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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

APR 27 2006

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

April 17, 2006

To: Governor's Office, Mike Volesky, State Capitol, Room 204, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:
Director's Office, Legal Unit, Design & Construction, FWP Commissioners,
Lands Section, Parks Division, Fisheries Division, Wildlife Division
MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923
George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed draft Environmental Assessment has been prepared for the proposed Northwestern Energy's Dillon Salmon/Bannack 69 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project. This project proposal will involve the removal of an unused portion of a transmission line and discharge of the associated easement and the addition of a short section of new transmission line and request for a new easement, all on Bannack State Park property.

This EA is available upon request to Jerry Walker at the above address or may be viewed on Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' website: <http://www.fwp.mt.gov>.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks invites you to comment on the attached proposal. The public comment period will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 31, 2006. Comments should be sent to the following:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Bannack SP Transmission Line Project
c/o Jerry Walker
1400 S. 19th Ave.
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or e-mailed to: gwalker@mt.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Flowers". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor

Attachment

**Dillon Salmon/Bannack
69 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project
MEPA/NEPA/HB495
Environmental Assessment Checklist**

April 2006

Submitted By

NorthWestern Energy
40 East Broadway Street
Butte, Montana 59701

Prepared For

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, Montana 59718

Prepared By



901 Technology Boulevard
Bozeman, Montana 59718

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action

The proposed project is classified as development and maintenance, and consists of (1) new construction of approximately 355.2 feet of 69 kV transmission line, and (2) removing approximately 2,240.0 feet of existing 69 kV transmission line. Both project areas are located within Bannack State Park, Montana. Project activities within the new construction portion of the project area will include the installation of a single circuit 69 kV transmission line, four single wood pole structures, and 13 guy wires attached to seven anchors. The proposed new construction and removal project is intended to improve transmission reliability to customers in the local areas and extend the useful life of the power line.

There will be 10 structures removed from the Bannack State Park land. The 10 structures consist of eight single poles and two H-frames, which total 12 wooden poles. One of the structures (a single pole) to be removed is in the vicinity of the Vigilante REA Bannack Substation and the new construction project area; the single pole structure will be replaced with another single pole structure. The replacement of this single-pole structure is included in the total number of poles, guy wires, and anchors to be installed as a result of new construction provided above.

One of the guy wires and one of the anchors listed above is to down guy one static wire of a double static wire configuration on the existing Vigilante REA 69 kV line. This will also be in the vicinity of the Vigilante REA Bannack Substation and within Bannack State Park land.

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action

The agency authority for the proposed action is found in MCA 87-1-209 (4), "When necessary and advisable for the management and use of department property, the director is authorized to grant or acquire from willing sellers right-of-way easements for purposes of utilities, roads, drainage facilities, ditches for water conveyance, and pipelines if the full market value of the interest is less than \$20,000."

3. Name of Project

Dillon Salmon/Bannack 69 kV Transmission Line Rebuild

4. Name, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor

NorthWestern Energy
Contact Person: Rick Walsh, Environmental Permitting Manager
40 East Broadway Street
Butte, Montana 59701
(406) 497-2535

5. If applicable:

Estimated construction/commencement date: June 1, 2006

Estimated completion date: December 31, 2006

Current status of project design (% complete): 100%

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township).

The impacted portions of Bannack State Park are located in the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 1, Township 8 South, Range 12 West (the property is also described as Government Lot 2); and the east half of the southwest quarter of Section 5 and the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 8, Township 8 South, Range 11 West, Beaverhead County, Montana.

7. Project size: Estimate the numbers of acres that would be directly affected that are currently

(a) Developed:

Residential..... ___ acres

Industrial..... ___ acres

(b) **Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation** 2.9 acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas ___ acres

(d) Floodplain ___ acres

(e) Productive:

irrigated cropland ___ acres

dry cropland..... ___ acres

forestry..... ___ acres

rangeland ___ acres

other..... ___ acres

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

See the attached maps provided as Figures 1, 2, and 3, which are located between the text and the appendices section of this document.

9. Listing of any other Local, State, or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits		
Agency Name: NPS/FWP	Permit: LWCFA 6f Land Exchange	Date Filed: To be acquired

(b) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities	
Agency Name: State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Type of Responsibility: Cultural preservation

10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action.

The proposed project consists of (1) constructing approximately 355.2 feet of new 69 kV transmission line, and (2) removing approximately 2,240.0 feet of existing 69 kV transmission line. Both project areas are located within Bannack State Park, Montana. The new construction and removal project is intended to improve transmission reliability to customers in the local areas and extend the useful life of the power line. NorthWestern Energy is requesting an easement for the new construction portion (355.2 feet) of this project (identified in Figure 2), and is discharging an existing easement for the removal portion (2,240.0 feet) of the project (identified in Figure 3).

For the new construction portion of the project, construction activities will include the installation of a single circuit 69 kV transmission line, four single wood pole structures, and 13 guy wires attached to seven anchors. The establishment of each single pole would temporarily disturb approximately a 10 foot by 10 foot area. It is expected that no blade work will be required and that rubber tired vehicles will be used for construction activities.

For the removal portion of the project, the transmission line and associated guy wires and anchors will be removed, and the existing wood poles will be cut-off at the base (ground surface level). The portions of the wood poles located below the ground surface will be left in the ground to naturally decompose on site, and the entire lengths of the felled poles will be removed from the project area and disposed of properly. It is anticipated that no blade work will be required and that rubber tired vehicles will be used for removal of the line and the poles.

Completion of the HB495 Project Qualification Checklist verified that HB495 rules apply to this proposed project, warranting completion of this MEPA/NEPA/HB495 Checklist document. Only Item H. "*Any new above ground utility lines?*" on the Project Qualification Checklist was checked as being applicable to the proposed project. The Project Qualification Checklist is provided as Appendix A.

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (Parks Division)
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Montana Natural Heritage Program (Natural Resources Information System)
 Montana State Historic Preservation Office
 Travel Montana – Department of Commerce

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		yes	1b.
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other		X				

Comments:

1a. The proposed transmission line construction and removal work is primarily surface disruption and is not anticipated to alter geologic substructure. The holes that need to be excavated for installation of the poles will be characterized by small diameters that also will not alter geologic substructure. In the removal portion of the project area, wood poles will be cut-off at ground level; therefore, removal activities will not alter geologic substructure.

1b. Activities associated with the construction and removal of the transmission line will temporarily disrupt and compact soils, temporarily reducing productivity and fertility in small areas immediately adjacent to the pole structures and guy wire anchors. Heavy equipment utilized for construction activities is anticipated to temporarily disturb soil surfaces as well. Following

construction activities, areas of disturbed soil will be seeded with a native grass mixture appropriate for the region and existing plant community.

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? [also see 13 (c)]			X		X	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		X	See comment 2a.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. Any discharge that will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (also see 2a)		X				
f. Other		X				

Comments:

2a. Generation of minor and temporary dust will occur during construction activities associated with the construction and removal of the transmission line. Dust is the primary air pollutant that will be created only during the construction phase of this project and should have no effect on odors, temperature patterns, vegetation, nor will it be created in volumes significant enough to conflict with state or federal air quality regulations.

The operation of various vehicles and heavy machinery during the construction phase of this project has the potential to create temporary petroleum-based exhaust in the immediate vicinity of the project areas. The presence of this exhaust may be perceived as the emission of air pollutants and the creation of an objectionable odor. However, the vehicle/machinery exhaust will be created only during the construction phase, will be temporary in nature, is anticipated to dissipate rapidly, and will not contribute to a deterioration of ambient air quality.

3. WATER	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		X	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. Effects to a designated floodplain?		X				
m. Any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations?		X				
n. Other:		X				

Comments:

3b. The potential exists for a minor increase in the rate and amount of surface runoff. The areas that will be disturbed during construction activities will temporarily harbor less vegetative cover to provide energy dissipation of surface water runoff. However, natural revegetation will occur rapidly, and the undisturbed vegetation that surrounds each of the disturbed areas will adequately dissipate any increase in surface runoff caused by construction/disturbance activities until natural revegetation is complete.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				4b.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?			X		Yes	4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4e.
f. Effects to wetlands or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Comments:

4a. The on-site vegetation community associated with the new construction portion of the project is classified as a typical sagebrush steppe, consisting primarily of sagebrush and perennial grasses; the vegetation community associated with the removal portion of the project is characterized as a sparsely-vegetated rocky slope, consisting primarily of bunchgrasses, limber pine, juniper, and mountain mahogany. Construction activities for the construction and removal of the transmission line will result in a minor temporary decrease in plant species abundance. The minor change in abundance is not expected to decrease the productivity or diversity of plant species. Due to the limited nature of the disturbance, it is anticipated that revegetation of the disturbed ground will occur rapidly. Consequently, the structure, function, and overall sustainability of the plant community are not anticipated to be affected. As previously stated in comment 1b, areas of disturbed soil will be seeded with a native grass mixture appropriate for the region and existing plant community.

4b. No, the dynamics of the plant community are not expected to be altered.

4c. A database search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) on January 11 and 20, 2006 identified seven plant species of concern in the general vicinity of the Bannack State Park project areas: taper-tip desert-parsley (*Lomatium attenuatum*), beautiful bladderpod (*Lesquerella pulchella*), chicken sage (*Sphaeromeria argentea*), slender thelypody (*Thelypodium sagittatum* ssp. *sagittatum*), hoary phacelia (*Phacelia incana*), bitterroot milkvetch (*Astragalus scaphoides*), and sword townsendia (*Townsendia spathulata*). These "species of concern" include taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors.

Table 1 (below) provides information associated with these plant species of concern and the project areas. Two of the species, beautiful bladderpod and sword townsendia, have been determined to likely occur in the project area based on habitat specifications and previous known occurrences. The remainder of the species are not likely to occur at the project sites because either habitat specifications do not exist or there have been no known occurrences in the project areas.

As previously stated in comment 4a, impacts to vegetation from project activities are expected to be minor and largely insignificant. Although two plant species of concern are likely to occur in the removal portion of this project, significant impacts to either species are not anticipated. If construction activities do result in the take of individuals of these two species, the anticipated minor extent of disturbance should not have an effect on the long-term health and viability of the species' populations within the project areas.

