

SECTION 1.0 - INTRODUCTION

Section 1 of the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance Plan (COM Plan) provides an overview of the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) and explains the purpose of the COM Plan, including the relationship of the COM Plan to other documents prepared for the SWIP, and other relevant permits and approvals. In this section the organization of the COM Plan also is presented and each section is briefly outlined.

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

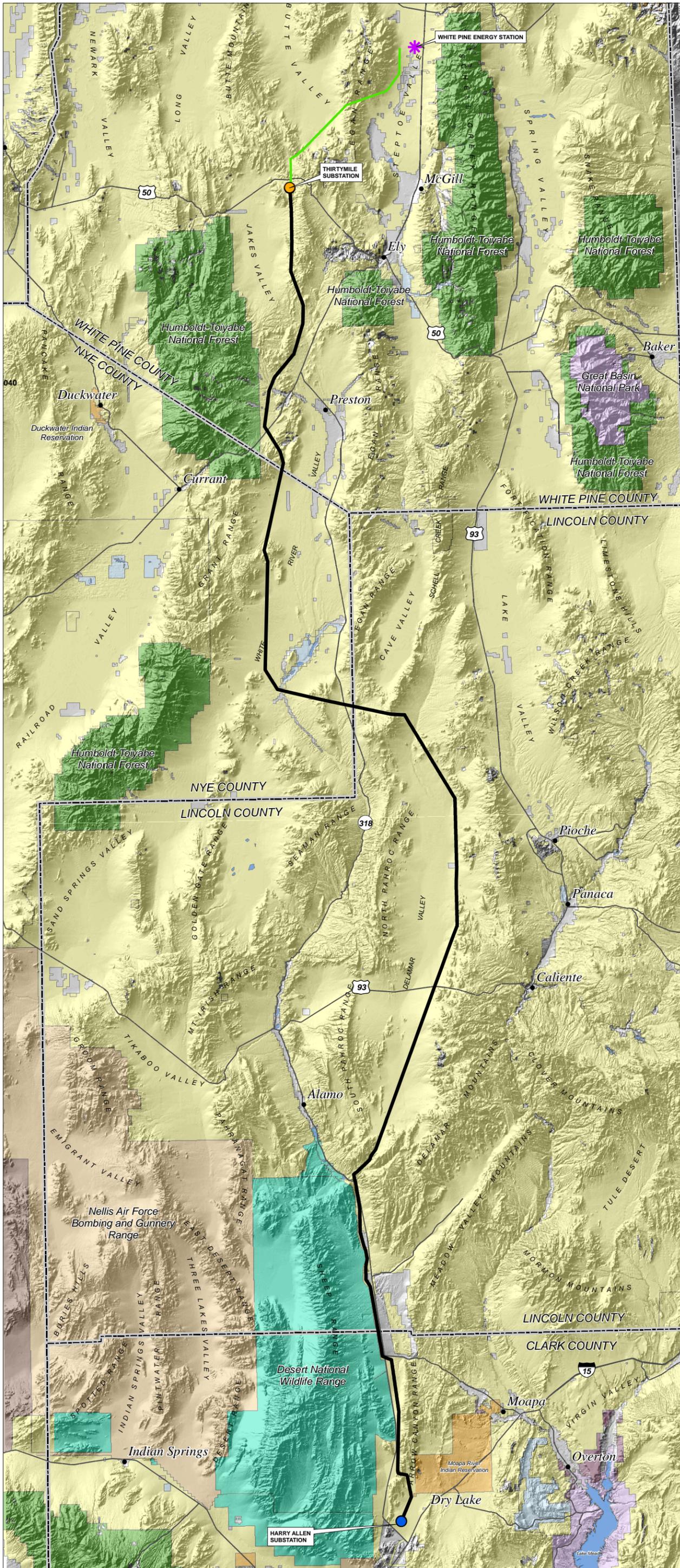
In 1994, a Record of Decision and Approved Land Use Plan Amendment (ROD/ALUPA) were issued by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP) (FR Doc. 94-30678, Filed 12-13-94), following the preparation and review of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The SWIP is a single-circuit, overhead, 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line project. The project proponents were the Idaho Power Company (IPC) and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

In conjunction with the ROD/ALUPA, the BLM issued Right-of-Way Grants (with serial numbers: IDI-26446, NVN-49781, UTU-73363) for the project on December 8, 1994, pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The Right-of-Way Grants were issued to IPC in segments, including a north-south segment of the project (Midpoint-to-Dry Lake), and an east-west segment of the project (Ely-to-Delta) which was immediately assigned to the LADWP and subsequently expired. The term of the Right-of-Way Grant for the Midpoint-to-Dry Lake segment was extended by the BLM in December 1999, and again in August 2004.

