHP Project Manager
Kevin Lincoln- POWER Environmental Specialist

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Introductions

Introductions were made and all shook hands.

2. Project introduction

Kevin thanked everyone for coming and briefly discussed the various jurisdictions involved, of which BLM is a small portion, but made it clear that we wanted to include them in the process early on. Kevin then invited Mark to give some project background info. Mark gave an overview of the project including connections to existing substations and the need for the project. Mark described the type of structures proposed, ROW width, existing ROW, etc.

3. Preliminary Routing

Kevin described the preliminary routing conducted to date including the various opportunities and constraints that were analyzed including sage grouse core areas and leks, land jurisdiction, mining operations, private residences and existing utility corridors. The BLM asked if we considered the proposed DM&E railroad route. At this time, the large opportunity and constraint map was brought out and the proposed railroad was pointed out and indicated that it did not go in the right direction for us to get where we needed to go.

Both Nathaniel and Heather took interest in the sage grouse core areas and their relation to our proposed routes. Nathaniel indicated that there were some large areas within our study area that were lacking sage grouse survey and he recommended survey. We discussed whether or not to survey all alternatives or just the "preferred" route. All seemed to be in agreement that only the

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“preferred” route would require survey. Kevin asked about required distances from sage grouse core areas and Nathaniel and Heather both indicated that we can be directly adjacent to and in some cases within a core area if the habitat is poor. The core area boundaries were drawn rather arbitrarily, and not all habitat within the core area boundaries is high quality. Nathaniel also stated that he didn’t think any other special status species would require survey in the project area but would like to see survey for sage grouse and raptors. He also hoped that our biologists would keep an eye out for plover habitat, prairie dog towns and burrowing owls. Heather did not like the northern route due to it crossing prime elk habitat in relatively un-disturbed terrain. She liked the southern route the best since it follows an existing corridor. Mark and Kevin pointed out that the southern route may prove to be difficult due to Black Thunder mining operation and the difficulty in getting a line through the congested area. She wants to make sure that Joe Sandrini gets a shape file of the proposed routes, since he is the WY G&F wildlife biologist in charge of a portion of the study area and he may have additional input. Also provide shape file to Mary Flanderka.

Mike and Bill had no real concerns other than sage grouse, but stated that cultural resources and Native American concerns are of high importance to them and all efforts should be made to avoid these areas or minimize impact to the greatest extent possible. We discussed briefly the visual resource issues near the state line. They referred us to Allison Barnes in the BLM Buffalo office who will be the main contact for visual resources.

Mike Worden will be replaced by Rick Miller effective immediately. Bill Carson is the primary BLM contact at this time.

Kevin asked what level of involvement both agencies anticipate in the process, and both acknowledged that their role would likely be small, but would like to be kept in the loop and cooperate.

ACTION ITEMS:

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE
Shape files	Provide to both agencies	Kevin	TBD



MEETING NOTES

SUBJECT: Project Introduction Meeting – Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest/Thunder Basin National Grasslands

MEETING DATE: October 28, 2009

LOCATION: Douglas Ranger District Office,
Douglas, WY

PROJECT NAME: Teckla-Osage-Lange 230kV Transmission Line **PROJECT #:** 117390

PREPARED BY: Lynn Askew

TO: See Attached List

ATTENDEES:

See attached Meeting Attendees list at end of these Meeting Notes.

COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS MINUTES:

No previous meeting notes

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Introductions

All went around the room and introduced themselves and their role in the project.