Table 1. MNHP Listed Plant Species and Expected Occurrence

Common Name	Scientific Name	Likely to Occur in Project Area	Habitat Specifications	Phenology
Taper-tip Desert Parsely	<i>Lomatium attenuatum</i>	NO; habitat specifications exist at the removal portion of the project area, however no known occurrences of the species occur within the project area.	Scree or dry, gravelly soils of south- or west-facing slopes in mountains, canyons, and foothills. Usually found in limestone-derived soils, also in igneous rock.	Flowers in June and fruits mature in July.
Beautiful Bladderpod	<i>Lesquerella pulchella</i>	YES; habitat specifications exist and species is known to occur near the removal portion of the project area.	Gravelly, sparsely vegetated foothill slopes ranging in elevation in calcareous soils, also in limestone soils.	Flowers in June at lower elevations and from mid-July through early August at higher elevations.

Table 1 (continued). MNHP Listed Plant Species and Expected Occurrence

Common Name	Scientific Name	Likely to Occur in Project Area	Habitat Specifications	Phenology
Chicken Sage	<i>Sphaeromeria argentea</i>	NO; habitat specifications for this species exist at the removal portion of the project area site, however there are no known occurrences of this species within the project areas.	Grows in sagebrush steppe in the valley and foothill zones in shallow, limestone-derived soils.	Flowers in June and early July.
Slender Thelypody	<i>Thelypodium sagittatum ssp. sagittatum</i>	NO; habitat specifications exist within the project areas, however there are no known occurrences of this species in the project areas.	Montane zones in moist alkaline meadows with species including greasewood or shrubby cinquefoil.	Flowers and fruits from the end of May through mid-July.
Hoary Phacelia	<i>Phacelia incana</i>	NO; habitat specifications for this species exist at the removal portion of the project area, however there are no known occurrences of this species within the project areas.	Steep talus slopes in foothills vegetated with mountain mahogany and various grasses. Found in limestone-derived, stony soils.	Flowers in June through July and fruits in July.
Bitterroot Milkvetch	<i>Astragalus scaphoides</i>	NO; habitat specifications for this species exist at the removal portion of the project area, however there are no known occurrences of this species within the project areas.	Sagebrush grassland with cover of sagebrush and bare ground, silty limestone-derived soils, along drainages, frequently south-facing slopes.	Flowers in late May-early June, with fruit maturing in July.

Table 1 (continued). MNHP Listed Plant Species and Expected Occurrence

Common Name	Scientific Name	Likely to Occur in Project Area	Habitat Specifications	Phenology
Sword Townsendia	<i>Townsendia spathulata</i>	YES; habitat specifications for this species exist in the removal portion of the project area and the species is known to occur in the vicinity of the project area.	Open, rocky, limestone-derived soils on slopes in valley and foothill zones.	Flowers in early May to late June.

Habitat and phenology information was paraphrased from the MNHP website for species information. Species occurrence likelihood was determined following a review of the species of concern map provided by MNHP (this map available from Gerald Walker, FWP, #406-994-3552).

4e. Areas that are disturbed by construction activities can be susceptible to the establishment and spread of noxious weeds. In addition, vehicle and heavy machinery traffic has the potential to transport weed seeds into previously uninfested areas. NorthWestern Energy will coordinate with FWP and the Beaverhead County Weed Supervisor to determine the requirements for completion and submittal of a Weed Management Plan in association with this proposed project. Following project completion, noxious weeds would be monitored and controlled by FWP in accordance with methods outlined in the Region Three Weed Management Plan.

4f. As a result of the site investigation, it was determined that no wetlands occur within the new construction project area. In the removal portion of the project area, no placement of fill will occur in wetlands. Based on correspondence with the NRCS, soil unit mapping (and data entry) within Bannack State Park is incomplete as of the time this document was submitted to FWP. Therefore, the NRCS has stated that it is not possible to determine if any portion(s) of the project areas have been classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance (Appendix B).

5. FISH/WILDLIFE	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X		Yes	5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X		Yes	5c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				5e.

5. FISH/WILDLIFE (continued)	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?			X			5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		Yes	5g.
h. Adverse effects to threatened/endangered species or their habitat?		X				5h.
i. Introduction or exportation of any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location?		X				
j. Other:		X				

Comments:

5a. No fish habitat occurs within the project areas. Therefore, there will be no deterioration of critical fish habitat.

Wildlife habitat exists within the project areas and is utilized by a variety of animal species. Habitat within the construction portion of the project area is not expected to be impacted with the installation of the transmission line and four wood pole structures because a transmission line currently exists in the area and new construction accounts for a small cumulative quantity of disturbed area. The new construction portion of the project area will not disrupt habitat connectivity for land-dwelling animal species because of the elevated and landscape-porous characteristics of the transmission line structure. The new construction is also not expected to have a negative effect on bird species (i.e., habitat loss and bird/transmission line collisions) because a transmission line currently exists in the project area and it is assumed that bird species are accustomed to the presence of an elevated structure in the area. Furthermore, the new construction transmission line structures will also meet raptor-proof standards.

In the portion of the project area where the removal of transmission line will occur, a positive effect on wildlife habitat is anticipated because the transmission line and associated pole structures will be removed at the ground surface level. Although the negative impact from the existing transmission line is considered minimal, its removal will eliminate any existing effects.

5b. Proposed construction activities will temporarily increase the level of human activity within the project areas. However, long-term impacts to wildlife game species (i.e., animals and birds) are not anticipated because the project will consist of constructing a small segment transmission line in an area adjacent to existing transmission line, and removing another portion of transmission

line. These project components will occur without any long-term changes in human activity or traffic volume, as well as without ongoing disturbance or habitat disruption.

Minor short-term impacts to wildlife (primarily land-dwelling species) are expected to occur. These impacts will likely consist of the temporary displacement of some animals, particularly slow moving or limited mobility species, and possibly ground-nesting bird species as well. However, available habitat that is adjacent to the proposed project area is suitable to absorb these displaced species. The affected animals would likely move a short distance from project construction activities and quickly resume use of the project areas following the completion of construction. Therefore, no significant changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species are anticipated to occur.

- 5c. Refer to comment 5b above. The analysis of impacts to the diversity and abundance of game animal and bird species is the same as for nongame species. Therefore, no significant changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame animals or bird species are anticipated to occur.
- 5e. As previously stated in comment 5a above, habitat connectivity for land-dwelling animal species is not expected to be negatively impacted because of the elevated and landscape-porous characteristics of the transmission line structure. Therefore, the proposed project will not result in the creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals.
- 5f. A database search by MNHP on January 11 and 20, 2006 identified the following eight Montana animal species of concern: westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), Great Basin pocket mouse (*Perognathus parvus*), black-tailed jack rabbit (*Lepus californicus*), Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), and greater sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). These "species of concern" include taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors.

Table 2 provides information associated with these animal species of concern and the project areas. All of the species, excluding the westslope cutthroat trout, have been determined to likely occur in the project area based on habitat specifications and previous known occurrences. The westslope cutthroat trout does not occur within the project areas due to the absence of streams and aquatic habitat. As previously stated in comment 5b, impacts to animal and bird species (including species of concern) from project activities are expected to be insignificant. Although seven animal species of concern are likely to occur in the project areas, significant impacts to these species are not anticipated. Short-term impacts to wildlife are expected to occur and will likely consist of the temporary displacement of some animals. However, available habitat that is adjacent to the proposed project area is suitable to absorb these displaced species and the affected animals would likely move a short distance from project construction activities and quickly resume use of the project areas following the completion of construction.

Suitable nesting habitat for the ferruginous hawk exists in the transmission removal portion of the project area. Proposed activities have the potential to adversely affect nesting activities of the ferruginous hawk in this area. Therefore, construction activities in only the transmission line removal portion of the project area will be prohibited from April 1 through May 31 to ensure the avoidance of impacts to ferruginous hawk nesting unless an inspection of the site by FWP confirms there are no ferruginous hawks within or adjacent to the project site during this period.

Approval to proceed with construction will be issued by the Dillon FWP Wildlife Biologist, Craig Fager.

The project areas likely provide year-round habitat for greater sage grouse. Based on previous research in the vicinity of the project areas, an historic grouse lek exists north and outside of the new construction project area. However, lek monitoring efforts during the previous three years have failed to confirm use of the historic lek. In addition, a greater sage grouse lek has been previously identified in Section 25, Township 7 South, Range 12 West, over 1 mile north of the new construction portion of the project. If project construction activities occur between March and May, visual monitoring of the project areas by FWP prior to commencement of construction activities will occur for identification of potential lek sites.

Based on the limitation of minor potential impacts occurring only during construction activities, and the conservation measures to be implemented for avoidance of impacts to potential lek activities, no significant adverse effects on animal species of concern are anticipated to occur from proposed project activities.

Table 2. MNHP Listed Wildlife Species and Expected Occurrence

Common Name	Scientific Name	Likely to Occur in Project Area	Habitat Specifications	Analysis of Occurrence/Effects of Project
Westslope Cutthroat Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi</i>	NO	Cool streams in western Montana.	No streams or drainages exist in the project areas.
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	YES	Mixed grass prairie, shrub-grasslands, grass-sagebrush complex and sagebrush steppe. Nests in grass-sagebrush complexes on mid-elevation slopes.	Suitable nesting habitat located at the removal portion of the project site; nesting period from April through May.
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	YES	Caves and abandoned mine shafts for maternity roosts and hibernacula, also structures for roosts; preferred habitat in the vicinity of roosts include Douglas fir and lodgepole pine forests, ponderosa pine woodlands, juniper-sagebrush scrub and cottonwood bottomlands.	No roosting or hibernacula habitat will be affected by the project; minor disturbance of vegetation will not have a significant effect on insect populations for foraging.

Table 2 (continued). MNHP Listed Wildlife Species and Expected Occurrence

Common Name	Scientific Name	Likely to Occur in Project Area	Habitat Specifications	Analysis of Occurrence/Effects of Project
Pygmy Rabbit	<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>	YES	Shrub-grasslands on alluvial fans, floodplains, plateaus, high mountain valleys, and mountain slopes where suitable sagebrush cover and shallow soils for burrowing exist.	Temporary displacement of individuals may occur.
Great Basin Pocket Mouse	<i>Perognathus parvus</i>	YES	Sparsely vegetated grassland-shrubland consisting of pine woodland, juniper-sagebrush scablands, short-grass steppes, and shrubland with sagebrush, bitterbrush, greasewood, and rabbitbrush; sandy soils are preferred.	Temporary displacement of individuals may occur.
Black-tailed Jack Rabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>	YES	Open fields, plains, and deserts with scattered shrubs or cacti. Prefers sagebrush desert.	Temporary displacement of individuals may occur.
Brewer's Sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>	YES	Sagebrush areas. Nest in sagebrush.	No known nesting sites within the project area; incidental occurrence in the project area possible; temporary displacement of individuals may occur.
Greater Sage Grouse	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	YES	Sagebrush dominated areas adjacent to agricultural fields or greasewood bottoms	If project construction activities occur between March and May, visual monitoring of the project area is required for identification of potential lek sites.

