

# U.S. Forest Service Addendum for the TransWest Express Transmission Project Final EIS

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## Introduction

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) formally adopts the TransWest Express (TWE) Transmission Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) published by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Western Area Power Administration (Western) on May 1, 2015, as amended by this addendum to collectively be referenced as the USFS Final EIS (2017).

This addendum amends the Final EIS with adjustments related to four topics: 1) recognition of the relevant planning regulations, 2) inclusion of reference to the Approved Land Management Plan Amendments for the Great Basin Region Greater Sage-Grouse, 3) addition of the Salt Creek Canyon Micro-siting Reroute, and 4) recognition of a Land Use Plan Amendment for the Preferred Alternative through the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The discussions below indicate the causes requiring these adjustments, and details the resulting changes to the TransWest Express Transmission Project Final EIS.

## Relevant USFS Planning Regulations

The Final EIS issued by the BLM and Western did not include a reference to the applicable land management plan regulation for the USFS. The addition below includes that reference.

Changes to the text have been notated in red, where the original Final EIS text is in blue.

### Section 1.4.2.7 U.S. Forest Service Roles, Requirements, and Decisions (Final EIS p. 1-12, Subsection "U.S. Forest Service")

The USFS is a cooperating agency on the Project. The proposed Project and alternative corridors being analyzed would cross USFS lands under the jurisdiction of up to five different national forests in Utah. The USFS would issue a Special Use Authorization for any transmission facilities and associated activities to be located on USFS lands and a separate ROD that would outline the USFS decision and the terms and conditions under which the Special Use Authorization would be granted. This Project implements a land management plan and is not authorized under the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Act (HFRA). The decision for this Project is subject to subparts A and B of 36 CFR 218.

## Approved Land Management Plan Amendments for the Great Basin Region Greater Sage-Grouse

The Final EIS issued by the BLM and Western was published prior to the USFS publication of the ROD and Approved Land Management Plan Amendments for the Great Basin Region Greater Sage-Grouse Sub regions of Idaho and Southwestern Montana, Nevada and Northeast California, and Utah. The additional text below acknowledges USFS consideration of the referenced decision.

Changes to the text have been notated in red, where the original Final EIS text is in blue.

Section 1.4.2.7 U.S. Forest Service Roles, Requirements, and Decisions  
(Final EIS p. 1-14, Subsection “U.S. Forest Service”)

On January 12, 2001, the USFS published the Roadless Conservation Final Rule in the Federal Register (FR 66 (9): 3243-3273). The preamble to the Final Rule describes USFS policy concerning roadless areas throughout the National Forest System (NFS) and specifies that constructing new access roads or reconstructing existing unauthorized roads that cross inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) would not be allowed. The Final Rule was implemented on May 12, 2001, and has been recently affirmed. On October 21, 2011, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit decided *Wyoming v. USDA* and found the USFS’s adoption of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule does not violate federal law. Accordingly, any proposed construction in IRAs should be done with roadless construction techniques.

On September 23, 2015, the USFS announced the availability of the ROD and Approved Land Management Plan Amendments (ALMPAs) for the Great Basin Region Greater Sage-Grouse Sub-regions of Idaho and Southwestern Montana, Nevada and Northeast California, and Utah (80 *Federal Register* 57333). The ROD for the approved ALMPAs stated that this Presidential priority Project will fully mitigate potential impacts to greater sage-grouse “through (1) micro siting to adjust the route to avoid important habitat and leks, (2) transmission tower design to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to GRSG such as perching for predators, and (3) compensatory mitigation measures, such as habitat restoration and pre-suppression activities to reduce the risk of habitat loss due to fire, to offset any unavoidable impacts to a conservation gain standard.”

**Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option**

Private landowners in Juab County, Utah, near the upper portion of Salt Creek Canyon (also known as Nephi Canyon) east of the town of Nephi have proposed the Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option to reroute the Project in a way agreeable to the landowners involved. The reroute extended to lands that were included in the BLM and Western Draft EIS analysis corridors, but had been subsequently screened out of the Final EIS refined transmission corridors based on the criteria described in Section 2.3. Due to this, the area potentially affected by the reroute is hereby incorporated into the Final EIS refined transmission corridors and additional analysis has been performed. This addendum documents its inclusion in the following sections of the Final EIS.

