

# Western Governors Association Federal Lands Transmission Siting



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# **Two Elements Driving the Present Situation**

## **1) Multiple Layers of Authorizations**

- Most interstate transmission lines in the western United States will need BLM authorization**
- No one entity has ‘universal’ siting authority**
- State and Local Government Siting Authority vary by state**
- See “Transmission Siting in the Western U.S.” Prepared by Holland and Hart for the Western Interstate Energy Board (Aug. 2009)**

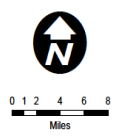
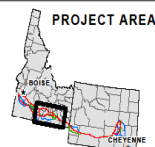
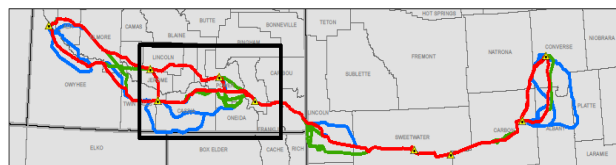
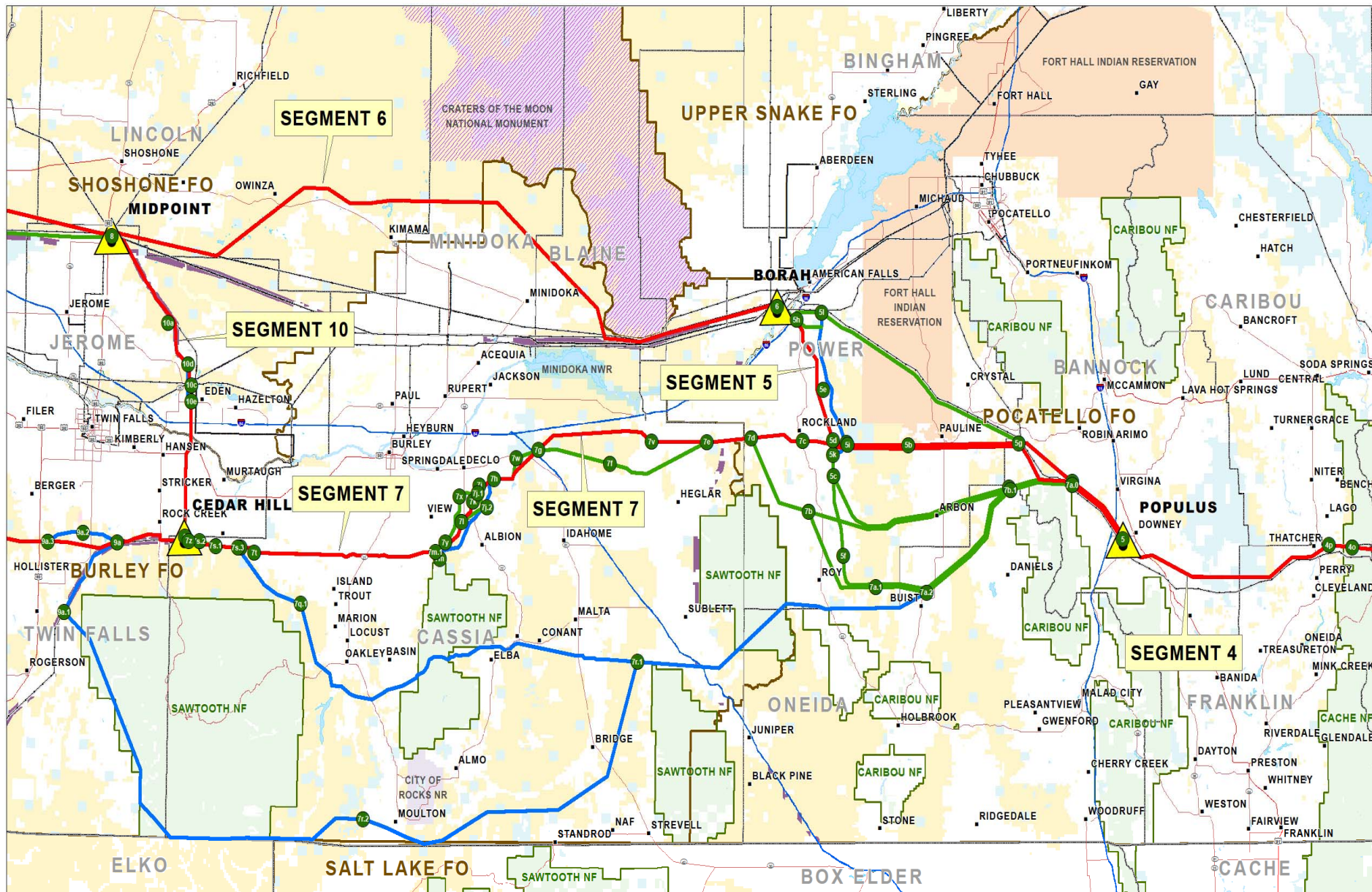