Habitat information was paraphrased from the MNHP website for species information. Species occurrence likelihood was determined following a review of the species of concern map provided by MNHP (this map available from Gerald Walker, FWP, #406-994-3552).

5g. Proposed construction activities have the potential to create temporary conditions that could stress wildlife populations within or adjacent to the project areas. However, these conditions would only be present during the construction phase (i.e., new construction and removal) of this project. As stated previously in comment 5b, short-term impacts to wildlife will likely consist of the temporary displacement of some animals, particularly slow moving or limited mobility species, and possibly ground-nesting bird species as well. However, available habitat adjacent to the project areas is suitable to absorb these displaced species and the affected animals would likely move a short distance from project construction activities and quickly resume use of the project areas following the completion of construction. Construction activities will not affect long-term wildlife population abundance.

5h. Analyses of T&E species' likely occurrence within the project areas and potential effects from construction activities have been completed for this document. In their response to a request for information, USFWS stated that "The Service does not have any site-specific information on other species of fish or wildlife that may occur in the proposed project area and can only provide a list of species by county." The USFWS information request and response letters are included in Appendix B.

The following six species are federally-listed T&E species for Beaverhead County, in which the project areas are located: Montana arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), grizzly bear (*Ursos arctos horribilis*), Ute ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), and Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). Table 3 (below) provides information associated with these T&E species and the project areas. Based on preliminary analysis of habitat specifications, none of the listed species are likely to occur in the project areas. Habitat specifications are not represented in the project areas for the Montana arctic grayling, Ute ladies' tresses, or Canada lynx. For the bald eagle, grizzly bear, and gray wolf, abundant food sources are not available in the project areas, but incidental occurrences of these species within the project areas are possible. Potential negative effects on T&E species from project implementation would consist of project area avoidance during construction activities. Following completion of transmission line construction and removal activities, it is anticipated that T&E species incidental occurrences within the project areas would resume to pre-construction potential. It is anticipated that transmission line removal activities will have a beneficial effect on T&E species in the removal portion of the project area. Complete removal of the existing transmission line will eliminate any potential of a negative effect from the transmission line structure on T&E species that may occur in the project area.

Table 3. Beaverhead County Listed T&E Species and Expected Occurrence

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Likely to Occur in Project Area	Habitat Specifications Analysis
Montana Arctic Grayling	<i>Thymallus arcticus</i>	Candidate	NO	No streams or drainages within the project areas.
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Listed Threatened	NO	No major waterbodies or abundant food source; incidental occurrence possible.
Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursos arctos horribilis</i>	Listed Threatened	NO	Abundant food source not available in project areas; incidental occurrence possible.
Ute Ladies' Tresses	<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Listed Threatened	NO	No meander wetlands or swales exist within the project areas. Predominantly limestone-derived soils in project areas.
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	Experimental non-essential population	NO	Abundant food source not available in project areas; incidental occurrence possible.
Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	Listed Threatened	NO	No connective forested habitat within project areas.

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		X	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				6c.
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				6d.
e. Other:		X				

Comments:

6a. Minor and temporary noise increases will occur with the use of equipment and heavy machinery during the construction and removal phases of this project. The increased noise levels will not be severe and will terminate with completion of construction activities.

6c. In the construction portion of the project area, the development of a new transmission line segment will occur. This 355.2-foot-long new line segment will exhibit similar electromagnetic effects that occur throughout the existing transmission line. Because the new construction will take place in an area adjacent to the existing line, the minor addition of electromagnetic effects will not be detrimental to human health or property. In the removal portion of the project area, any electromagnetic effects associated with the existing line will be eliminated following the removal of the 2,240-foot-long existing 69 kV line.

6d. As stated in comment 6c, the minor addition of electromagnetic effects of the transmission line is not expected to affect the surrounding property. The existing transmission line's effect on radio or television reception is not expected to be modified by the new construction portion of this project. In the removal portion of the project area, any interference with radio or television reception associated with the existing line will be eliminated following the removal of the line.

7. LAND USE	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?			X		X	7a.
b. A conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				7b.
c. A conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on, or relocation of, residences?		X				
e. Compliance with existing land policies for land use, transportation, and open space?		X				See comment 7b.
f. Increased traffic hazards, traffic volume, or speed limits or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Comments:

7a. Creation of the new 355.2-foot-long easement corridor associated with the new construction portion of the project will diminish the area and subsequent appraisal value of designated State Park land, and therefore alter the profitability of the existing land use. However, this impact will be mitigated through implementation of an Easement addition/Easement discharge. The transmission line removal portion of the project area will result in the discharge of a 2,240-foot-long easement into park land jurisdiction; the 6f land exchange will result in a net gain of State Park land.

7b. Bannack State Park is valued for its recreational, historical, aesthetic, and educational opportunities and benefits. Approval of this proposed project would allow for construction activities to occur within State Park lands. Required documentation will be completed for the pending approval of project implementation, including the completion of the MEPA/HB495 Tourism Report and a 6f Land Exchange. A conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance is not anticipated to result from project implementation.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a.
b. Effects on existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Disturbance to any sites with known or potential deposits of hazardous materials?		X				
e. The use of any chemical toxicants?			X		Yes	See comment 8a.
f. Other:		X				

Comments:

8a. The FWP Region Three Weed Management Plan advocates and Bannack State Park utilizes chemical, mechanical, and biological methods to combat invasive weed species. The implementation of a weed management plan for the project areas will include the utilization of herbicides. Although the proposed project areas do not harbor an abundance of weed species, herbicides will be used to control weeds that may become established following ground disturbance or weed seed transport associated with construction activities. All necessary chemical applications will be conducted by a licensed weed applicator according to established County weed control guidelines. No other uses of hazardous substances are anticipated during construction or maintenance of the transmission line.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X		N/A	9c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Comments:

9c. Construction activities associated with the new construction and removal of the transmission line are likely to result in a temporary increase in the number of individuals seeking local services. Business establishments such as restaurants and motels within a reasonable distance from the project areas may experience elevated customer numbers throughout the duration of the proposed project; however, these increases are expected to be insignificant.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. An effect upon or a result in need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If so, specify.		X				
b. Effects on the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. A need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. Other.		X				
Additional information requested:						
f. Define projected revenue sources.	See comment 10f. below					
g. Define projected maintenance costs.	See comment 10g. below					

Comments:

10f. The revenue source for the proposed project will be generated entirely from NorthWestern Energy, a private corporation.

10g. Projected maintenance costs for the new construction portion of the project are unknown due to the unpredictability of events that warrant transmission line maintenance operations. However, future required maintenance costs will be the responsibility of NorthWestern Energy.

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				11c.
d. Adverse effects to any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Comments:

- 11a. The new construction portion of the project area will create approximately 355.2 feet of new transmission line and the associated pole structures, guy wires, and anchors. Because of the close proximity of the existing transmission line, the new construction is not expected to significantly alter the scenic vista from its existing characteristic. The removal portion of the project will result in the removal of 2,240 feet of existing transmission line and associated poles, guy wires, and anchors, which will have a positive effect on the scenic vista of the area.
- 11c. The proposed project is not anticipated to result in the alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings within or adjacent to the project areas. Refer to the MEPA/HB495 Tourism Report provided as Appendix C.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical changes that would affect unique cultural values?		X				See comment 12a.
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				See comment 12a.
d. Adverse effects to historic or cultural resources?		X				See comment 12a.
e. Other:		X				

Comments:

12a. Consultation with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been completed regarding potential impacts to cultural resources from proposed project activities. SHPO has concluded that there will be no effect on cultural resources within the construction or removal portions of the project corridor, including Bannack State Park lands. In a letter dated October 4, 2005 from Josef Warhank (SHPO) to Tim Bozorth (BLM Dillon Field Office), SHPO indicates that site eligibility determinations were left unresolved, however proposed project activities are cleared for Section 106 due to avoidance. A copy of this October 4, 2005 correspondence letter is provided in Appendix D.

In addition to the October 4, 2005 SHPO letter, five correspondence letters regarding potential impacts to cultural resources from proposed project activities are also provided in Appendix D. These additional letters are being included with this document to provide further clarification and documentation of the Section 106 determination of effect for the proposed project.

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				13a.
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. Have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy?		X				
Additional information requested:						
g. List any federal or state permits required.	Refer to Part I, #9 of this document.					

Comments:

13a. Based on the existing transmission line in the project area, the minor extent of anticipated disturbance, and the complete removal of a transmission line segment, this project will neither result in significant individual adverse impacts nor cumulative adverse impacts.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONTINUED

2. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action Alternative: This alternative would consist of not implementing the project. Potential adverse impacts associated with this alternative include jeopardizing transmission reliability, long-term sustainability, and preventing cooperative agreements between agencies and private corporations that will benefit the efficiency and affordability of electrical service. The recognized need for reliable electrical service in the area resulted in this alternative being eliminated from consideration.

Reconstruction Alternative: This alternative would consist of reconstructing the existing transmission line in a new location. Following analysis of this alternative, NorthWestern Energy determined that its implementation would require the construction of numerous new access roads for the transmission line reconstruction. Potential adverse impacts from construction of the new access roads were predominantly attributed to the excessive ground disturbance that would be required to construct the access roads. This substantive level of ground disturbance would have the potential to adversely affect, among other things, water resources, vegetation, soils, wildlife, fisheries, and cultural resources. This alternative was ultimately rejected because the risk of creating significant adverse impacts to the local environment dictated that another feasible alternative be implemented that could achieve the same result without a similar level of impact potential.

Realignment Alternative: This alternative would consist of a slight modification to the existing proposed new construction as described in the preferred alternative. The transmission line configuration in this alternative would require an additional 125-foot intertie segment between the existing Vigilante REA 69kV line and the proposed NorthWestern Energy 69kV line. This alternative was initially designed to accommodate a proposed in-line metering station to be administered by Vigilante REA. However, project modifications allowed relocation of the metering station off site; therefore, the need for the additional 125-foot segment of transmission line was eliminated. Rejecting this alternative resulted in the reduction of newly acquired right-of-way within State Park land and the reduction of in-line structures (i.e., wooden poles, guy wires, and anchors) associated with the additional 125-foot intertie segment.