The final permitting and construction of the SWIP was not undertaken by IPC. In 2005, IPC entered into an exclusive arrangement with White Pine Energy Associates, LLC (WPEA), to complete the permitting, development, engineering, and construction of the SWIP, and authorized the BLM to work directly with WPEA toward this end. WPEA subsequently assigned its rights to its affiliate, Great Basin Transmission, LLC (Great Basin, or Project Proponent). In May 2008, BLM approved assignments from IPC to Great Basin for portions of the SWIP Right-of-Way Grant now identified as NVN-85210 and NVN-85211. In August 2008, BLM issued an amendment to Right-of-Way Grant NVN-85210 to incorporate minor modifications that were addressed in an Environmental Assessment (serial number 040-07-048).

The scope of this COM Plan includes the construction, operation, and maintenance of the facilities to be constructed within Right-of-Way Grants NVN-85210 and NVN-85211. The transmission line facilities will consist of self-supporting, steel-lattice, and steel-pole H-frame structures, placed approximately 1,200 to 1,500 feet apart. For the purposes of this COM Plan, the proposed facilities are described in phases as follows and as illustrated in Figure 1-1:

1. SWIP – Southern Portion - begins at the Harry Allen Substation, located in Dry Lake, Nevada, approximately 20 miles northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada, and traverses approximately 230 miles north through parts of Clark, Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine counties in Nevada, to the proposed Thirtymile Substation located approximately 18



REGIONAL LOCATION



Land Jurisdiction

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- State of Nevada
- Private

Electrical Transmission Facilities

- SWIP - Southern Portion (N-85210)
- SWIP - Central Portion (N-85211)
- Proposed White Pine Energy Station
- Proposed Thirtymile Substation
- Harry Allen Substation

General Reference Features

- County Boundary
- Major Transportation

Sources

BLM - Nevada State Office, Land Ownership 2005
 USGS, 30 meter Digital Elevation Models



SOUTHWEST INTERTIE PROJECT
 500kV Transmission Line
 Southern & Central Portions

Great Basin Transmission, LLC

Project Location

August 2008

Figure 1-1



miles northwest of Ely, Nevada, where it will interconnect with Sierra Pacific Power Company's existing Falcon-to-Gonder 345kV transmission line. In general, this phase corresponds to Right-of-Way Grant NVN-85210.

2. SWIP – Central Portion – begins at the proposed Thirtymile Substation and traverses generally north approximately 34 miles to a point just west of the proposed White Pine Energy Station (WPES) in White Pine County, Nevada. In general, this phase corresponds to Right-of-Way Grant NVN-85211.

Collectively the SWIP – Southern Portion and the SWIP – Central Portion shall be referred to herein as the “projects” or each individually as a “project.”

The remainder of the original SWIP Right-of-Way Grant which is not a part of this COM Plan traverses from the vicinity of the WPES to Idaho Power's Midpoint Substation near Shoshone, Idaho, and is identified as BLM case file NVN-49781. The proposed facilities for this most northern phase of the SWIP will be covered under a separate COM Plan. Together the facilities located within Right-of-Way Grant NVN-85211 and NVN-49781 are generally referred to as the SWIP – Northern Portion or the Thirtymile to Midpoint Project.

Construction of the projects could take up to 48 months to complete and will consist of the following new or expanded facilities:

- 500kV transmission line
- Construction of new or improved roads providing access to transmission structures and ancillary facilities
- Temporary work areas associated with construction activities
- A 500kV switchyard addition to the existing Harry Allen Substation
- A new 345kV/500kV switchyard facility called the Thirtymile Substation

The BLM jurisdictions that are crossed by the projects include the Egan Field Office, Schell Field Office, and Caliente Field Office in the Ely District, and the Las Vegas Field Office in the Southern Nevada District.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE COM PLAN

This COM Plan outlines the stipulations and mitigation measures that must be followed during construction of the projects. The BLM is the lead federal agency for the projects and environmental inspectors and monitors will be employed during construction, as required and stipulated in this COM Plan and by the BLM. The COM Plan also is intended to be used project wide as: (1) a summary of project environmental requirements and protection measures; and (2) a description of the processes and procedures that will be used to ensure compliance with the BLM, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other federal, state, and/or local agencies) as appropriate.

