



**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

SOUTHEAST REGION

1345 Barton Road  
Pocatello, Idaho 83204

James E. Risch / Governor  
Steven M. Huffaker / Director

September 13, 2006

Mark Korsness, Project Manager  
Bonneville Power Administration, Public Affairs Office – DKC – 7  
P.O. Box 14428  
Portland, OR 97293-4428

**RE: Proposed Caribou 138/115-kV Substation and Caribou-Lower Valley 115-kV  
Transmission Line – Mill Canyon portion**

Dear Mark:

Paul Wackenhut of our regional staff attended a meeting and field tour regarding the eastern portion of this proposed transmission line on Monday, September 11, and has reported back to me on his assessment of the possible alternatives. Given our understanding that this general routing of the transmission line up the Blackfoot River corridor is the only practical choice, we offer these follow up comments.

In our letter on July 12, 2006, we expressed our desire that this portion of the line avoid the Blackfoot River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), and what we consider to be some important wildlife habitat on the WMA and Caribou-Targhee National Forest lands. At that time we were not fully aware of limitations on the route selection posed by severity of the slope on the west side of Dry Ridge. Because that steep face necessitates approaching the ridge at a saddle overlooking the mid-point of Mill Canyon, and because any route down the Mosquito Creek drainage would involve more vegetation alteration and maintenance (disturbance) of the corridor, we no longer see an advantage to pursuing a route down Mosquito Creek. The saddle that the line will approach and cross over is along the southern edge of the unroaded and secluded refugia that we were hoping to protect. Once the disturbance reaches that point, any route that impacts more habitat in the short term or long term is not logical. We agree that following down along the less vegetated Mill Canyon proper, either on the open south-facing slope, or along the road on the north-facing slope, makes more sense for minimizing impacts to wildlife.

We appreciate efforts to keep the line as far away from the WMA property as possible, and particularly routing that prevents visual impacts from the river valley in the middle of the WMA. We feel it is important that the line be installed and maintained in this reach (from Dry Valley to Upper Valley) without construction of additional roads that might lead to additional authorized or unauthorized travel. We stand by all recommendations in the July 12 letter referring to guidelines in the Avian Protection Plan, wildlife sightings, needed surveys, and critical wildlife activity periods. As stated previously, bird avoidance devices should be utilized and we would encourage

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any possible steps to minimize sight distances within the cleared corridor through timber. Avoiding long straight stretches where possible, minimizing the width of the corridor, and removal of only taller vegetation all would help maintain the security values for big game and other wildlife.

Again, we appreciate the BPA's efforts to solicit input regarding these projects. Please contact Jim Mende or Paul Wackenhut at 232-4703 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Mark Gamblin  
Regional Supervisor

MG/PW/JM

Cc: Darren Olsen, Soda Springs Ranger Dist., USFS  
Damien Miller, USFWS  
Bob Bramer, IDL  
NRPB

Email: Carl Anderson, Brandon Chamberlin, Tom Maeder, IDFG