Preferred Alternative: This alternative would consist of the proposed action description as previously detailed in this document. This proposed action would include the construction of 355.2 feet of single circuit 69 kV transmission line, four single wooden pole structures, 13 guy wires, and seven anchors. The preferred alternative would also include the removal of 2,240.0 feet of existing 69 kV transmission line and the subsequent removal of 10 transmission line structures. The 12 wooden poles comprising the 10 structures would be cut-off at the soil surface level and left on site to decompose. Based on the minimal length of transmission line new construction and limited associated infrastructure, the elimination for need of new access roads, the beneficial impacts resulting from the removal of 2,240.0 feet of existing transmission line, and the overall low risk for potential impacts associated with this project, the proposed action described in this document is being presented as the preferred alternative.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Due to the minor extent of anticipated disturbance and associated adverse impacts resulting from project implementation, only the following mitigation measures are being proposed to ensure avoidance of adverse impacts on resources within the project areas:

- Following construction activities, areas of disturbed soil will be seeded with a native grass mixture appropriate for the region and existing plant community.
- Construction activities in only the transmission line removal portion of the project area will be prohibited from April 1 through May 31 to ensure the avoidance of impacts to ferruginous hawk nesting unless an inspection of the site by FWP confirms there are no ferruginous hawks within or adjacent to the project site during this period.
- Construction activities in both the transmission line construction and removal project areas will be prohibited between March 25 and May 7, to avoid potential impacts with sage grouse lek activities unless an inspection of the site by FWP confirms there are no sage grouse leks within or adjacent to the project site during this period.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Narrative evaluation and comment has been provided in Part II following each of the impact category checklist boxes.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

No, an EIS is not required for this proposed project. Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA and NEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action and the potential minor impacts that were identified can be mitigated effectively. Therefore, an EIS is unnecessary and the completion of an EA checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for this project.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

An article describing the proposed project will be published in spring 2006 in the Bannack Association newsletter. The newsletter is typically distributed by mail to the approximately 500 Association members, all of whom have an interest in the park and its activities. No negative comments are anticipated to be received regarding this transmission line construction and removal project.

Copies of this EA will be distributed to those individuals, agencies, and entities on the Region Three EA standard distribution list, as well as park neighbors.

The public will also be notified in the following manners to comment on this EA Checklist document:

- Two public notices in each of these newspapers: *Dillon Tribune*, *Montana Standard* (Butte), and the *Helena Independent Record*
- Public notice on the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.

This is an appropriate level of public notice and participation for a project of this scope. This project is anticipated to have few minor impacts, which can be mitigated. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this project will have little or no opposition.

3. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days following the publication of the legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until May 31, 2006 and can be mailed to the address below:

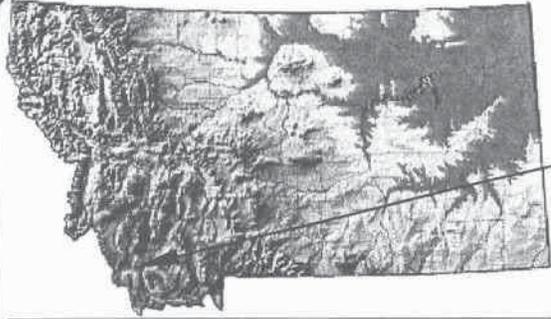
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region Three
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or e-mailed to: gwalker@mt.gov

4. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

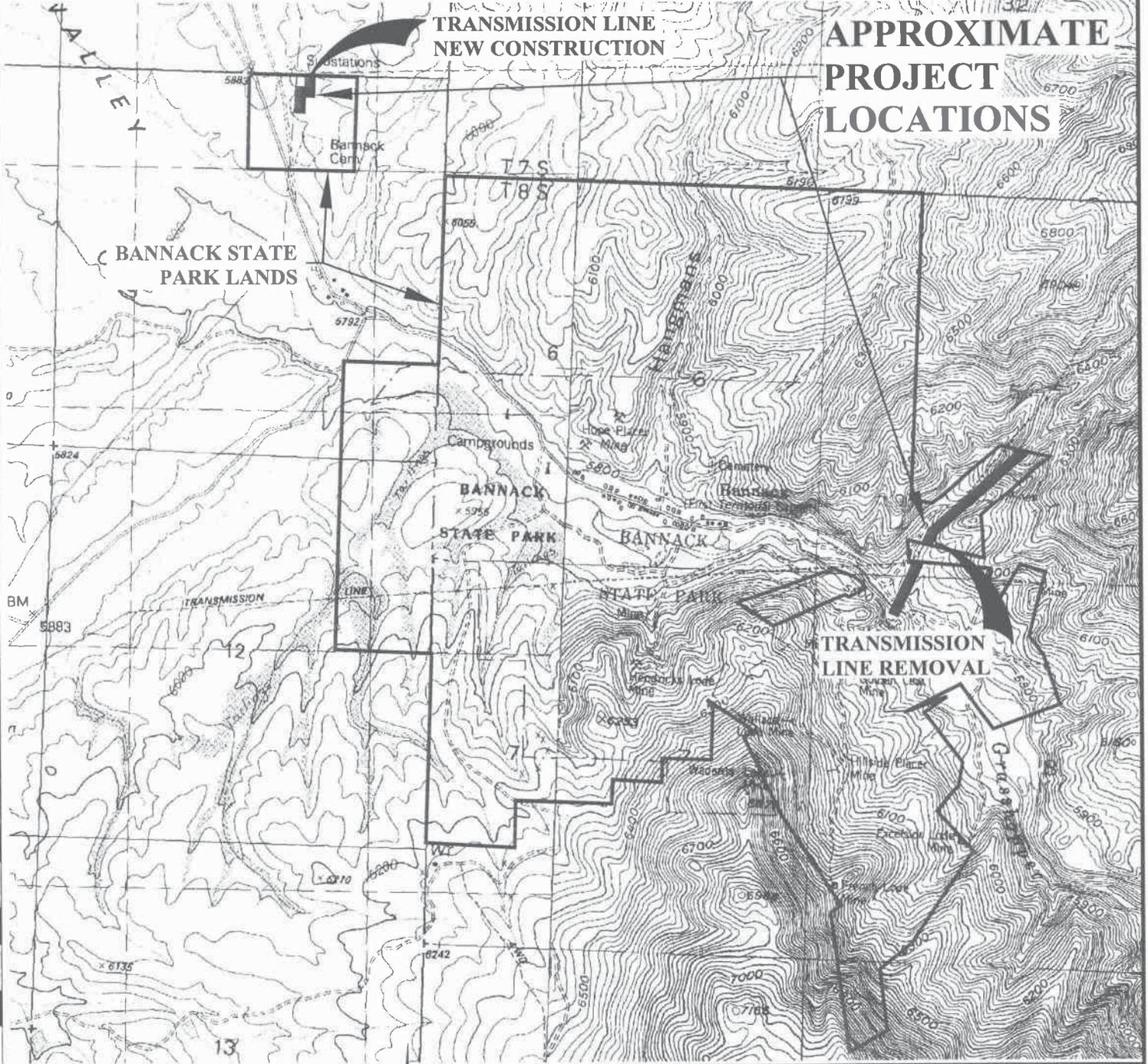
Steve M. Laufenberg
Environmental Scientist
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
901 Technology Blvd.
P.O. Box 1113
Bozeman, MT. 59771
(406) 587-0721

Paul W. McGuire
Senior Environmental Scientist
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
901 Technology Blvd.
P.O. Box 1113
Bozeman, MT. 59771
(406) 587-0721



NW1/4NE1/4 Section 1, T8S, R12W and the E1/2SW1/4 Section 5 and the N1/2NW1/4 Section 8, T8S, R11W, P.M.M., Beaverhead County, Montana

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP (1988 AND 1991)



APPROXIMATE PROJECT LOCATIONS

TRANSMISSION LINE REMOVAL

GRAPHIC SCALE



(IN FEET)

1 inch = 2000ft.

MORRISON MAIERLE, Inc.
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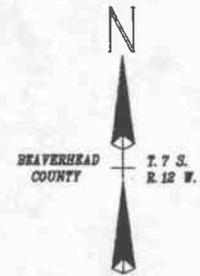
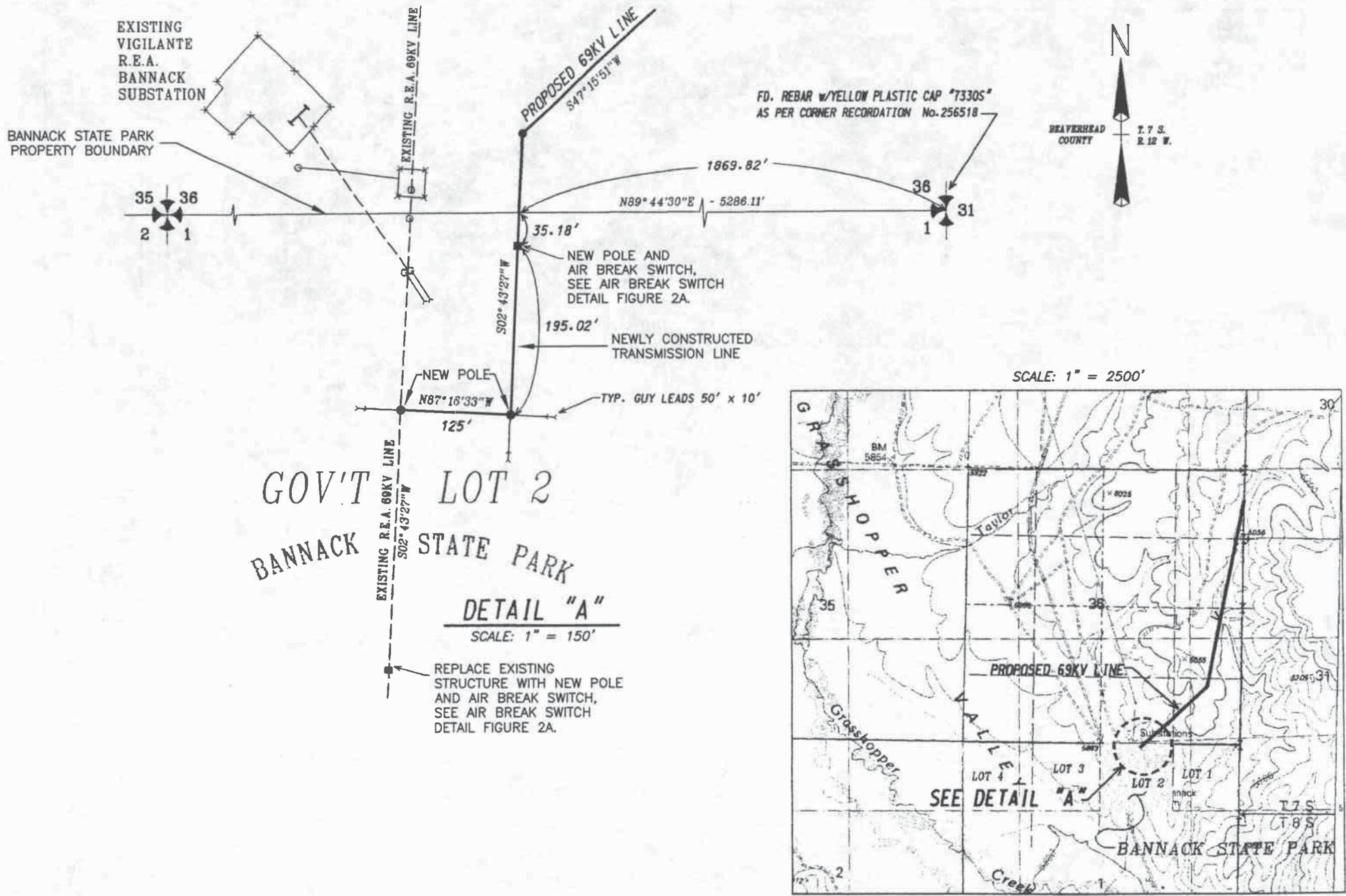
CLIENT: NORTHWESTERN ENERGY