1.2.1 Relationship with Other Environmental Documents

This COM Plan is derived from the SWIP Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) (1992-1993), the ROD and right-of-way grants (1994, and subsequent extensions), discussions with relevant federal and state agencies and relevant previous COM Plans, and the 2008 EA, Decision Record, and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The analyses were conducted through the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process, which identified measures for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of environmental impacts resulting from project implementation. Additions and/or amendments to the appendices are anticipated as a part of detailed design and construction. These additions or amendments will be reviewed and approved by the BLM as necessary.

1.2.2 Authorizations, Permits, Reviews, and Approvals

The project conforms to the BLM's RMPs, MFPs, and Proposed RMPs for the affected area, and to other relevant federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, and plans. Table 1-1 documents the potential federal, state, and local agencies' approvals, reviews, and permitting requirements identified to date for the proposed project.

TABLE 1-1 AUTHORIZATIONS, PERMITS, REVIEWS, AND APPROVALS*		
Action Requiring Permit, Approval, or Review	Permit/Approval	Accepting Authority/Approving Agency
FEDERAL		
Use of land under federal ownership and management	Right-of-way grant	BLM
NEPA compliance to grant right-of-way	EIS, EA	BLM
Grant of Right-of-Way by BLM	Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act	BLM and Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
Grant of Right-of-Way by BLM	Compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act	BLM/USFWS
STATE OF NEVADA		
Construction of utility facilities	Utility Environmental Protection Act – Permit to Construct	Public Utilities Commission of Nevada
Crossing of state highway	Encroachment Permit	Nevada Department of Transportation
Construction of access roads and utility facilities	Surface Area Disturbance Permit	Nevada Department - Bureau of Air Pollution Control
Construction of access roads and utility facilities	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (Storm Water Discharge) Permit	Nevada Bureau of Water Pollution Control
Critically Endangered Plant Species	Incidental Take Permit	Nevada Division of Forestry
Desert Tortoise and Gila Monster Handling Permit/Authorization	Handling Authorization	Nevada Department of Wildlife
CLARK COUNTY		
Construction and Operation	Special Use Permit	Clark County Planning Commission
Construction/Fugitive Dust – PM10	Dust Control Permit	Clark County Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management
NYE COUNTY		
Construction of Utility Facilities	No permit required	Notify county upon construction
LINCOLN COUNTY		
Tower Construction	Construction Permit	Lincoln County Building Official
Construction and Operation	Special Use Permit	Lincoln County Planning Commission

TABLE 1-1 AUTHORIZATIONS, PERMITS, REVIEWS, AND APPROVALS*		
Action Requiring Permit, Approval, or Review	Permit/Approval	Accepting Authority/Approving Agency
WHITE PINE COUNTY		
Construction and Operation	Special Use Permit	White Pine County Commission
MILITARY (NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE)		
Construction	No permit required	Notify control tower during construction activities within Military Operating Areas (MOAs), where cranes and helicopters will be required.
*This table will be revised and updated prior to construction by the Project Proponent and construction contractor (as necessary). Additional permits also may be required to cross other utilities (e.g., natural gas, fuel, communications, and water lines). The owner of the facility or authority responsible for the facility will obtain these permits.		

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE COM PLAN

The COM Plan is organized into two major volumes. Volume I contains Sections 1 through 6 and the appendices. Volume II includes engineering, mitigation and environmental mapping which support information presented in Volume I. Following is an overview of the information contained in these two volumes.

1.3.1 COM Plan Volume I

Volume I of the COM Plan is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of the construction, operation and maintenance requirements for the projects. Volume I provides a general overview of the projects and key elements of the COM Plan (Sections 1-6), and includes detailed information regarding the required mitigation measures, protocols, and procedures for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line and ancillary facilities (Appendices). While Sections 1 through 6 provide general information, the Appendices along with the mapping materials in Volume II are more detailed and have been designed to serve as stand-alone documents that may be readily updated and refined. Following is an outline summary of the information and materials presented in Sections 1 through 6 and the Appendices of the COM Plan.