- Ian Ritchie, Cultural Resources
- Charlie Bradshaw, Range and Botany
- Misty Hays, Asst. District Ranger
- Amy Ormseth, Minerals and Lands
- Cristi Painter, Wildlife
- Robin Brooks, GIS (not present at meeting)
- Robert Sprentall, District Ranger
- Mark Carda, BHP Project Manager
- Jim Rudolph, POWER Engineers Cultural Resource Lead
- Lynn Askew, POWER Engineers, Environmental Project Manager
- Mike Walbert, POWER Engineers, Project Manager

2. Project Description

- This is a Black Hills Power (BHP) 230 kV transmission line project to improve reliability in the Rapid City area. Lynn Askew described the project to the Forest Service staff using a study area map. The project begins at Teckla Substation in Wyoming, interconnects with the Osage Substation in Wyoming and terminates at the Lange Substation at the northwest end of Rapid City. A fact sheet describing the project was handed out for review. The project includes two phases, Teckla to Osage and Osage to Lange. The timing of

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construction is separate for the phases but they constitute a full and complete project and thus will be routed and analyzed together in one project.

The proposed line will cross portions of the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) and the Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG) and possibly BLM and State of Wyoming lands.

3. Protocols

Communications

- Amy Ormseth will be the point of contact for the project.
- Mark Carda is the point of contact for BHP.
- Lynn Askew is the point of contact for POWER Engineers

Lynn explained that Rick Hudson of the BHNF offered to be project lead for the project. Robert Sprentall stated that he thinks the lead should be determined after the route alternatives have been identified to see which entity has the most land jurisdiction in the alternatives.

Application

- Lynn stated that an SF-299 has been filed with the TBNG. He pointed out the application states that 100 feet of right of way is being sought while the fact sheet states 125 feet. Lynn stated that 125 feet is being sought on nongovernmental land while a reduced right of way is being sought on governmental lands. This is due to the fact that no building can take place on governmental lands while building next to the line could occur on private lands. BHP will also need tree trimming rights on the 100 foot right of way to remove danger trees and keep the right of way clear of possible electrical clearance issues.
- A routing study will be completed to identify route alternatives. The Forest Service will be kept informed about the progress and results of the routing study. This will take from 4-6 months.
- Lynn asked if there were any other discussion items for the application. No other application issues were discussed.

Cost Recovery

- BHP has signed a cost recovery and Memorandum of Agreement with the BHNF. The agreement includes language allowing for a third party preparer, POWER Engineers, Inc.
- BHNF will provide an estimate to BHP for the BHNF costs.
- The Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG) can and will use the agreement executed with BHNF. TBNG will likely get its own individual charge number so that costs between the two National Forest Entities can be tracked. BHNF will also use a separate charge number.
- TBNG will provide two cost estimates, one for the data acquisition and routing portion of the project and a second estimate for the NEPA portion once route alternative have been identified. Initially the NEPA estimate will be a place holder and will be adjusted once more detail on the project is known, including project leadership.

MEETING NOTES

4. Study Area

- Lynn asked if the study area appeared to be reasonable to TBNG. The staff consensus was that it should be expanded to the north on a line from Upton west to the current study area western boundary. The larger area is needed to avoid sage grouse core areas and coal mining operations. This may also allow more flexibility for avoidance of TBNG sensitive areas. Misty stated that we might also want to consider extending the study area to the south.
- Misty asked if this transmission line project was associated with any wind farms. Mark explained that this project is for reliability in the Rapid City area and not associated with any wind development. If a wind developer wants to interconnect to the line they would need to follow the standard generation interconnection process.

Key Issues

- Lynn asked what key issues the Forest staff saw with the project. Forest staff responded as follows:
 - Routing along State Highway 450 is preferred but the corridor may be getting crowded with other uses.
 - Look at paralleling transmission line corridor north from Teckla to avoid coal operations.
 - Sensitive view shed issues for the Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) of Inyan Kara Mountain.
 - Avoid sage grouse core areas
 - Sharp tail grouse areas may have construction timing issues
 - Raptors
 - Mountain plover
 - All migratory birds covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
 - Bats
 - Swift fox
 - Maybe listed fish and amphibians if impacts to habitat could occur
 - Black footed ferret areas
 - Grazing allotments- there are two grazing associations, Thunder Basin Grazing Association in Douglas and Inyan Kara Grazing Association in Newcastle
 - Noxious weeds
 - Dakota Minnesota and Eastern Railroad project (DM&E) is proposing a new track in the area and there will need to be coordination.
 - Canadian Pacific Railroad liens also are proposed and will need coordination.
 - Cultural resource TCPs and issues in the Buffalo Divide and Cellars areas. Tribal consultation is important.
 - Paleontological surveys for the proposed route will be needed.
 - Access roads use existing roads as much as possible.