Changes to the text have been notated in red, where the original Final EIS text is in blue.

Section 2.5.1.2 Project Description and Alternatives, Region II  
(Final EIS p. 2-56, Subsection “Alternative II-A”)

*Strawberry IRA Micro-siting Options 2 and 3*

The Strawberry IRA micro-siting options have been developed to address concerns with construction in Uinta National Forest Planning Area IRAs at a location the designated WWEC offsets from a continual corridor (**Figure 2-28**). Strawberry IRA Micro-siting Option 1 is now the proposed alternative alignment considered in Alternative II-A. Strawberry IRA Micro-siting Option 2 would be located with a 250-foot offset from the existing transmission line and within, but on the edge, of the IRA. Strawberry IRA Micro-siting Option 3 would cross the existing transmission line twice, remaining in the designated WWEC and avoiding the USFS IRA. These micro-siting options are compared with the portion of Alternative II-A they might replace.

### *Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option*

The Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option has been proposed by private landowners working with TransWest to site the Project in a way agreeable to the landowners involved. This reroute is located in Juab County, Utah approximately 5 miles east of the Town of Nephi. The reroute would be approximately 3.7 miles long, and replace approximately 3.3 miles of Alternative II-A (**Figure 2.28.B**). It would diverge from Alternative II-A within the state land parcel just west of the Juab-Sanpete county line and follow a route to the south-southwest for approximately 1 mile onto privately owned land, crossing Utah Highway 132 and two existing high-voltage power lines. At that point, the route would turn west-northwest and be co-located with the existing powerlines for approximately 1.7 miles where it would cross 0.3 miles of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. After crossing back to private lands, the Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option would turn west, where it would rejoin the Alternative II-A route in approximately 1 mile. The Final EIS Refined Transmission Corridor is expanded to consider this potential reroute. This reroute micro-siting option is compared with the portion of Alternative II-A it might replace.

Within the Manti-La Sal National Forest, the Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option would cross a Range Forage Production MA.

(Final EIS p. 2-61, Subsection “Alternative II-G”)

The Fruitland, ~~and Strawberry IRA~~, and Salt Creek Canyon Reroute micro-siting options are also applicable to this alternative. See the description of these micro-siting options under the previous Alternative II-A discussion.

#### Section 3.13.6.4 Impacts to Recreation, Region II

(Final EIS p. 3.13-83, Subsection “Alternative II-G”)

Fruitland Micro-siting Option 1 would increase impacts to the Currant Creek/Wildcat WMA compared to Alternative II-G due to additional acreage located within the Currant Creek portion of the WMA (7percent of total WMA acreage) and crossing Currant Creek at an angler access point (US-40); Alternative II-G would cross Currant Creek on private property south of US-40 where public fishing access is generally not allowed (Marsh 2014; Utah Outdoors 2014). Option 1 also would impact the Tabby Mountain WMA—Tabby Mountain unit (1 percent of total WMA acreage). Fruitland Micro-siting Option 2 would result in the same impact to the Currant Creek/Wildcat WMA as Alternative II-G; however, Option 3 would reduce impacts to the WMA due to very little acreage affected within the Currant Creek portion of the WMA. All three Fruitland Micro-siting options and Alternative II-G would result in similar impacts to boating on Currant Creek as described under Alternative II-A.

The Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option would have the same impacts to the South Nebo WMA-Triangle Ranch Unit as described under Alternative II-F.

#### Section 3.14.6.4 Impacts to Land Use, Region II

(Final EIS p. 3.14-62, Subsection “Alternative II-A”)

More detail regarding LRMP consistency can be found in the Forest Plan spreadsheets in the Project Record, as well as in Chapter 4.0, Federal Agency Land Use Plan Amendments. Consistency with ROS Class designations is discussed in Section 3.13, Recreation Resources. Impacts to IRAs are discussed in Section 3.15, Special Designation Areas.

The Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option would cross a RNG management area for 0.3miles on the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The Project would be co-located with existing transmission, and would be consistent with the standards and guidelines of the LRMP.

Section 3.15.6.4 Impacts to Special Designations, Region II  
(Final EIS p. 3.15-67, Subsection “Alternative II-A”)

There is a small portion of the refined transmission corridor that is within the Cedar Knoll URUD area but not within the Cedar Knoll IRA. Modeled disturbance calculations estimate 2 acres of ROW vegetation removal, 10 acres of construction surface disturbance, and 7 acres of operations disturbance that may occur in the URUD area; most of this disturbance would be outside of the IRA. Application of **SDA-12** is proposed to extend the requirement for roadless construction techniques to any portion of an URUD area that is located outside of the IRA. Application of **SDA-13** is proposed to ensure that all applicable SDA mitigation is applied to URUD areas located both within and outside of IRAs. This would allow application of the mitigation measures identified above to URUD areas. Together, these proposed mitigations would reduce impacts by eliminating roads and staging areas in URUD areas, reducing visual impacts by allowing a greater diversity of vegetation within the ROW, and otherwise protecting wilderness characteristics.

*Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option*

The 3.8-mile-long Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option would cross approximately 0.3 miles of the San Pitch Mountains URUD area. The crossing would be in an area where the route would be co-located with two existing high-voltage transmission lines. Preliminary engineering indicates that the NFS lands could be spanned with no land disturbance required. However, if final engineering requires tower structures on NFS lands, the use of existing access roads and the application of **SDA-12** and **SDA-13** would minimize the Project disturbance to temporary access roads and tower erection sites, and the permanent tower locations.

(Final EIS p. 3.15-82, Subsection “Alternative II-G”)

*USFS IRAs and Unroaded/Undeveloped Areas*

Impacts to the Chipman Creek IRA, Cedar Knoll IRA/URUD Area, Tie Fork IRA, and Willow Creek IRA would be the same as discussed for Alternative II-A. The Salt Creek Canyon Reroute Micro-siting Option would cross the San Pitch Mountains URUD as discussed for Alternative II-A.

## **Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan Amendment**

EISs and Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment documents were prepared for two separate high-voltage transmission line projects crossing NFS and other federally administered lands including TWE and Energy Gateway South (EGS) proposed by Rocky Mountain Power. The TWE Project EIS was led by the BLM and Western, while the EGS Project EIS was led by the BLM. Each of these EISs considered the other project as a reasonably foreseeable future action when considering cumulative impacts.

The USFS has participated in both EISs as a cooperating agency, recognizing that a Special Use Permit will be required from the USFS for implementation of each project. The TWE Draft EIS was released by the BLM on July 3, 2013, and the Final EIS on May 1, 2015. The EGS Draft EIS was released on February 21, 2014, and the Final EIS on May 12, 2016. The USFS issued subsequent Notice of Availabilities (NOAs) for the Draft EISs, and this addendum accompanies the USFS NOA for the TWE Final EIS and Draft ROD.

As presented in the Final EISs, the agency preferred alternative for both projects would cross a portion of the Manti-La Sal National Forest in Utah County (see **Figure 4-17.B**). The projects would be co-located with each other and the existing 345-kV powerline across NFS lands, where the 1986 Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) has designated a General Big-

game Winter Range (GWR) Management Unit. The projects would cross up to approximately 0.9 mile of Management Areas 1 and 2 of the GWR.

This area's visual resources are currently identified and managed as a partial retention Visual Quality Objectives (VQO), which USFS Handbook 462 describes as an area where management activities remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Activities may repeat form, line, color, and texture common to the characteristic landscape; but changes in their qualities of sizes, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Activities also may introduce form, line, color, or texture found infrequently or not at all in the characteristic landscape, but they should remain subordinate to the visual strength of the characteristic landscape.

Review of the Draft and Final EISs and Proposed Land-use Plan Amendment documents for the TWE and EGS projects indicated inconsistencies in the outcome of assessments related to compliance of the projects with the management standards for the General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit; specifically the projects' conformance with the partial retention VQO assigned to the area crossed. Therefore, additional review and direction from the Manti-La Sal National Forest was requested and received.