FIELD WORK:
DRAWN BY: SMR/JCH
CHECKED BY: SML

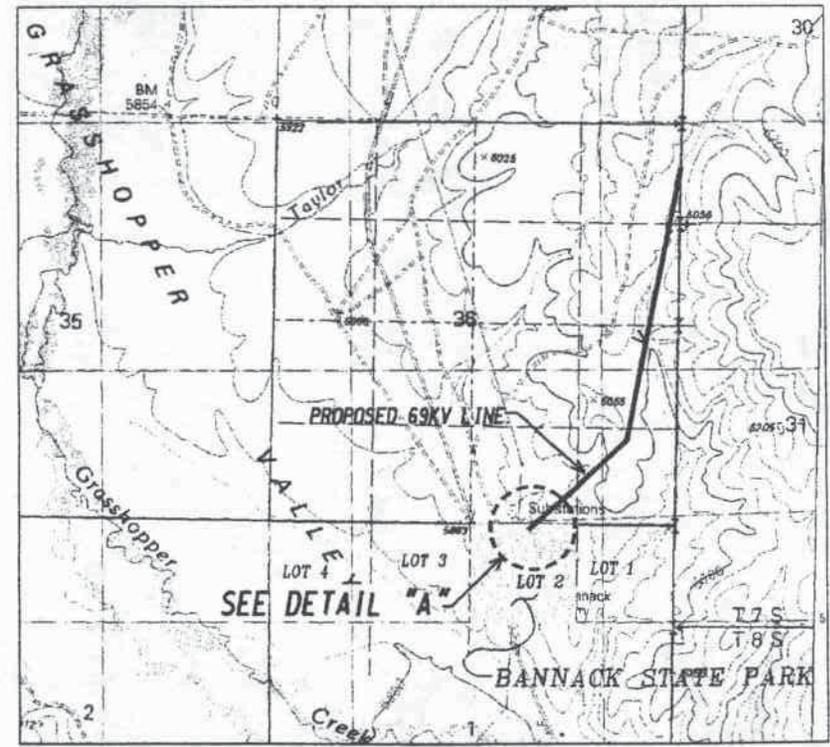
DATE: 4/06/06
SCALE: 1"=2000'
PROJ #: 1051.061.301

FIGURE 1
DILLON SALMON/BANNAK 69kV
TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD
VICINITY & TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

PLOTTED DATE: Apr/12/2006 - 10:53:05 am
DRAWING NAME:
H:\1051\061\ACAD\Exhibits\VIC-TOPO.dwg
SHEET _____ OF _____ PLOTTED BY: jhockaday



SCALE: 1" = 2500'



GOV'T LOT 2
 BANNACK STATE PARK
DETAIL "A"
 SCALE: 1" = 150'

REPLACE EXISTING
 STRUCTURE WITH NEW POLE
 AND AIR BREAK SWITCH,
 SEE AIR BREAK SWITCH
 DETAIL FIGURE 2A.



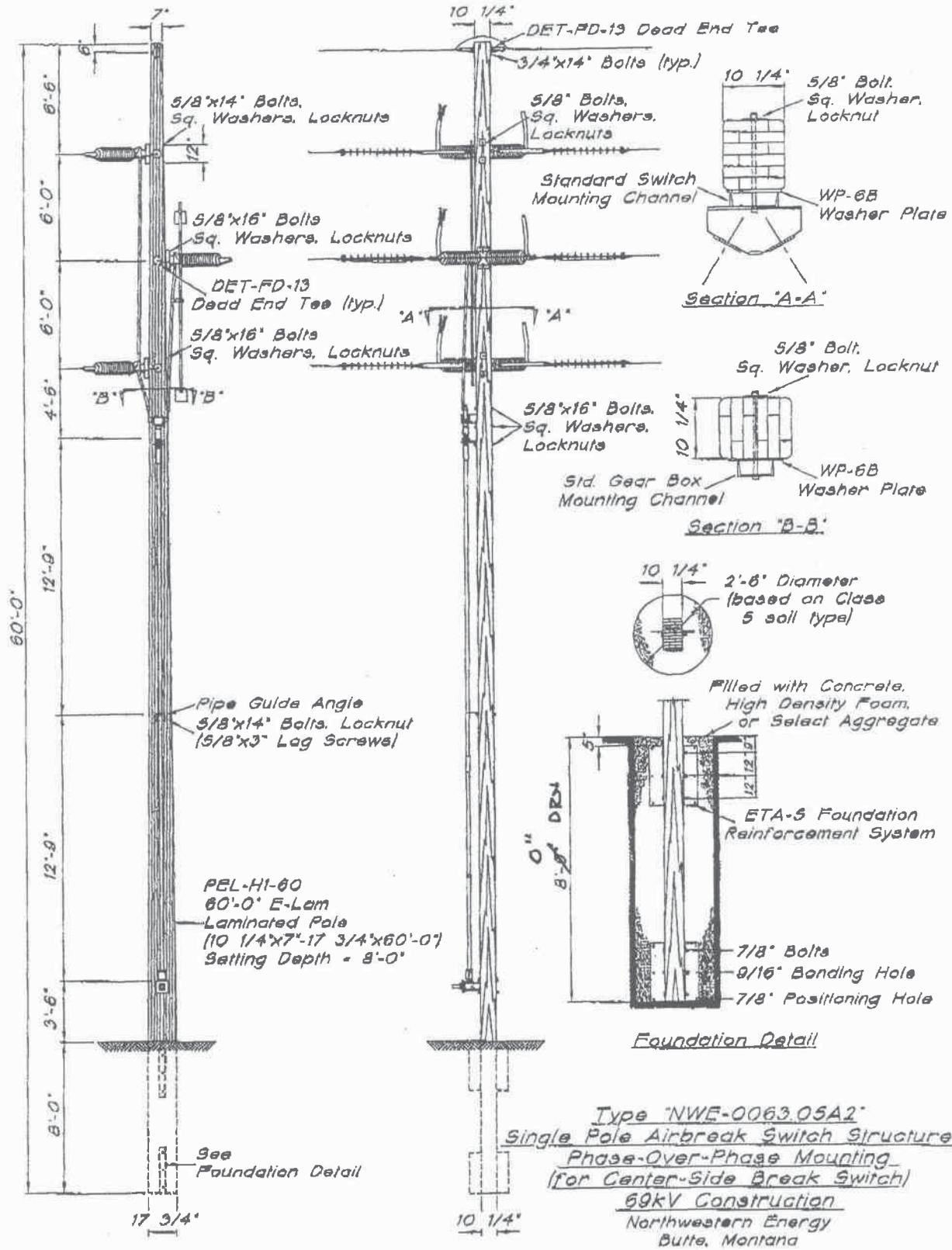
Engineers
 Surveyors
 Schematics
 Planners

901 Technology Blvd.
 Bozeman MT 59718

Phone: (406) 587-0721
 Fax: (406) 587-1176

DRAWN BY: SMR/JCH
 CHKD BY: SML
 APPR BY:
 DATE: 4/12/06

BANNACK	DILLON SALMON/BANNACK 69KV TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD	PROJECT NO. 1051.061
	NEW CONSTRUCTION CONFIGURATION	MONTANA FIGURE NUMBER FIG. 2