MEETING NOTES

- NEPA
 - BHNF offered to be the lead for NEPA. BHNF and TBNG staff will work out who will be lead for NEPA.
 - BHNF wants to see an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) completed for the project. TBNG agree an EIS is best.
 - Rick Hudson of BHNF believes that the two Forest Supervisors, BHNF and Medicine Bow-Routt NF can sign the Record of Decision (ROD). He will check to make sure this doesn't need to go to the Regional Forester. Supervisors can sign up to a 30 year permit approval.
 - The current project schedule shows the line between Teckla and Osage to be energized by the end of 2012 while the segment between Osage and Lange is to be energized by the end of 2014.
 - POWER is to provide a project schedule to the Forest Service. Scheduled date for the ROD is now spring 2011.
 - All those who conduct field resource studies will need a permit from the TBNG. Lynn stated that POWER intends to use our own resource specialists as much as possible for now but will provide a listing of any subcontractors if they are needed. POWER's staff will obtain permits as needed. As of the date of the meeting FMG will be a subcontracted land surveyor, Furgo-Horizons will do aerial photogrammetry if needed.
 - TBNG has all the original acquisition documentation for all Bankhead-Jones Act lands for historical records inventory. Misty mentioned that for this project Bankhead Jones lands will be considered the same as TBNG lands.
- Lynn stated that POWER staff will be going to the Cheyenne DEQ office to obtain life of mine areas for all coal mining areas in the study area. Robert mentioned that the BLM is doing the Wright area coal leases out of their Casper office.
 - Lynn stated that once alternatives have been identified BHP intends to hold public scoping meetings to gain input on alternatives before they are finalized. He asked if TBNG staff would like to participate. Robert responded that they would like to participate and suggested that on the Wyoming side of the project BHP should consider meetings in Wright and Upton.
- Lynn requested that the NEPA lead and an Interdisciplinary (ID) Team be identified for the project within the next six to eight weeks.
- BHP will be submitting an application for Convenience and Necessity with the Wyoming Public Service Commission (PSC) and an application for an Energy Facility Siting Permit with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The NEPA process will be completed prior to or will be well along before the commission application submittals are made.
- The BHP project will be under a special use permit with the Forest Service.
- POWER will prepare the meeting notes.
- TBNG team is to provide cost estimates to BHP.
- POWER will maintain the Administrative Record for the project.
- POWER will provide Amy a list of data required from the TBNG.

MEETING NOTES

ACTION ITEMS:

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE
TBNG Cost Estimates	TBNG to provide estimates of costs to BHP for initial and NEPA phase of project	Sprentall	Open
TBNG Tribal Consultation	TBNG will conduct tribal consultation on the project as needed	TBD	Open
Determination of ROD Signatories	BHNF to determine who will sign the ROD	Hudson	Open
Project Schedule	POWER to provide a project schedule to TBNG and BHNF	Askew/Walbert	11/23/2009
Subcontractors and Permits for Survey Work	POWER is to provide TBNG any proposed subcontractors for approval before use. POWER is to have its resource specialists obtain permits before resource studies are undertaken	Walbert/Askew	Open
Forest Service Lead and ID Team	Forest Service to identify the NEPA lead and ID team for the project	Hudson/Slepnikoff and Sprentall	1/15/2009
Expansion of Study Area	POWER to expand Study Area map and provide to TBNG for comment	Askew	12/01/2009
Obtain Life of Mine Plans	POWER to obtain Life of Mine Plans from Wyoming DEQ in Cheyenne	Askew	11/10/2009
Meeting Notes	POWER to prepare meeting notes.	Askew	11/13/2009
Administrative Record	POWER to maintain the project Administrative Record	Askew	Open
Data Request	POWER to provide TBNG (Amy) list of required data	Askew	Open