#### Summary of Energy Gateway South Final EIS Plan Amendment Analysis for Manti La Sal NF

The Final EIS for the EGS Project states that the EGS Project, after application of all feasible measures to reduce visual contrast, would not be able to meet the criteria of this objective and would not be permitted in this area; therefore the EGS Final EIS proposes an amendment for the area that would be crossed by the preferred alternative (Alternative COUT-C) on the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The amendment would amend the VQO from partial retention VQO to a modification VQO due to management standards for the General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit to allow projects to meet the designed VQO.

*Identified non-conformance issue:* Per a standard for the General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit (management emphasis is on general big-game winter range) in the 1986 Manti-La Sal National Forest LRMP states that activities must meet the Visual Quality Objective (VQO) except where habitat improvement activities occur. Due to the proximity of the EGS Project to U.S. Highway 89 and residences in the Birdseye, Utah, area, the EGS Project would not be subordinate to the characteristic landscape in these areas, which would be inconsistent with the definition of a partial retention VQO.

*Description of Proposed Plan Amendment:* The area in the EGS Project right-of-way that is inconsistent with a partial retention VQO and could not be mitigated through application of selective mitigation measures (Link U621 Milepost 3.4 to 4.3) would be amended from a partial retention VQO to a modification VQO. For further details, refer to Page 5-103 of the EGS Final EIS.

#### Summary of TransWest Express Final EIS Plan Amendment Analysis for Manti-La Sal NF

The Final EIS for the TWE Project states that the Agency Preferred Alternative across the Manti-La Sal National Forest (Alternative II-G) would not require a plan amendment. The TWE Final EIS stated the TWE Project would be in conformance with the standards and guidelines contained in the 1986 Manti-La Sal National Forest LRMP. Specific to the nonconformance issue the EGS Project raises within its EIS for that specific project, the TWE Project's visual analysis found that the TWE Project would conform to the partial retention VQO because it would be co-located at a 250-foot offset from the existing 345-kV transmission line through the area (see Attachment 1). Section 3.12 of the TWE Final EIS notes that contrasts would be weak to moderate in areas of existing disturbance or existing electrical transmission infrastructure (page 3.12-29). Page 3.12-88 states the following:

*Less than 1 percent of Alternative II-G would not conform or be consistent with agency management objectives after mitigations (Section 3.12.6.3), where changes may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. These locations primarily are associated with crossings of roads, trails, and rivers, where the Project is "sky-lined" and cannot be moved out of view, where there are no existing transmission lines, and where the Project dominates the view.*

Appendix I of the TWE Final EIS indicates that the area where Alternative II-G crosses the Manti-La Sal National Forest would be in conformance with the LRMP (Segment 1320.15, Mileposts 10.81-11.54; 0.73 miles). It recognizes the locations of visual non-conformance associated with this alternative (less than 1 percent) to be within the jurisdiction of the BLM Fillmore Field Office. Therefore, the TWE Final EIS does not include a proposed plan amendment for the Manti-La Sal National Forest LRMP.

#### Consideration of both the TWE and EGS Draft and Final EIS Analyses in Assessing the Need for a Land Use Plan Amendment for Manti La Sal National Forest

Without the Land Use Plan Amendment proposed in the EGS Final EIS, both projects would be required to conform with the existing partial retention VQO, where project development and activities would be subordinate to the characteristic landscape.

Implementation of the Land Use Plan Amendment proposed by the EGS Final EIS would allow for the changes to the characteristic landscape to increase to levels that may visually dominate the characteristic landscape. After initial review and consideration of the analyses in both projects Draft EISs, the USFS has determined that it is uncertain that the TWE project would be able to conform to this VQO. Implementing this plan amendment for the TWE project would ensure conformance with the Manti-La Sal Forest Plan.

