

Link	Milepost Begin	Milepost End	Distance (miles)	Special Management Area
16-1	6.5	7.6	1.1	South Pioneers SRMA
18-1	0.0	0.8	0.8	South Pioneers SRMA
18-1	1.2	2.3	1.1	South Pioneers SRMA
18-1	2.6	3.7	1.1	South Pioneers SRMA
18-1	13.9	15.2	1.3	Rocky Hills SRMA
18-1	15.5	20.1	4.6	Rocky Hills SRMA
18-1	62.7	64.2	1.5	Italian Peak Roadless Area

*Land and Water Conservation Fund Site

Table 4.3-10 Recreational Sites and Usage within the 4-mile Land Use Study Corridor for the MSTI Project in Montana.

Recreation Site Type	Recreation Site	Associated Recreational Activities	Recreational Use Level
Wilderness Study Areas	Bell/Limekiln Canyon	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
	Henneberry Ridge	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
	Hidden Pasture Creek	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
	Humbug Spires	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
	Black Sage	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
	Elkhorn Tack-on	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
Recommended Wilderness	Italian Peak	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
	Garfield Mountain	Foot, stock, ski, snowshoe travel, camping	Low
National Historic Trails	Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail	hiking, canoeing, horseback riding, biking	Low
National Scenic Trails	Continental Divide National Scenic Trail	hiking, horseback riding, biking	Moderate
National Wild and Scenic Rivers	Muskrat Creek (recommended as suitable for inclusion)	fishing	Low
	Deadman Creek (eligible)	fishing	Low

<i>Recreation Site Type</i>	<i>Recreation Site</i>	<i>Associated Recreational Activities</i>	<i>Recreational Use Level</i>
<i>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern</i>	<i>Muddy Creek/Big Sheep Creek</i>	<i>scenic and cultural resource values including pictograph and rock sites, not noted for recreation</i>	<i>Low</i>
	<i>Block Mountain</i>	<i>exceptional geology, not noted for recreation</i>	<i>Low</i>
<i>Potential ACECs</i>	<i>Elkhorn Mountains</i>	<i>recreation opportunities not identified</i>	<i>Low</i>
	<i>Ringing Rocks</i>	<i>noted for geology, not noted for recreation</i>	<i>Low</i>
	<i>Humbug Spires</i>	<i>primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities, especially rock climbing</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<i>Inventoried Roadless Areas</i>	<i>Cattle Gulch</i>	<i>hunting, fishing, motorcycle and ATV trails, snowmobiling</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Electric Peak</i>	<i>snowmobiling, camping, hiking, mountain biking</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Fleecer</i>	<i>hunting (some of the highest hunter use in the state), snowmobile, motorcycle, ATV use</i>	<i>High</i>
	<i>Garfield Mountain</i>	<i>hunting, stock use, snowmobiling</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Italian Peak</i>	<i>hunting, fishing, camping</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>McKenzie Canyon</i>	<i>hunting</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Sourdough Mountain</i>	<i>hunting</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<i>Research Natural Areas</i>	<i>Bernice Experimental Forest</i>	<i>not noted for recreation</i>	<i>Low</i>
	<i>Big Sheep Creek Backcountry Byway</i>	<i>sightseeing, wildlife viewing, camping, fishing, pleasure-driving</i>	<i>moderate</i>

<i>Recreation Site Type</i>	<i>Recreation Site</i>	<i>Associated Recreational Activities</i>	<i>Recreational Use Level</i>
<i>Recreation Management Areas</i>	<i>Lower Big Hole</i>	<i>river recreation, day use, semi-primitive camping</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>South Pioneers</i>	<i>motorized recreation, mountain biking, day use</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Lewis and Clark Trail</i>	<i>camping, power boating, river floating, fishing, swimming, horseback riding, hiking, hunting, wildlife/scenic landscape viewing</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Upper Big Hole River</i>	<i>fishing, camping, picnicking, river floating, hunting, hiking, pleasure-driving, nature observation</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Humbug Spires</i>	<i>hiking, tent camping, backpacking, stream fishing, horseback riding, rock climbing, hunting, wildlife viewing, nature photography, snowshoeing</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<i>Special Recreation Management Areas</i>	<i>Toston Reservoir/Missouri River</i>	<i>camping and day use activities, lake access for motorized boating, fishing, swimming, picnicking, group gatherings</i>	<i>Moderate</i>