Sections 1 through 6

Sections 1 through 6 include the following information:

Section 1.0 Introduction – Section 1 introduces the SWIP, discusses the purpose of the COM Plan, explains the Plan’s relationship to other documents, lists required authorizations, permits, and approvals required for construction, and explains the organization of the plan.

Section 2.0 Project Management - Section 2 explains the roles and responsibilities of the project coordination team and discusses project communications and procedures.

Section 3.0 Project Components – Section 3 describes the project components/facilities (structures, foundations, conductors, access roads, etc), right-of-way agreements, and the project’s relationship with other related rights-of-way and utilities.

Section 4.0 Project Construction - Section 4 provides an introduction to the construction plan, including a summary of the activities related to construction, how to address deviations during construction, safety requirements, and fire protection. The construction plan is more fully described in Appendix A.

Section 5.0 Maintenance and Operation of Project - Section 5 provides information related to the maintenance and operation of the SWIP transmission line once construction is complete including public and environmental protection, dust control, and the termination and restoration of the right-of-way.

Section 6.0 Mitigation of Environmental Concerns - Section 6 includes a brief overview and introduction of the key environmental concerns associated with the construction of the SWIP transmission line and relevant mitigation measures to be applied in order to avoid or minimize potential effects.

Appendices

The appendices are organized into six sections (A – F) as presented below:

Appendix A: Construction Considerations –This appendix offers detailed information about the specifics of construction including:

- A1 – Construction Plan and Program
- A2 – Transportation Management Plan
- A3 – Blasting Plan Methodology
- A4 – Flagging, Fencing, and Signage Plan
- A5 – Erosion, Dust Control, and Air Quality Plan
- A6 – Fire Protection Plan
- A7 – Hazardous Materials Management Guidelines
- A8 – Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan Guidelines

Appendix B: Biological Considerations – This appendix includes:

- B1 –Biological Opinion (BO)
- B2 – Biological Protection Plan
- B3 – Noxious Weed Management Plan

Appendix C: Cultural and Paleontological Considerations – This appendix includes:

- C1 – Historic Properties Treatment Plan
- C2 – Paleontologic Resources Literature Review and Treatment Plan

Appendix D: Other Resource Considerations and Mitigation Measures – This appendix includes information and mitigation measures specific to other environmental resource considerations (recreation, visual resources, etc.).

Appendix E: Storm Water Pollution and Prevention Plan Methodology – This appendix outlines the requirements and methodology for the preparation and submittal of a Storm Water Pollution and Prevention Plan that will be completed by the construction contractor in order to meet the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System general permit.

Appendix F: Right-of-Way Preparation, Rehabilitation, and Restoration Plan – Outlines a plan to be applied during the preparation of the right-of-way and during the construction and reclamation phases of the project. This plan also provides guidance for monitoring the success of the reclamation process as appropriate.

1.3.2 COM Plan Volume II

Two sets of maps are included in COM Plan Volume II. These maps contain regional to detailed information, including the identification of key resource areas and site-specific measures and treatments to guide the construction of the transmission line and associated facilities as described below. This information is intended for use by the BLM, Compliance Inspection Contractor (CIC), Project Proponent, and Construction Contractor(s) as described in Section 2 of the COM Plan.

Map Set 1

The maps (7.5' topographic quads, scale of 1"=24,000') in Map Set 1 include panels that illustrate the location of facilities at a large scale for the entire alignment, including the location of tower sites, pulling and tensioning sites, laydown and staging areas, and access routes (including all approved potential ingress and egress points to the right-of-way). General information depicting sensitive biological and cultural resources in context with project facilities is also included for use specifically by the BLM, CIC, and biological and cultural resource monitors. In Map Set 1, Panels 1 to 5 correspond to the SWIP – Central Portion. Panels 5 to 32 correspond to the SWIP – Southern Portion.

Map Set 2

The maps (aerial maps, scale of 1"=200') in Map Set 2 include sheets that show (1) the right-of-way in detail including the specific location of permanent and temporary facilities (structures, pulling and tensioning sites, access roads, etc.), and sensitive environmental resource areas in the immediate vicinity, and (2) key mitigation measures to be implemented during the design, construction, and operation of the transmission line. Each of these detailed panel maps is numbered and indexed on the 1:24,000 scale maps presented in Map Set 1 (described above). In Map Set 2, Sheets 1 to 26 correspond to the SWIP – Central Portion. Sheets 26 to 218 correspond to the SWIP – Southern Portion.