The impacts of the proposed Land Use Plan Amendment include the potential visual impacts from allowing multiple transmission lines in this area. Both the TWE and EGS Draft and Final EISs include cumulative impacts analysis disclosing the cumulative impacts of the TWE and EGS transmission projects. Additionally, the EGS Draft and Final EISs include the specific proposed land use plan amendment and associated disclosure of the impacts of that amendment, including consideration of the impacts of construction of the TWE Project (see excerpt below from the EGS Final EIS).

*By amending the land-use plan to change the VQO of this area to a modification VQO, the Project or other RFFAs could be sited on these lands and further dominate views in this area. Furthermore, in association with other RFFAs, the Manti-La Sal LRMP could be amended to change the VQO of additional adjacent areas to accommodate those projects, such as the TWE Transmission Project, which would allow for further dominance of views and impacts on scenic values.*

To review the detailed analysis of the impacts of implementing this plan amendment, please see the publicly available EGS Draft and Final EISs which can be accessed at the following website: [http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/gateway\\_south.html](http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/gateway_south.html).

After reviewing both the EGS and the TWE Draft and Final EISs, the USFS has determined that it is appropriate to evaluate a land use plan amendment in making our decision for the TWE Project. This determination has been made based on review of the respective visual analyses for each project and the conclusion that the transmission lines would create a dominance of views in the area which would be inconsistent with the current VQO of partial retention. Accordingly, with this addendum, we propose to implement a Land Use Plan Amendment for the Manti-La Sal National Forest as part of the proposed TWE project. This plan amendment would be as described above, which is identical to that proposed and analyzed in the EGS Final EIS. The USFS TWE Record of Decision in regards to this

plan amendment is informed by the disclosure of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of both projects in their respective EISs and the specific land use plan amendment analysis included in the EGS Draft and Final EIS (incorporated by reference here). This provides consistency in the USFS consideration of the Special Use Permits for both projects and provides for effective continued long-term management of each project's operations through the Manti-La Sal Forest Plan.

Specific changes to the text of the TWE Final EIS related to the proposed plan amendment are detailed below. Changes to the text have been notated in red, where the original Final EIS text is in blue.

Section 2.8 Summary of Impacts by Region and Alternative  
 (Final EIS p. 2-135, Subsection "Summary of Impacts for Region II")

Table 2-24 Summary of Impacts for Region II

Resource	Resource Topic	Alternative II-A	Alternative II-B	Alternative II-C	Alternative II-D	Alternative II-E	Alternative II-F	Alternative II-G
Plan Amendments								
	Number of Necessary Plan Amendments	<del>Three</del> <b>Four</b> Plan Amendments: Vernal FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area; Conflict with SSS Wildlife and Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines); Salt Lake FO (Accommodate RFFA Projects); Uinta NF Planning Area (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area); <b>Manti-La Sal NF (amend to modification VQO Standard for General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit where Project crosses)</b>	Four Plan Amendments: White River FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Accommodate RFFA Projects); Vernal FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Conflict with SSS Wildlife and Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines); Price FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Conflict with Cultural, SSS Wildlife, and Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines; Accommodate RFFA Projects); Manti-La Sal NF (Conflict with Visual Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines	Four Plan Amendments: White River FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Accommodate RFFA Projects); Vernal FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Conflict with SSS Wildlife and Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines); Price FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Conflict with SMAs, Cultural, SSS Wildlife, and Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines; Accommodate RFFA Projects); Fishlake NF (Conflict with Visual Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines	Three Plan Amendments: Vernal FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area; Conflict with SSS Wildlife, Raptors, Water, and SMAs Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines); Price FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Conflict with Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines; Accommodate RFFA Projects); Manti-La Sal NF (Conflict with Visual Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines	<del>Three</del> <b>Four</b> Plan Amendments: Vernal FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Conflict with SSS Wildlife and Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines); Salt Lake FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Accommodate RFFA Projects); Uinta NF Planning Area (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area); <b>Manti-La Sal NF (amend to modification VQO Standard for General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit where Project crosses)</b>	<del>Three</del> <b>Four</b> Plan Amendments: Vernal FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area; Conflict with SSS Wildlife, Raptors, Water, and SMAs Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines); Salt Lake FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Accommodate RFFA Projects); Uinta NF Planning Area (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area); <b>Manti-La Sal NF (amend to modification VQO Standard for General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit where Project crosses)</b>	<del>Three</del> <b>Four</b> Plan Amendments: Vernal FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Conflict with SSS Wildlife and Water Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines); Salt Lake FO (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area, Accommodate RFFA Projects); Uinta NF Planning Area (Utility Corridor Restrictions/ROW Exclusion Area); <b>Manti-La Sal NF (amend to modification VQO Standard for General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit where Project crosses)</b>



