

Local

Boardman to Hemingway project

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Tamara Gertsch, National Project Manager with the BLM, who was present at the open house, said, "Idaho Power filed their application with the BLM at the end of 2007, and here we are in 2015," noting the length of time the process has taken thus far. After initially receiving a large number of comments during a public meeting in 2008, the proposed route was refined, and a second public meeting was completed in 2010, Gertsch said.

After several years of more refinement, administrative paperwork, etc., the DEIS was released on December 19, 2014.

Concerning the timing of the current comment period, December 19, 2014 to March 19, 2015, and public open houses, Gertsch said, "As a team, we decided that it makes more sense up front, because it allows the people more time to go back and look at documents, ask questions, and zero in on where they might want to make comments."

Allowing interested and potentially affected individuals to attend the open houses to ask questions, voice concerns and comment early after the release of the DEIS helps avoid much of the frustration and issues usually encountered if the comment period were delayed, she said.

Gertsch explained people need time to digest the DEIS, or at least parts of it, a roughly 3,000 page document. She said the

process, including compiling comments, possibly refining maps, etc., could take until the summer of 2016 to get to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) stage.

Scott Flinders, GIS Analyst for Tetra Tech and Idaho Power Consultant, was on hand to provide a map viewing program on a screen set up in the room, so attendees could see in detail where the proposed and alternate routes would be in relation to their properties. "Everyone's always interested in where their property is in relation to the project," Flinders said, noting the popularity of the map viewing service. This was the first time he's used this type of program, as previously, there were paper maps used, which was still a popular convenience.

This interactive mapping capability, including printing copies, is available on the project internet website, boardmanto-hemingway.com, Flinders said.

Kevin McCoy, Outdoor Recreation Planner with the BLM in Baker City, provided realistic, detailed visual simulations of the proposed lines and towers in area photos. He said, "When you're talking about 195-foot towers, people think, 'Oh my gosh,' but what we did was bring it into perspective, so people could have something tangible they could look at."

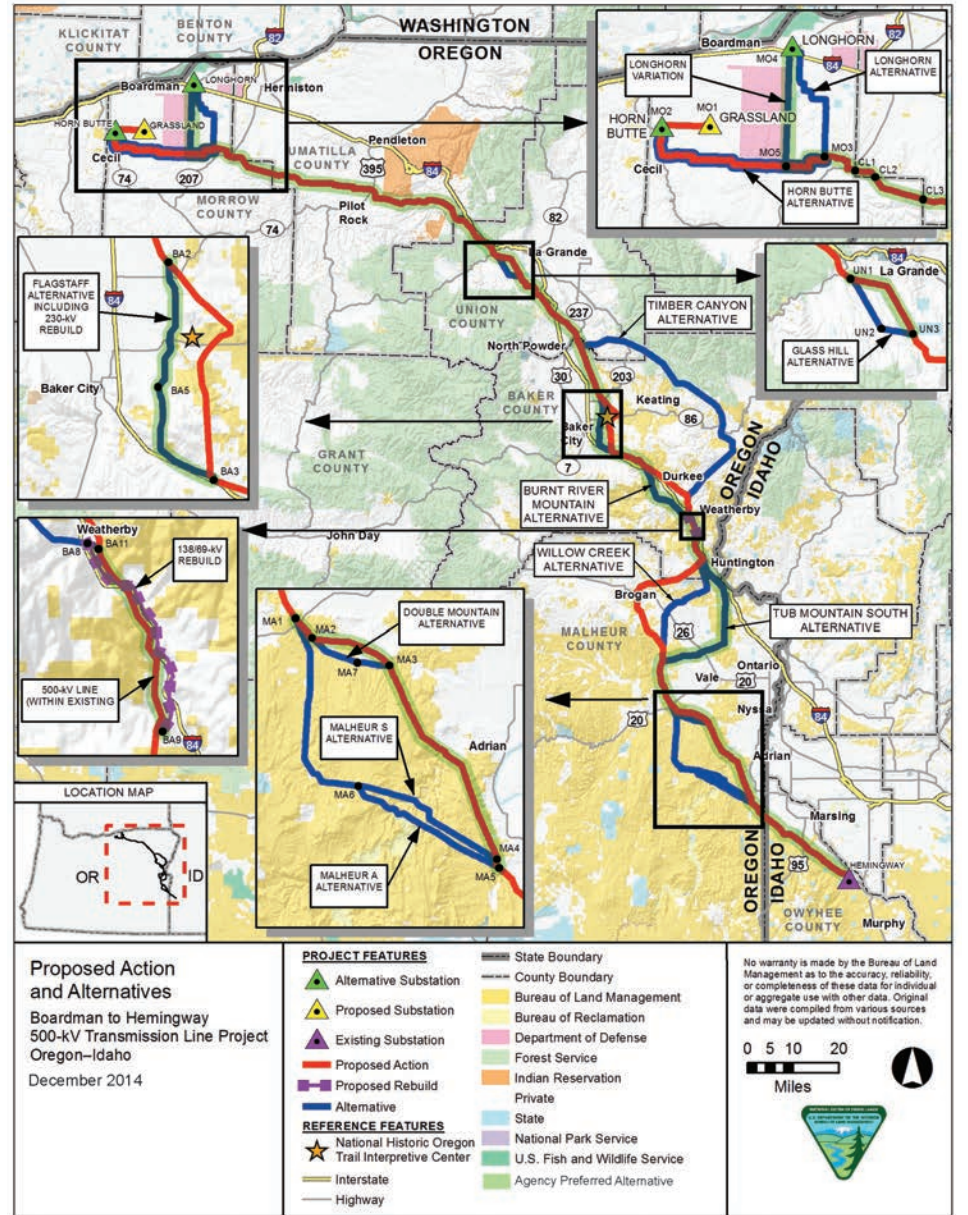
The attendees overall voiced mostly agricultural concerns according to the project staff there, but visual simulation allowed