Engineers
Surveyors
Scientists
Planners

901 Technology Blvd.
Bozeman MT 59718

Phone: (406) 587-0721
Fax: (406) 587-1176

DRAWN BY: JCH
CHKD. BY: SML
APPR BY:
DATE: 4/12/06

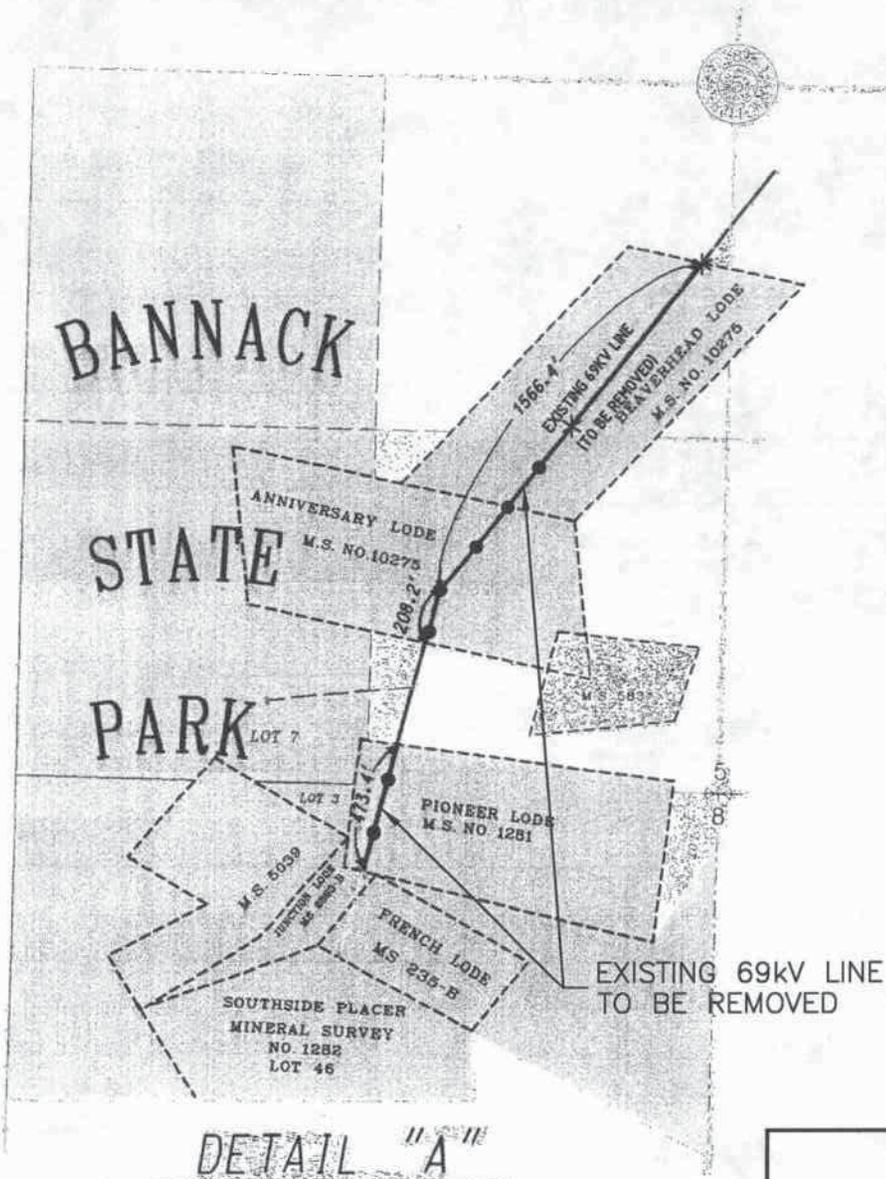
DILLON SALMON/BANNACK
69kV TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD
MONTANA

BANNACK

AIR BREAK SWITCH DETAIL

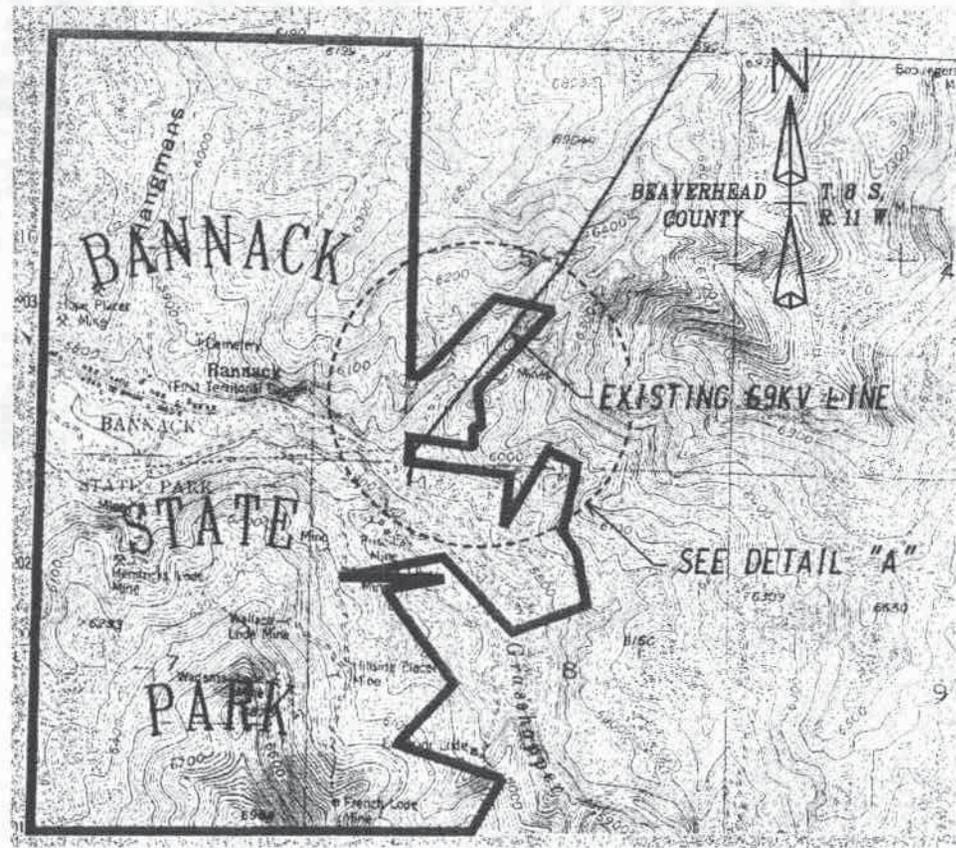
PROJECT NO.
1051.061

FIGURE NUMBER
FIG. 2A



DETAIL "A"

N.T.S.



TOTAL LENGTH TO BE RELEASED: 2248.0'

LEGEND

- * H-FRAMES TO BE REMOVED
- SINGLE POLES TO BE REMOVED



Engineers
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DATE: 4/12/06

BANNACK
DILLON SALMON/BANNACK
69KV TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD
MONTANA

REMOVAL PROJECT BOUNDARY MAP
PROJECT NO.
1051.061
FIGURE NUMBER
FIG. 3

Appendix A
HB495 Project Qualification Checklist

PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST
HB 495

Date: January 20, 2006

Person Reviewing: Steve Laufenberg,
Environmental Scientist
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.

PROJECT LOCATION: The impacted portions of Bannack State Park are located in the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 1, Township 8 South, Range 12 West; and the east half of the southwest quarter of Section 5 and the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 8, Township 8 South, Range 11 West, Beaverhead County, Montana.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: The proposed project is classified as development and maintenance, and consists of (1) rerouting approximately 480.2 feet of 69 kV transmission line, and (2) removing a portion of 69 kV transmission line. Both project areas are located within Bannack State Park, Montana. Project activities will include the installation of a single circuit 69 kV transmission line, seven single wood pole structures, and 28 guy wires attached to 14 anchors. The proposed reroute and removal project is intended to improve transmission reliability to customers in the local areas and extend the useful life of the power line.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary). Capital Construction projects - Prepared by D & C; Force Account Projects - Prepared by Region.

A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?

Comments:

B. New building construction (buildings < 100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?

Comments:

C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?

Comments:

D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?

Comments:

E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?

Comments:

F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?

Comments:

G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?

Comments:

H. Any new above ground utility lines?

Comments: The proposed project will result in the new construction of approximately 355.2 feet of 69 kV transmission line.

I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?

Comments:

J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects.

Comments:

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE ARE CHECKED, HB 495 RULES APPLY TO THIS PROPOSED WORK AND SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED ON THE MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

cc: Park Managers, Region

D&C

Project File

Appendix B
Resource Agency Correspondence

RECEIVED JAN 20 2006



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0581 • tel 406.444.5354 • <http://mtnhp.org>

January 20, 2006

Erik Nyquist
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
P.O. Box 1113
Bozeman, MT 59771

Dear Erik,

I am writing in response to your request for information on plant and animal species of special concern in the vicinity of the Bannack EA, in Section 1, T08S, R12W, and Sections 5 and 8, T08S, R11W, in Beaverhead County. We checked our databases for information in this general area and have enclosed 23 species of concern reports, 18 animal inferred extent reports, 3 ecological site reports and one map.

Please keep in mind the following when using and interpreting the enclosed information and maps:

- (1) These materials are the result of a search of our database for species of concern that occur in an area defined by requested township, range and sections with an additional one-mile buffer surrounding the requested area. This is done to provide a more inclusive set of records and to capture records that may be immediately adjacent to the requested area. Reports are provided for the species of concern that are located in your requested area with a one-mile buffer. Species of concern outside of this area may be depicted on the map but are not reported.
- (2) On the map, polygons represent one or more source features as well as the locational uncertainty associated with the source features. A source feature is a point, line, or polygon that is the basic mapping unit of an EO Representation. The recorded location of the occurrence may vary from its true location due to many factors, including the level of expertise of the data collector, differences in survey techniques and equipment used, and the amount and type of information obtained. Therefore, this inaccuracy is characterized as locational uncertainty, and is now incorporated in the representation of an EO. If you have a question concerning a specific EO, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- (3) This report may include sensitive data, and is not intended for general distribution, publication or for use outside of your agency. In particular, public release of specific location information may jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or communities.
- (4) The accompanying map(s) display management status, which may differ from ownership. Also, this report may include data from privately owned lands, and approval by the landowner is advisable if specific location information is considered for distribution. Features shown on this map do not imply public access to any lands.
- (5) Additional biological data for the search area(s) may be available from other sources. We suggest you contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for any additional information on threatened and endangered species (406-449-5225). Also, significant gaps exist in the Heritage Program's fisheries data, and we suggest you contact the Montana Rivers Information System for information related to your area of interest (406-444-3345).

Electronic access to the Montana Natural Heritage Program is available at URL
<http://mtnhp.org>

- (6) **Additional information on species habitat, ecology and management is available on our web site in the Plant and Animal Field Guides, which we encourage you to consult for valuable information. You can access these guides at <http://mtnhp.org>. General information on any species can be found by accessing the link to NatureServe Explorer.**

The results of a data search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program reflect the current status of our data collection efforts. These results are not intended as a final statement on sensitive species within a given area, or as a substitute for on-site surveys, which may be required for environmental assessments. The information is intended for project screening only with respect to species of concern, and not as a determination of environmental impacts, which should be gained in consultation with appropriate agencies and authorities.

I hope the enclosed information is helpful to you. Please feel free to contact me at (406) 444-3290 or via my e-mail address, below, should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Martin P. Miller
Montana Natural Heritage Program
martinm@mt.gov



P.O. Box 201800 • 1515 East Sixth Avenue • Helena, MT 59620-1800 • fax 406.444.0581 • tel 406.444.5354 • <http://mtnhp.org>

January 11, 2006

Erik Nyquist
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
P.O. Box 1113
Bozeman, MT 59771

Dear Erik,

I am writing in response to your request for information on plant and animal species of special concern in the vicinity of the Bannack EA, in Section 1, T08S, R12W, and Section 8, T08S, R11W, in Beaverhead County. We checked our databases for information in this general area and have enclosed 27 species of concern reports, 22 animal inferred extent reports, 3 ecological site reports and one map.