(Final EIS p. 2-181, Subsection “Comparison of Agency Preferred Parameters”)

**Table 2-27 Comparison of Agency Preferred Parameters between the Applicant Proposed and the Agency Preferred for the Entire Project**

Parameter	Topic	Details (units)	Applicant Proposed	Agency Preferred
(2.a)	Plan Amendments Required	(count)	56	56

#### Section 3.14.6.4 Impacts to Land Use, Region II

(Final EIS p. 3.14-62, Subsection “Alternative II-A”)

Within the Manti-La Sal National Forest, the Project would cross three management areas, GWR, KWR, and RNG. The Project would be consistent with management area direction for visual resources or would be co-located with existing transmission, cleared ROW, and access roads in the KWR and RNG management areas. However, the Project would not be consistent with the partial retention VQO in the GWR. Accordingly, the USFS would amend the visual resources Visual Quality Objective (VQO) within the GWR to be a modification VQO.

(Final EIS p. 3.14-67, Subsection “Alternative II-E”)

Within the Manti-La Sal National Forest, there is one area near the county line east of Nephi and another just east of Birdseye that would not meet visual quality objectives; however, the Project would be co-located with an existing transmission line through the area these areas. More detail regarding LRMP consistency can be found in Section 4.0 and the Forest Plan spreadsheets in the Project record.

(Final EIS p. 3.14-68, Subsection “Alternative II-F”)

Within the Manti-La Sal National Forest, there is one area near the county line east of Nephi, another just east of Birdseye and a third just west of Emery that would not meet visual quality objectives; however, the Project would be co-located with an existing transmission line through the area these areas. More detail regarding LRMP consistency can be found in Section 4.0 and the Forest Plan spreadsheets in the Project record.

(Final EIS p. 3.14-73, Subsection “Region II Conclusion”)

Alternatives II-A, II-B, II-D, II-E, II-F, and II-G are generally consistent with the standards and guidelines of most of the USFS management units crossed by the transmission line. However, due to visual impacts from this Project the USFS would amend the visual resources VQO within the GWR to be a modification VQO where Alternatives II-A, II-E, II-F or II-G would cross the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Alternative II-C traverses two small areas of High SIO and areas that would not meet visual management objectives, and would require a project-specific plan amendment.