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Attendees

Name	Company	Phone	e-mail
Robert Sprentall	MBRNF & TBNG	(307) 358-4690	rsprentall@fs.fed.us
Misty Hays	Douglas Ranger District	(307) 358-4690	mahays@fs.fed.us
Amy Ormseth	Douglas Ranger District	(307) 358-7115	aormseth@fs.fed.us
Cristi Painter	Douglas Ranger District	307-358-7132	cpainter@fs.fed.us
Charlie Bradshaw	Douglas Ranger District	307-358-7125	cbradshaw@fs.fed.us
Ian Ritchie	Douglas Ranger District	307-358-2129	iritche@fs.fed.us
Mark Carda	Black Hills Power	(605) 721-2274	Mark.Carda@BlackHillsCorp.com
Lynn Askew	POWER Engineers	(208) 788-0438	laskew@powereng.com
Jim Rudolph	POWER Engineers	(208) 288-6323	Jim.rudolph@powereng.com
Mike Walbert	POWER Engineers	(208) 788-0357	mwalbert@powereng.com



MEETING NOTES

SUBJECT: Project Introduction Meeting – Black Hills National Forest

MEETING DATE: October 27, 2009

LOCATION: Mystic Ranger District Office,
Rapid City, SD

PROJECT NAME: Teckla-Osage-Lange 230kV Transmission Line **PROJECT #:** 117390

PREPARED BY: Lynn Askew

TO: See Attached List at end

ATTENDEES:

See attached Meeting Attendees list at end of these Meeting Notes.

COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS MINUTES:

No previous meeting notes

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Introductions

Everyone went around the room and introduced themselves.

2. Project Description

- This is a Black Hills Power (BHP) 230 kV transmission line project to improve reliability in the Rapid City area. Lynn Askew described the project to the Forest Service staff using a study area map. The project begins at Teckla Substation in Wyoming, interconnects with the Osage Substation in Wyoming and terminates at the Lange Substation at the northwest end of Rapid City. A fact sheet describing the project was handed out for review. The project includes two phases, Teckla to Osage and Osage to Lange. The timing of construction is separate for the phases but they constitute a full and complete project and thus will be routed and analyzed together in one project.

3. Protocols

Communications

- Dave Slepnikoff will be the overall project manager for the Black Hills National Forest (BHNf). Katie Van Alstyne will be the project coordinator and NEPA lead. All correspondence should be through Katie with Dave and Rick both being copied.
- Mark Carda will be the lead contact for BHP. Lynn Askew will be the lead for POWER Engineers.

MEETING NOTES

Application

- Katie asked about the right of way width on National Forest Lands. The application states that 100 feet of right of way is being sought while the fact sheet states 125 feet. Lynn responded that 125 feet is being sought on nongovernmental land while a reduced right of way is being sought on governmental lands. This is due to the fact that no building can take place on governmental lands while building next to the line could occur on private lands. BHP will also need tree trimming rights on the 100 foot right of way to remove danger trees and keep the right of way clear of possible electrical clearance issues.
- A routing study will be completed to identify route alternatives. The Forest Service will be kept informed about the progress and results of the routing study. This will take from 4-6 months.
- No other application issues were discussed.

Cost Recovery

- Black Hills Power (BHP) has signed a cost recovery and Memorandum of Agreement with the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF). The agreement includes language allowing for a third party preparer, POWER Engineers, Inc.
- BHNF will provide an estimate to BHP for the BHNF costs.
- The Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG) can and will use the agreement executed with BHNF. TBNG will likely get its own individual charge number so that costs between the two National Forest Entities can be tracked. BHNF will also use a separate charge number.
- Other Forest staff that will be involved are: Shirlene Haas, Wildlife Biology; Andy Korth, Botany; Christy Harper, Cultural Resources; Les Gonyer, Hydrology; Steve Keegan, Landscape Architect and Visual Specialist.