Please keep in mind the following when using and interpreting the enclosed information and maps:

- (1) These materials are the result of a search of our database for species of concern that occur in an area defined by requested township, range and sections with an additional one-mile buffer surrounding the requested area. This is done to provide a more inclusive set of records and to capture records that may be immediately adjacent to the requested area. Reports are provided for the species of concern that are located in your requested area with a one-mile buffer. Species of concern outside of this area may be depicted on the map but are not reported.
- (2) On the map, polygons represent one or more source features as well as the locational uncertainty associated with the source features. A source feature is a point, line, or polygon that is the basic mapping unit of an EO Representation. The recorded location of the occurrence may vary from its true location due to many factors, including the level of expertise of the data collector, differences in survey techniques and equipment used, and the amount and type of information obtained. Therefore, this inaccuracy is characterized as locational uncertainty, and is now incorporated in the representation of an EO. If you have a question concerning a specific EO, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- (3) This report may include sensitive data, and is not intended for general distribution, publication or for use outside of your agency. In particular, public release of specific location information may jeopardize the welfare of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or communities.
- (4) The accompanying map(s) display management status, which may differ from ownership. Also, this report may include data from privately owned lands, and approval by the landowner is advisable if specific location information is considered for distribution. Features shown on this map do not imply public access to any lands.
- (5) Additional biological data for the search area(s) may be available from other sources. We suggest you contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for any additional information on threatened and endangered species (406-449-5225). Also, significant gaps exist in the Heritage Program's fisheries data, and we suggest you contact the Montana Rivers Information System for information related to your area of interest (406-444-3345).

Electronic access to the Montana Natural Heritage Program is available at URL
<http://mtnhp.org>

(6) **Additional information on species habitat, ecology and management is available on our web site in the Plant and Animal Field Guides, which we encourage you to consult for valuable information. You can access these guides at <http://mtnhp.org>. General information on any species can be found by accessing the link to NatureServe Explorer.**

The results of a data search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program reflect the current status of our data collection efforts. These results are not intended as a final statement on sensitive species within a given area, or as a substitute for on-site surveys, which may be required for environmental assessments. The information is intended for project screening only with respect to species of concern, and not as a determination of environmental impacts, which should be gained in consultation with appropriate agencies and authorities.

I hope the enclosed information is helpful to you. Please feel free to contact me at (406) 444-3290 or via my e-mail address, below, should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Martin P. Miller
Montana Natural Heritage Program
martinm@mt.gov



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
MONTANA FIELD OFFICE
100 N. PARK, SUITE 320
HELENA, MONTANA 59601
PHONE (406) 449-5225, FAX (406) 449-5339

File: M.30 (I)
(Dillon Salmon/Bannack Transmission Line)

February 24, 2006

Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
Paul W. McGuire
901 Technology Boulevard
Bozeman, Montana 59718

Dear Mr. McGuire:

This letter responds to your January 10, 2006 letter requesting comments from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for the installation and improvements of electric facilities in Beaverhead County Montana. These comments have been prepared under the authority of, and in accordance with, the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*). The Service received your letter on January 13, 2006.

The Service does not have any site-specific information on other species of fish or wildlife that may occur in the proposed project area and can only provide a list of species by county (see <http://montanafieldoffice.fws.gov>). In addition to federally listed species there may be state species of concern and we recommend contacting Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 1420 East Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701, 406-444-2535 for more specific information. The Montana Natural Heritage Program, 1515 East 6th Avenue, Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800, 444-5354, may also be an excellent source of information for species specific to the project site.

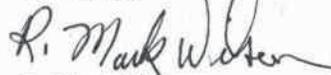
Section 9 of ESA prohibits knowingly taking listed species, which includes harm, harassment, capture, or collection activities, except when specifically permitted by the Service. Please also be apprised of the potential application of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA), as amended, 16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*; and the Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (BEPA), as amended, 16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*; to your project. The MBTA does not require intent to "take" to be proven and does not allow for "take," except as permitted by regulations. Section 703 of the MBTA provides: "Unless and except as permitted by regulations ...it shall be unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to...take, capture, kill, or attempt to take, capture, or kill, possess... any migratory bird, or any part, nest, or eggs of any such bird..." The BEPA prohibits knowingly taking, or taking with wanton disregard for the consequences of such an activity, any bald or golden eagles or their body parts, nest, or eggs, which includes collection, molestation, disturbance, or killing activities.

Any power lines, if not properly constructed, could pose electrocution hazards for eagles. To help conserve these species, and other large raptors protected by Federal law, we urge that new or reconstructed power lines be raptor proofed. The publication, "Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996" outlines criteria and techniques that may be useful as guidance. A copy may be obtained from Jim Fitzpatrick, Treasurer, Carpenter Nature Center, 12805 St. Croix Trail South, Hastings, MN 55033. The use of such techniques, or similar raptor proofing efforts, would likely be most beneficial adjacent to expected raptor foraging areas (i.e., stream crossings or wetlands that support populations of waterfowl).

In Montana, habitats frequently used by important fish and wildlife resources are wetlands, streams, and riparian (streamside) woodlands. Special attention is given to proposed developments that include modification of wetlands, or stream alteration, or contamination of important habitats. For actions that involve stream channels or wetland the Service offers the following comments: We recommend that you work closely with the Corps of Engineers (COE) regulatory office (406-441-1375) regarding any Section 404 permits that may be needed. With regard to such permits, depending on permit type and other factors, the Service may be required to review permit applications and recommend fish and wildlife protection or mitigation measures to the COE as appear reasonable and prudent at that time. On site inspection by Service personnel may be necessary to provide technical assistance regarding wetland avoidance or mitigation.

Should you have any further questions, please contact me or Dan Brewer within our office at (406) 449-5225, extension 216. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments.

Sincerely,



R. Mark Wilson
Field Supervisor



1051.061
JB4 2b USFWS carries
901 TECHNOLOGY BLVD • P.O. BOX 1113 • BOZEMAN, MT 59771 • 406-587-0721 • FAX: 406-587-1176

ENGINEERS
SCIENTISTS
SURVEYORS
PLANNERS

January 10, 2006

FILE COPY

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Montana Ecological Services Field Office
R. Mark Wilson, Field Supervisor
100 N. Park, Suite 320
Helena, Montana 59601

Subject: Request for Information Regarding Threatened and Endangered Species
for Dillon Salmon/Bannack 69 kV Transmission Line Rebuild
MMI#: 1051.061.301

Dear Mr. Wilson:

NorthWestern Energy has contracted with Morrison-Maierle, Inc., Environmental Services Group (MMI) to complete a Categorical Exclusion checklist/report for the relocation of a transmission line within and adjacent to Bannack State Park, Montana. One area of interest for the project is identified as a power line corridor located in the northeast quarter of Section 1, Township 8 South, Range 12 West, Beaverhead County, Montana. Project construction activities in this location will be limited to the utility corridor, which is anticipated to be approximately 480.2 feet long and 40.0 feet wide. The other area of interest is located in the northwest quarter of Section 8, Township 8 South, Range 11 West, Beaverhead County, Montana. Project activities at this location include the removal of a portion of an existing transmission line and all support structures. A project location map is included for your reference. Impacts are not anticipated to occur outside of the utility corridors.

We are requesting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) review the project for environmental documentation of possible effects on threatened and endangered (T&E) species, as follows:

1. In accordance with Section 7(a) of the Endangered Species Act, please identify any listed or proposed T&E species that may occur in the project area. MMI has reviewed the county-wide list of T&E species corresponding to each project location and requests site-specific information regarding possible presence and effects on T&E species;

"Providing resources in partnership with clients to achieve their goals"

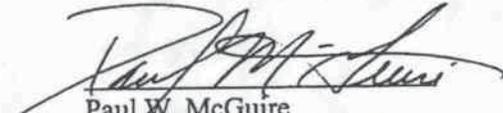
2. Please provide any site-specific information (including the presence of critical habitat) regarding T&E species identified as potentially being present during your review that will allow MMI to complete comprehensive T&E documentation for the project.

Please send your written response to the following address:

Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
Paul McGuire
901 Technology Boulevard
Bozeman, Montana 59718

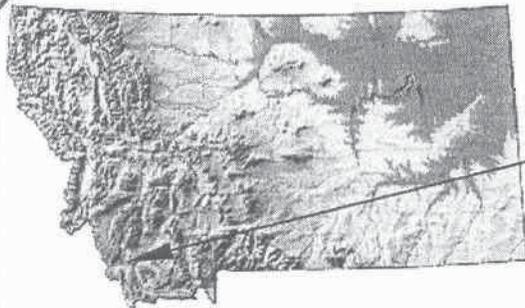
If you have any questions or if you require additional information, please contact Erik Nyquist or myself at (406) 587-0721.

Sincerely,
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.


Paul W. McGuire
Senior Environmental Scientist

PWM/ESN

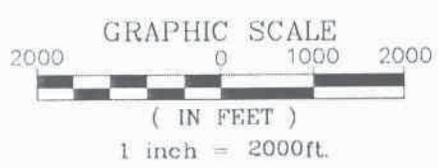
Enclosure



Portion of the Northeast quarter of Section 1,
Township 8 South, Range 12 West and a Portion
of the northwest quarter of Section 8,
Township 8 South, Range 11 West,
P.M.M. Beaverhead County, Montana



USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP (1988 AND 1991)



<p>MORRISON MAIERLE, INC. An Employee-Owned Company PD Box 1113, 301 Technology Blvd, Bozeman, MT 59711 • Phone: (406) 587-8771 Fax: (406) 587-1178</p>	<p>ENGINEERS SCIENTISTS SURVEYORS PLANNERS SINCE 1945</p>	<p>DILLON SALMON/BANNACK 69 KV TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD VICINITY AND TOPOGRAPHIC MAP</p>
	<p>CLIENT: NORTHWEST ENERGY</p>	<p>PLOTTED DATE: Jan/11/2006 - 09:09:53 am</p>
<p>FIELD WORK: _____</p> <p>DRAWN BY: SER</p> <p>CHECKED BY: PWM</p>	<p>DATE: 1/10/06</p> <p>SCALE: 1"=2000'</p> <p>PROJ #: 1051.061.301</p>	<p>DRAWING NAME: M:\1051\060\ACAD\Exhibits\VC-TOPO.dwg</p> <p>SHEET _____ OF _____ PLOTTED BY: vrothschiller</p>

From: "Rolfes, Tony" <Tony.Rolfes@mt.usda.gov>
To: <slaufenberg@m-m.net>
Date: 2/24/2006 11:33:12 AM
Subject: Soil Info BeaverheadCounty

Steve

The soil information you requested in Beaverhead County is located in Soil Survey 612 (Horse Prairie part of Beaverhead County). At this time the soil information, specifically Important Farmlands, is not completed or available for this soil survey area. There is no specific date in the near future in which this data is scheduled for release.