**Section 4.4 Proposed Land Use Plan Amendments**  
(Final EIS p. 4-10)

**Table 4-1 Federal Agency Land Use Plan Amendment Considerations and Recommendations<sup>1</sup>**

National Forest	Affected Management Plans	Alternatives Requiring Amendment	Area of Resource Conflict or Amendment Consideration	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F	Alternative G	Alternative Connectors	Alternative Variations	
Ashley National Forest	Ashley National Forest LRMP (Nov 1986)	Reservation Ridge Alternative Variation	Utility Corridor Restriction <sup>2</sup> / ROW Exclusion Area	N/A	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Conflict with Resource Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	N/A	N/A	X-visual <sup>1</sup>	
			Amendments to Accommodate RFFA Projects	N/A	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Uinta National Forest Planning Area <sup>7</sup>	LRMP Uinta National Forest (May 2003)	A, E, F, G, Reservation Ridge Alternative Variation	Utility Corridor Restriction <sup>2</sup> / ROW Exclusion Area	X <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	N/A	
			Conflict with Resource Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines <sup>3</sup>	X-visual <sup>6</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	X-visual <sup>6</sup>	X-visual <sup>6</sup>	X-visual <sup>6</sup>	X-visual <sup>6</sup>	X-visual <sup>6</sup>	N/A
			Amendments to Accommodate RFFA Projects	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	--	--	--	N/A	N/A	
Manti-La Sal National Forest	LRMP Manti-La Sal National Forest (Nov 1986)	A, B,D, E, F, G	Utility Corridor Restriction <sup>2</sup> / ROW Exclusion Area	--	--	N/A	--	--	--	--	N/A	N/A	
			Conflict with Resource Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines <sup>3</sup>	--X-visual <sup>5</sup>	X-visual <sup>1</sup>	N/A	X-visual <sup>1</sup>	--X-visual <sup>5</sup>	--X-visual <sup>5</sup>	--X-visual <sup>5</sup>	N/A	N/A	
			Amendments to Accommodate RFFA Projects	--	--	N/A	--	--	--	N/A	N/A		
Fishlake National Forest	Fishlake National Forest LRMP (Jun 1986)	C	Utility Corridor Restriction <sup>2</sup> / ROW Exclusion Area	N/A	--	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Conflict with Resource Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines <sup>3</sup>	N/A	--	X-visual <sup>1,4,5</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Amendments to Accommodate RFFA Projects	N/A	--	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

**Table 4-1 Federal Agency Land Use Plan Amendment Considerations and Recommendations<sup>1</sup>**

National Forest	Affected Management Plans	Alternatives Requiring Amendment	Area of Resource Conflict or Amendment Consideration	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F	Alternative G	Alternative Connectors	Alternative Variations	
Dixie National Forest	LRMP for the Dixie National Forest (Sept 1986)	Ox Valley East, Ox Valley West, Pinto Alternative Variations	Utility Corridor Restriction <sup>2</sup> / ROW Exclusion Area	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	--	
			Conflict with Resource Objectives, Stipulations, Standards, Guidelines <sup>3</sup>	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X-visual <sup>1</sup>
			Amendments to Accommodate RFFA Projects	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	--

<sup>1</sup> Non-conformance/inconsistency issues identified require a plan amendment before the Project could proceed, if approved.

<sup>2</sup> Non-conformance/inconsistency issues related to utility corridors were only identified for agency plans that have restrictions to locating ROWs within corridors or the designated corridor was identified for underground only utilities.

<sup>3</sup> Resource conflicts were identified from affected management plans; however, these issues do not necessarily require a plan amendment as some issues allow exceptions in the current plan.

<sup>4</sup> Non-conformance issues as they pertain to visual resources on BLM-administered lands include areas of VRM Class I and II outside of designated utility corridors. Inconsistency issues as they pertain to visual resources on USFS-administered lands includes areas of VQO Preservation, Retention, and Partial Retention or SIO Very High and High that is not co-located with existing transmission or within a designated utility corridor.

<sup>5</sup> Areas that would conflict with visual quality objectives; however, these areas are either located within a designated utility corridor, co-located with existing overhead transmission, or could be mitigated so as to not conflict with the current management plan for the area. Therefore, plan amendments for these conflicts are not necessarily required, but are mitigated as determined by federal land managers.

<sup>6</sup> Through discussions with federal land managers and information considered, it was determined that a plan amendment was not necessary to address the conflicts identified. These resource conflicts could be addressed through other measures, including exceptions, as allowed through the current area plan.

<sup>7</sup> In March 2008, the Uinta National Forest and the Wasatch-Cache National Forest were combined into one administrative unit (Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest). Each of these forests continues to operate under individual forest plans approved in 2003. The term "Uinta National Forest Planning Area" is used to refer to the portion of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest managed under the 2003 LRMP for the Uinta National Forest.

Section 4.4.17, Proposed Land Use Plan Amendments, USFS Manti-La Sal National Forest  
(Final EIS p. 4-56)

Alternatives A, B, D, E, F, and G pass through the Manti-La Sal National Forest. A summary of the consistency review of the project in relation to the LRMP standard and guidelines for each alternative are provided below. The detailed consistency worksheets are contained in the Project Record.