# **Authorization Examples**

- **BLM Right-of-Way Grant (for Public Lands)**
- **US Forest Service Special Use Permit**
- **US Army Corps of Engineers '404' permits**
- **Wyoming Industrial Siting Council Permit**
- **County Special Use Permits or similar siting authorizations**
- **Idaho and Wyoming Public Utility Commission's Certificate of Necessity and Convenience**
- **WECC Reliability Capacity Rating**







- PROJECT FEATURES**
- Proposed Line
  - Existing Line, Upgrade to 500kV
  - Newly Designated Route
  - Approximate Substation Location
  - Heat Wells Energy Corridor (HWEC)
  - Circle Reference Nodes

- OWNERSHIP**
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
  - US Forest Service (USFS)
  - National Park Service (NPS)
  - US Fish and Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge
  - Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
  - Indian Reservation
  - Department of Defense
  - Other Federal
  - State & Local
  - State & Local Parks & Wildlife
  - Private



GATEWAY WEST TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT  
IDAHO / WYOMING

**SEGMENTS 5 - 6 - 7**

**FIGURE 1-5**

# **Multiple Authorization Example**

- **County is ‘initial’ siting authority in Idaho**
- **County designated a utility corridor**
  - **55 miles longer than proposed route**
  - **37% on private lands vs. 73% for proposed route**
  - **Significantly more impacts to sage grouse habitat and national historic trails and other public land resources than proposed route**
- **Proposed route has opposite land ownership, effects private land values**
- **How will PUC rule on reasonableness?**