them to envision what the proposed lines and towers could look like, said McCoy. "I've been really pleased with the Baker turnout, and the questions coming in," he said. He said Don Gonzalez, Vale District Manager with the BLM, is the Authorizing Officer for the project, and he makes decisions based partly on what information is gathered as a result of the open houses, so attendees' comments and concerns are certainly given attention.

Everything displayed at the open houses is also available at boardmanto-hemingway.com.

Comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible, a sentiment echoed by both Gonzalez and Larry Moore, Public Affairs Officer with the Vale District BLM. Ideally, comments would include references to chapters, pages, and line numbers of the DEIS, and any sources that support the comments.

The DEIS, in document and DVD form, in Baker County, is currently available for viewing at the Baker County Library, Baker County Planning Department, BLM-Baker Field Office, and the USFS-Wallowa Whitman National Forest Whitman Ranger District. The DEIS can also be requested in DVD form, or downloaded at boardmanto-hemingway.com. Comments can be submitted at comment@boardmanto-hemingway.com, or mailed to the BLM by close of business on March 19, 2015.



Graphic courtesy of BLM.

The above illustration is the project map for the proposed B2H transmission line route.

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Unity man fined over \$8.1K by Oregon DEQ

Oregon DEQ sent six press release email blasts to media Monday, announcing fines levied against various businesses and individuals.

Among those penalized was Larry Dean Stratton of Unity, \$8,194 for failing to close or take other action on three underground storage tanks located at a former fuel filling station at 107 Main Street in Unity, Ore. Stratton installed the tanks in 1998.

DEQ issued a temporary closure certificate in 2007, which gave Stratton one year to decide what to do with the tanks. Among the options under Oregon law, DEQ says Stratton could have applied to permanently close the tanks, returned the tanks to operation or sought more time to decide by extending the temporary certificate.

DEQ says it issued the penalty because tanks left in the ground without

a closure plan can leak, threatening ground and surface water. Stratton has until January 20, 2015 to appeal the penalty. The full notice of penalty assessment and order can be found here: <http://www.oregon.gov/deq/docs/011215LStratton.pdf>

DEQ's press release archives listing penalties broken down by month are found here: <http://www.oregon.gov/deq/Pages/NewsRelease.aspx>

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NORTHWEST SHOW 12PM - 3PM **NATIONAL SHOW 3PM - 6PM**

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