Alternatives A, E, F, and G would cross three management units in the Manti-La Sal National Forest: GWR, KWR and RNG. All of these alternatives would be co-located with existing transmission lines and would be consistent with the standards and guidelines. For management units KWR and RNG, these alternatives could be constructed and operated while specifically maintaining the partial retention VQO. However, the partial retention VQO cannot be maintained through the GWR management unit. The analysis contained in the Energy Gateway South Transmission Line Project EIS (BLM 2016) concluded the following relative to that project:

*“Per a standard for the General Big-game Winter Range Management Unit (management emphasis is on general big-game winter range) in the 1986 Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) activities must meet the Visual Quality Objective (VQO) except where habitat improvement activities occur (Management Activity AO4, page III-62 of LRMP). Due to the proximity of the Project to U.S. Highway 89 and residences in the area of Birdseye, Utah, the Project would not be subordinate to the characteristic landscape in these areas, which would be inconsistent with the definition of a partial retention VQO.”*

After consideration of the impacts analyses in both the TWE and the Energy Gateway South Transmission Line Project EIS (BLM 2016), the USFS has determined that it would amend the VQO for the Project. The areas crossed by the Project within the GWR would be amended from a partial retention VQO to a modification VQO under Alternatives II-A, II-E, II-F or II-G. This amendment would consist of changing the VQO of a 21 acre area. **Figure 4-17.B** depicts the area, which is the 250 footwide ROW crossing the corner of the NFS Lands at a diagonal.

Alternative B would cross seven management units: GWR, DRS, MMA, RNG, UC, TBR, and WPE. The portion of Alternative B that crosses the DRS and TBR management units in areas of area of partial retention VQO outside the designated utility corridor would not be consistent with Visual Resource Management (A04) (p. III-17). In addition, the portion of the route crossing the Indian creek campground road in the DRS unit would not meet current management objectives. A project-specific amendment would be required where this alignment crosses these management units.

Alternative D would cross eight management units: RNG, UC, TBR, DRS, GWR, SLD, RPI, and UDM. Alternative D, an alignment where there are no existing utilities, would cross only partial retention VQO areas and would not be consistent with Visual Resource Management (A04) (p. III-17) in the following management units: DRS, GWR, RNG, and TBR. In addition, Alternative D includes less than 1 acre of disturbance within the Gooseberry campground and Flat Canyon campground in the DRS unit, which would not meet current management objectives. A project-specific amendment would be required where this alignment crosses these management units.

**Table 4-18** identifies areas not consistent with the LRMP and the proposed plan amendments by alternative through the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Since proposed amendments would be specifically for this Project, the impacts associated with the amendment are disclosed in the project impacts discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.

**Table 4-18 Areas Not Consistent and Amendments Proposed in the Manti-La Sal National Forest**

Alternative	Areas Not Consistent		Amendments Proposed	
	Length	Reason	Proposed Amendment	Length
<b>Manti-La Sal National Forest</b>				
A	n/a <sup>1</sup>	None <sup>1</sup>	<del>None</del> Partial retention VQO amended to a modification VQO as described above	n/a < 1 mile
B	< 1 mile	Inconsistent with Partial Retention VQO	One-time exception to allow one high-voltage transmission line	< 1 mile
D	10 miles	Inconsistent with Partial Retention VQO	One-time exception to allow one high-voltage transmission line	10 miles
E	n/a <sup>1</sup>	None <sup>1</sup>	<del>None</del> Partial retention VQO amended to a modification VQO as described above	n/a < 1 mile
F	n/a <sup>1</sup>	None <sup>1</sup>	<del>None</del> Partial retention VQO amended to a modification VQO as described above	n/a < 1 mile
G (Agency Preferred)	n/a <sup>1</sup>	None <sup>1</sup>	<del>None</del> Partial retention VQO amended to a modification VQO as described above	n/a < 1 mile

For the Alternatives A, E, F, or G, the 1986 Manti-La Sal National Forest LRMP would be amended to add 21 acres of modification VQO and remove 621 acres of partial retention VQO from the GWR management area to allow the construction and operation of the Project.