If you have any questions concerning this request please contact me.

Tony Rolfes

Tony Rolfes, Resource Soil Scientist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
3710 Fallon Street, #B
Bozeman, MT 59718
Phone:(406)522-4023
Fax:(406)585-1272

Appendix C

MEPA/HB495 Tourism Report

**TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495**

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Dillon Salmon/Bannack 69 kV Transmission Line Rebuild

Project Location: The impacted portions of Bannack State Park are located in the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 1, Township 8 South, Range 12 West; and the east half of the southwest quarter of Section 5 and the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 8, Township 8 South, Range 11 West, Beaverhead County, Montana. The attached vicinity and topographic map depicts the locations of the project areas.

Project Description: The proposed project is classified as development and maintenance, and consists of (1) rerouting approximately 480.2 feet of 69 kV transmission line, and (2) removing a portion of 69 kV transmission line. Both project areas are located within Bannack State Park, Montana. Project activities to be completed by NorthWestern Energy will include the installation of a single circuit 69 kV transmission line, seven single wood pole structures, and 28 guy wires attached to 14 anchors. The proposed reroute and removal project is intended to improve transmission reliability to customers in the local areas and extend the useful life of the power line.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
 NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
 NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

Signature Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana

Appendix D

Cultural Resources Correspondence



MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

225 North Roberts ♦ P.O. Box 201201 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1201
♦ (406) 444-2694 ♦ FAX (406) 444-2696 ♦ www.montanahistoricalsociety.org ♦

October 4, 2005

TIM BOZORTH
BLM DILLON FIELD OFFICE
1005 SELWAY DRIVE
DILLON MONTANA 59725

RE: Dillon-Bannack 69kV Electric Transmission Line

Dear Tim,

Mark Sant and I also discussed this project on the phone and due to your plans to avoid the identified sites we will record them as unresolved until a future project requires us to establish eligibility or a larger survey either establishes a district or rules one out. As mentioned in the other letter the procedures in the sub-paragraph of Section 2: (C) in the PA, the BLM may redesigned the project to avoid all identified cultural resources. Please note that this undertaking is cleared for section 106 due to avoidance.

If you have any questions about any points that I have made, you may call me at (406) 444-0388, or email jwarhank@state.mt.us.

Sincerely,

Josef Warhank
Review & Compliance Officer

file: BLM/Dillon/2005

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE ♦ 1410 8th Ave ♦ P.O. Box 201202 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1202

♦ (406) 444-7715 ♦ FAX (406) 444-6575



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 841-4012 | FAX: (406) 841-4004

March 14, 2006

Tim Bozorth
Field Manager
BLM-Dillon Field Office
1005 Selway Drive
Dillon, Montana 59725

RE: Bannack 69kV Electric Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Bozorth:

Thank you for the copies of your correspondence with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office regarding the proposed transmission line project near Bannack. I will include them in our file of SHPO consultation regarding Bannack State Park.

As you mentioned, we unfortunately no longer have access to the cultural resource services of Dori Passman. Paul Valle is the Design and Construction Bureau Chief and the Cultural Resource Coordinator for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Any future correspondence regarding FWP related cultural issues should be directed to him at:

Paul Valle
Cultural Resource Coordinator
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Design and Construction Bureau
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 841-4013
pvalle@mt.gov

Please also feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bardell Mangum RLA
Assistant Cultural Resource Coordinator
Design and Construction Bureau

Visit our Website: <http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/insidefwp/d&c/d&ccontent.asp>



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Dillon Field Office
1005 Selway Drive
Dillon, Montana 59725
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/dfo>



Reply to:

8143A (MT050)

March 10, 2006

James Shive
Legacy Consulting Services
403 West Quartz Street
Butte, Montana 59701-9156

Dear Mr. Shive:

As you requested in your phone conversation with Mark Sant, we are enclosing a copy of the consultation correspondence between our office and the Montana State Historic Preservation Office regarding the Dillon-Bannack 69kV Electric Transmission Line project. As you will note, the recommendations for site eligibility determinations were left unresolved. However, since the recorded sites will be avoided during new power line construction and old power line removal, the SHPO agreed with our determination of NO EFFECT for the proposed undertaking.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark Sant, Archaeologist, at our office.

Sincerely,

Tim Bozorth
Field Manager
BLM - Dillon Field Office

Enclosures (2):

- 1 - Bozorth letter to SHPO 8/25/2005;
- 2 - Warhank letter to Bozorth 10/4/05



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Dillon Field Office
1005 Selway Drive
Dillon, Montana 59725
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/dfo>



Reply to:

8143A (MT050)

March 10, 2006

RECEIVED

MAR 14 2006

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
DEPT. OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Bardell Mangum
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Mr. Mangum;

This letter is in regards to the cultural resources inventory that was conducted for the Dillon-Bannack 69kV Electric Transmission Line project. This project crossed both BLM and state lands. Ordinarily we would have sent copies of our consultation correspondence with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office to Dori Passman for her records. Since Ms. Passman no longer works for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks we were not sure who to send the consultation paper work to.

James Shive, of Legacy Consulting, handles cultural resource issues for Northwestern Energy. He indicated that we should perhaps forward copies of our cultural resources consultation letters for the power line project to you. As you will note, the recommendations for site eligibility determinations were left unresolved. However, since the recorded sites will be avoided during new power line construction and old power line removal, the SHPO agreed with our determination of NO EFFECT for the proposed undertaking.

If you have any question, please contact Mark Sant, Archaeologist, at our office.

Sincerely

Tim Bozorth
Field Manager
BLM-Dillon Field Office

Enclosures (2):

- 1 - Bozorth letter to SHPO 8/25/2005
- 2 - Warhank letter to Bozorth 10/4/05



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 841-4012 | FAX: (406) 841-4004

February 7, 2006

Rick Walsh, Manager
Environmental Permitting
NorthWestern Energy
40 East Broadway St.
Butte, MT 59701

RE: Dillon-Bannack Electric Transmission Line Rebuild Project - Cultural Resource
Management-Resource Inventory Report Review

Dear Mr. Walsh:

Mr. James Shive of Legacy Consulting Services informed me that you are awaiting review and comment from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) regarding the Additional Cultural Resource Inventory in preparation for the Dillon-Bannack Electric Transmission Line Rebuild Project. I appreciate the opportunity to review the inventory and apologize for the delay in providing comment.

I have reviewed the Cultural Resource Inventory prepared by Renewable Technologies, Inc. and agree with the methods used and conclusions. I have also reviewed the project with the Staff at Bannack State Park and they are of the opinion that the project has a low likelihood of negative impact to cultural and visual resources of public lands administered by FWP.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Bardell Mangum RLA
Assistant Cultural Resource Coordinator

Cc: Mr. James J. Shive, Legacy Consulting Services
File 30.2



IN REPLY TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Dillon Field Office
1005 Selway Drive
Dillon, Montana 59725
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/dfo>



8143A

August 25, 2005

Mark Baumler, State Historic Preservation Officer
Montana State Historic Preservation Office
P.O. Box 201202
Helena, Montana 59620-1202

Dear Dr. Baumler:

Please find enclosed two Class III cultural resource inventory reports detailing work conducted for the proposed reconstruction of the Dillon-Bannack 69kV Electric Transmission Line. The inventory reports were prepared by Renewable Technologies, Inc. and are submitted in accordance with Section 2(F) of the **Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Management of Historic Sites Associated with Mining Activities in the State of Montana.**

Dillon-Bannack 69kV Electric Transmission Line Rebuild Beaverhead County, Montana,
prepared by Renewable Technologies, Inc. – (BLM Report No. 02-MT-050-45)

BLM Sites Previously Recorded:

24BE714 – prehistoric scatter - UNEVALUATED

BLM Sites Recorded:

24BE2013 – historic mining – determined NOT ELIGIBLE
24BE2014 – historic mining – determined NOT ELIGIBLE
24BE2015 – historic mining – determined NOT ELIGIBLE
24BE2016 – historic mining – determined ELIGIBLE under Criterion D only
24BE2017 – historic mining – determined NOT ELIGIBLE
24BE2018 – historic mining – determined NOT ELIGIBLE
24BE2019 – historic mining – determined NOT ELIGIBLE

Project Effect: Site 24BE714 remains unevaluated, pending additional cultural resource investigations. The site area is, however, located well outside of the area of potential effect (APE) associated with the proposed power line reconstruction. Subsequent project redesign (see BLM Report No. 05-MT-050-37) has re-routed the power line so as to totally avoid reconstruction in the vicinity of sites 24BE2013 through 24BE2019. Removal of the existing power line structures will involve sawing the poles off at ground level and removal with a rubber tire mounted vehicle. The proposed project will therefore have NO EFFECT upon any of the recorded properties.

Dillon-Bannack 69kV Electric Line Reroute, Beaverhead County, Montana: Additional Cultural Resources Inventory, prepared by Renewable Technologies, Inc. - (BLM Report No. 05-MT-050-37)

BLM/State of Montana Sites Recorded:

- 24BE2066 - historic mining (ditch) - determined ELIGIBLE under Criterion C
- 24BE2067 - historic dump - determined NOT ELIGIBLE
- 24BE2068 - prehistoric scatter - determined NOT ELIGIBLE

Project Effect: The proposed power line project was designed, through pole placement and the establishment of Restricted Operating Zones (ROZ), in order to avoid either direct or indirect impacts to significant cultural resource values. That portion of site 24BE2066 that intersects the proposed power line route will be designated as a Restricted Operating Zone. In addition pole placement is designed so that the site area will be spanned and not impacted by pole placement. The proposed power line project will therefore have NO EFFECT to any significant historic properties.

Pursuant to Section 2(F) of the historic mining sites PA, we request concurrence on site eligibility recommendations and determination of NO EFFECT for the proposed power line project. As always, if there are questions, please don't hesitate to contact Mark Sant, Dillon Field Office Archaeologist, at 683-2337.

Sincerely,

Tim Bozorth
Field Manager
BLM-Dillon Field Office

Enclosures (BLM Reports): As listed above