4. Study Area

Study Area Map

- Lynn asked if the study area appeared to be reasonable to BHNF. The consensus was that it was a reasonable area on the BHNF. TBNG will need to weigh in on the Wyoming portion of the project.

Key Issues

- Lynn asked what key issues the Forest staff saw with the project. Forest staff responded as follows:
 - Travel management and roads. BHNF is expecting a Record of Decision for its revised Travel Plan in January of 2010. Use of existing roads as much as possible is critical. Opening already closed roads are better than cutting new roads.
 - Goshawk habitat and occurrence.
 - Use the BHP vacated 69 kV right of way as much as possible including access. BHNF favors this corridor because of already existing impacts.
 - Osprey habitat and occurrence near Pactola Reservoir.
 - Hat Mountain is a critical Traditional Cultural Property (TCP); BHNF will conduct tribal consultation on the project and there may be issues that are currently unknown.

MEETING NOTES

- BHNF expects at least 3 alternatives, the proposed action, no action and an alternate.
- BHNF expects that alternatives in addition to the old 69 kV right of way alternative will be discussed in the NEPA document.
- There is a proposed trail in the area of the old 69 kV right of way.
- NEPA
 - BHNF offered to be the lead for NEPA. Lynn is to advise the TBNG of this during a meeting with them on Oct. 28, 2009. BHNF and TBNG staff will work out who will be lead for NEPA.
 - BHNF wants to see an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) completed for the project. Staff believes that there may be significant environmental impacts and that trying to prove non-significance could be costly and risky to the project schedule.
 - Rick believes that the two Forest Supervisors, BHNF and Medicine Bow-Routt NF can sign the Record of Decision. He will check to make sure this doesn't need to go to the Regional Forester. Supervisors can sign up to a 30 year permit approval.
 - The current project schedule shows the line between Teckla and Osage to be energized by the end of 2012 while the segment between Osage and Lange is to be energized by the end of 2014.
 - POWER is to provide a project schedule to the Forest Service. Scheduled date for the ROD is now spring 2011.
 - GIS positions on the BHNF are currently vacant. Rick will provide us a GIS contact for data acquisition.
 - BHNF wants files returned to them in the same format as they are originally provided by BHNF to POWER. Any mapping or data files should be provided in shape file format.
 - Rick asked that POWER identify and get approval for any subcontractors we use. All those who conduct field resource studies will need a permit from the BHNF. Lynn responded that we intend to use our own resource specialists as much as possible for now but will provide a listing of any subcontractors if they are needed. POWER's staff will obtain permits as needed. As of the date of the meeting FMG will be a subcontracted land surveyor, Furgo-Horizons will do aerial photogrammetry if needed.
 - We will need a timber cruiser as a subcontractor. BHP uses Dick Kessler from Rapid City for this. BHNF expects that the BHP will handle all cleared timber for disposal and no forest personnel will be involved in the disposal of timber or slash. NEPA documentation will include a timber action.
 - Rick asked for reference and qualification information from POWER Engineers for the file. POWER was selected in a competitive bid process by BHP. Mike will provide this information.
 - Rick requested a copy of the contract between BHP and POWER Engineers. Ron to provide the contract.
 - Groups and interested organizations for the project include: Biodiversity Conservation Alliance, Western Watersheds Project, Prairie Hills Audubon Society, Sierra Club, and possible the Norbeck Society.
- Rick asked what potential routes exist to get from Pactola Reservoir to the Lange Substation. Ron stated that the Big Bend line corridor is not a possibility. The county line east from the Blackhawk area to Lange may be a possibility. Expansion of the Lange Substation requires that the line enter the station from the north.