# **Two Elements Driving the Present Situation**

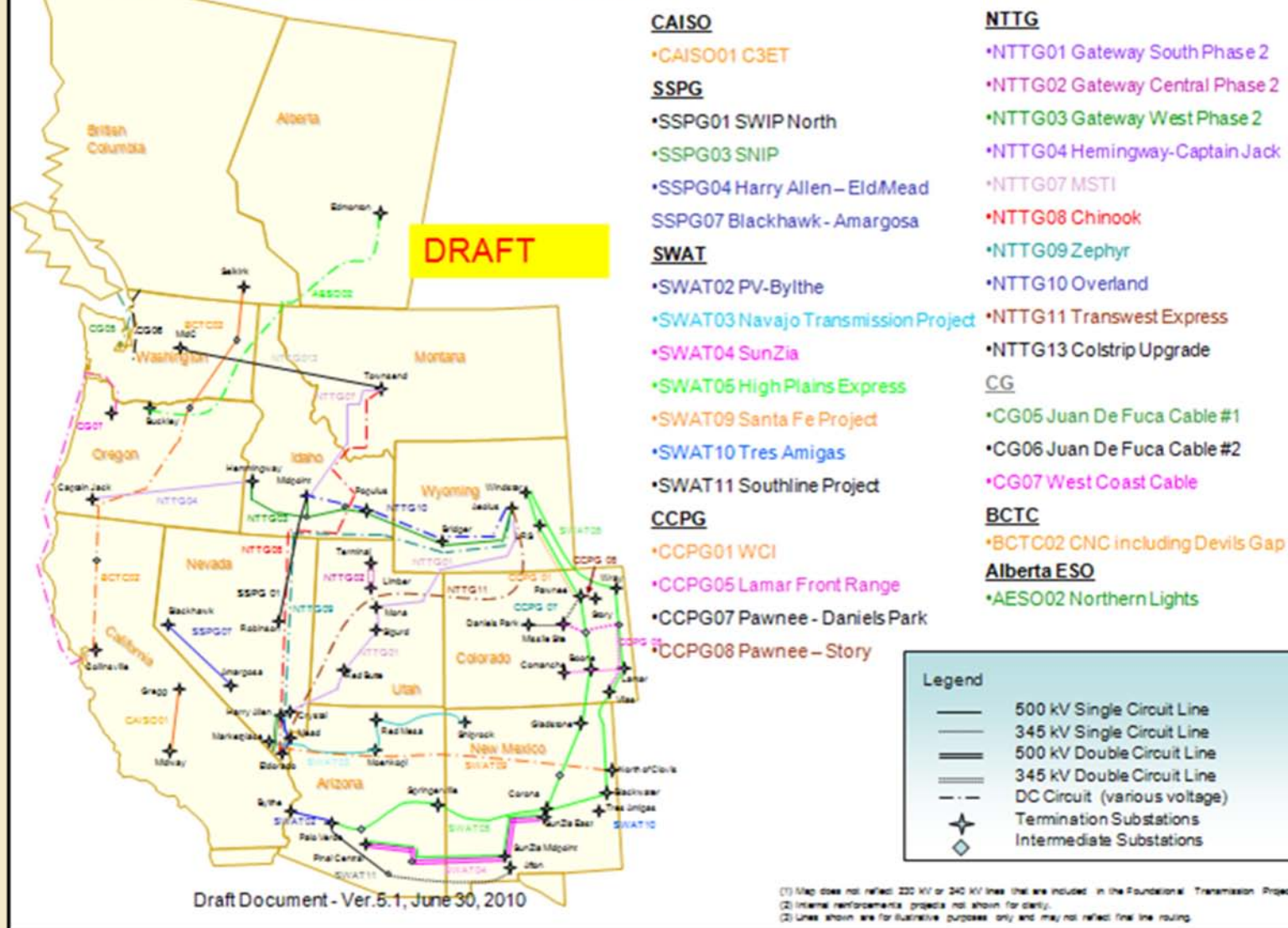
## **2) Change in the historical scope and number or transmission proposals**

- Transmission systems developed incrementally to serve customers in a local service territory**
- Today, interstate transmission proposals:**
  - Support load centers with insufficient nearby generation capability**
  - Transmit renewable energy from distant sources**
  - Multiple projects simultaneously proposed**
  - Merchant transmission lines**





## POTENTIAL PROJECTS BY 2020



Acknowledge: Subregional Coordination Group (SCG) of WECC's Transmission Expansion Planning Policy Committee (TEPPC)

# Varied Jurisdictions Mean Varied Siting Criteria

- Avoid Sage Grouse Core/Key Areas and other important wildlife habitat
- Avoid National Historic Trails and associated landscapes
- Avoid Wild Lands and visually sensitive areas
- Avoid private lands and impacts to high value agriculture operations
- Consider Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Reliability Criteria





# Use of Corridors

- West Wide Energy Corridors designated in January 2009
  - BLM also designates corridors in its land use plans
  - Potential corridors exist along any existing linear facility
- designated corridors are BLM's preferred, but not mandatory locations for linear facilities
- BLM cannot designate corridors off of public lands but recognizes our designations influence where linear facilities may go on private lands



# Land Use Plan Conformance

- BLM Regulations (43 CFR 1610.5-3) require authorizations to conform to land use plans
- Plan Revision initiative began in 2002 - - plans addressed a wider range of decisions than previous plans
  - This reflects increasing populations near public lands and interest in public land values
- End result is more non-conformity of proposals with approved plans



# How the BLM is Working to Succeed

- Improve the NEPA process
  - Engage a wide range of agencies and governments
  - Consider a wide range of reasonable alternatives
  - Neutral position on BLM preferred alternative until after DEIS public comment period
  - Use dispute resolution processes to reach complementary siting decisions
  - Address issues at the level of the project scope
  - Anticipate NEPA process issues such as purpose and need, connected actions and cumulative effects



# **How the BLM is Working to Succeed**

- Use designated corridors as a principle siting criteria but be flexible to local issues and needs
- Incorporate all needed plan amendments into the project analysis process