MEETING NOTES

- Rick requested shape file locations for all BHP lines in the study area. Ron will provide the information once he receives a written request.
- Katie noted that Jewell Cave is now National Park Service and Wind Cave is a National Park, not State Park as shown on the study area map. POWER will update this.
- Lynn stated that scoping meetings with the public will be held once line alternatives have been identified. Does the Forest Service want to participate in these meetings? Rick and Dave responded that the BHNF would like to participate in these meetings and requested that BHNF be informed when the time comes.
- Lynn requested that the NEPA lead and an Interdisciplinary (ID) Team be identified for the project within the next six to eight weeks. Rick responded that the Forest Leadership Team (FLT) will need to discuss the project. He suggested that Ron Dahlinger give a brief presentation to the FLT after the first of the year. Rick will get the project on the FLT agenda.
- BHP will be submitting an application for Convenience and Necessity with the Wyoming Public Service Commission (PSC) and an application for an Energy Facility Siting Permit with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The NEPA process will be completed prior to or will be well along before the commission application submittals are made.
- The BHP project will be under a special use permit with the Forest Service.
- POWER will prepare the meeting notes.
- POWER will maintain the Administrative Record for the project. Lynn to provide BHNF a copy of previous Administrative Record that POWER has done.

MEETING NOTES

ACTION ITEMS:

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE
BHNF Cost Estimates	BHNF to provide estimate of costs to BHP	Hudson/Slepnikoff	Open
BHNF Tribal Consultation	BHNF will conduct tribal consultation on the project	Hudson/Slepnikoff	Open
Determination of ROD Signatories	BHNF to determine who will sign the ROD	Hudson	Open
Project Schedule	POWER to provide a project schedule to BHNF	Askew/Walbert	11/23/2009
BHNF GIS Contact for Data	BHNF to provide a GIS contact for data acquisition	Hudson	11/02/2009
POWER Engineers Contract	BHP to provide POWER contract to Dave Slepnikoff	Dahlinger	11/09/2009
PEI Reference Information	POWER to provide reference and qualification information to BHNF	Walbert	Open
Shape Files of T-Lines within Project Study Area	Hudson to request in writing to BHP. BHP to provide.	Hudson/Dahlinger	Open
Subcontractors and Permits for Survey Work	POWER is to provide BHNF any proposed subcontractors for approval before use. POWER is to have its resource specialists obtain permits before resource studies are undertaken	Walbert/Askew	Open
Cleared Timber Disposal	BHP to handle cleared timber for disposal	Dahlinger	Open
Update Study Area Map	Update land status for Jewell Cave and Wind Cave	Askew	Open
Forest Service Lead and ID Team	Forest Service to identify the NEPA lead and ID team for the project	Hudson/Slepnikoff and TBNG	1/15/2009
FLT Presentation	BHP to provide project presentation at FLT meeting in January 2010.	Dahlinger/Hudson	1/2010
Meeting Notes	POWER to prepare meeting notes.	Askew	11/13/2009
Administrative Record	POWER to provide BHNF copy of previous Administrative Record	Askew	Open

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Attendees

Name	Company	Phone	e-mail
Rick Hudson	BHNF Supervisor Office	(605) 673-9239	rlhudson@fs.fed.us
David Slepnikoff	Mystic Ranger District	(605) 716-2007	dslepnikoff@fs.fed.us
Katie Van Alstyne	Mystic Ranger District	(605) 343-1567	kvanalstyne@fs.fed.us
Shirlene Haas	Mystic Ranger District	(605) 716-1892	shaas@fs.fed.us
Steve Pischke	Mystic Ranger District	(605) 716-1957	
Rody Brown	Mystic Ranger District	(605) 716-1861	rwbrown@fs.fed.us
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Mark Carda*	Black Hills Power	(605) 721-2274	Mark.Carda@BlackHillsCorp.com
Steven Dunn	Black Hills Power	(605) 721-2356	Steven.Dunn@BlackHillsCorp.com
Lynn Askew	POWER Engineers	(208) 788-0438	laskew@powereng.com
Jim Rudolph	POWER Engineers	(208) 288-6323	Jim.rudolph@powereng.com
Scott O'Meara	POWER Engineers	(605) 716-7839	Scott.Omeara@powereng.com
Mike Walbert	POWER Engineers	(208) 788-0357	mwalbert@powereng.com

*Mark Carda is the Black Hills Power Project Manager but was unable to attend the meeting; contact information provided for reference.