4.3.2 IDAHO

The Idaho portion of the study area and region contains a number of recreational opportunities that vary with seasonal changes as well as other areas with special management designations (see Parks, Recreation, and Preservation Areas map, MFSa Application, Volume III). Open spaces offer a number of recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife observation. The Snake River is a local natural and recreational resource, and serves as a major source of tourism. Recreational activities include camping, picnicking, touring (vehicle and bicycle) hiking, fishing and OHVs in the summer; hunting in the fall; and snowmobile and cross-country skiing in the winter.

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is a major resource in the study area.

There are two National Forests in the study area: Caribou-Targhee and Salmon-Challis. Both forests provide a variety of yearlong, outdoor recreation. Activities on USFS land includes camping, picnicking, hunting, fishing, float boating, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and sightseeing. Idaho outfitters and guides also provide recreational opportunities on USFS lands such as sightseeing, hunting, fishing, and rafting. Many of these activities are authorized by SUPs.

The BLM also has land holdings in the study area. The majority of this land is in large blocks and is managed for multiple uses. Recreational opportunities include both dispersed and developed

activities, such as hunting, fishing, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, hang gliding, OHV and snowmobile use, cross country and alpine skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, camping, caving, river running and boating, horseback riding, and picnicking.

Baker Caves, which represents a prehistoric resource, is also located in the study area. The site, administered by the BLM, consists of a lava tube located in the lava fields of southern Idaho. The cave was occupied for a short time about 1,000 years ago by occupants who apparently trapped a small bison herd consisting of at least 17 animals.

State endowment lands in the study area are generally available for mineral and agricultural leasing, and public recreation. A conservation easement on this land was identified southeast of Fish Creek Reservoir (T9N, R33E, S16). Much of this land is surrounded by private or federal land. Recreational opportunities on these lands include hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, and snowmobiling.

Some municipalities offer museums, parks, baseball fields, rodeo grounds/fairgrounds, walking/hiking/bicycle trails, water sports, outdoor sports activities at schools, and other opportunities. Dietrich Park, located within the city of Dietrich, is located within the study area.

In addition to public lands, recreational opportunities exist on privately owned lands, including

existing roads or overland access for construction areas. Impacts associated with the transmission lines would be short-term and related to the movement of personnel and equipment during construction. Because of the limited traffic volumes on all roadways and the low number of construction-related trips that would be necessary each day, traffic associated with construction would not be substantial. Personnel trips and equipment movement necessary for operation of the transmission line would be minimal and transmission line monitoring would be limited to one or two vehicles at any one time. It should be noted that specific roadways used and the number of construction vehicle trips would likely vary for the Project. These transportation impacts, characterized as moderate, would be reduced by implementation of Environmental Protection Measure 2.14 (obtain an encroachment permit or similar authorization). Encroachment permit requirements would be specified by the agency having jurisdiction. The encroachment permit issued by local jurisdictions may include the following:

- Identify all roadway locations where special construction techniques (e.g., night construction) would be used to minimize impacts to traffic flow.
- Develop circulation and detour plans to minimize impacts to local street circulation. This may include the use of signing and flagging to guide vehicles through and/or around the construction zone.
- Schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- Limit lane closures during peak hours to the extent possible.
- Use haul routes minimizing truck traffic on local roadways to the extent possible.
- Include detours for bicycles and pedestrians in areas potentially affected by project construction.
- Install traffic control devices if specified by agencies.
- Store construction materials only in designated areas.
- Coordinate with local transit agencies for temporary relocation of routes or bus stops in works zones, if necessary.

Enforcement of the terms of an encroachment permit would reduce impacts associated with short-term road closures. Upon implementation of this mitigation measure, residual impacts would be classified as low.

6.1.10 CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WOULD POTENTIALLY DISRUPT OR INCREASE ACCESS TO RECREATION SITES

No permanent changes in access are expected for recreation areas that are not either crossed by or directly adjacent to an alternative route centerline. Access to some recreation sites whose access roads would be crossed by an alternative route centerline could be impacted during construction activities, especially transmission line stringing, at the crossing locations. However, these access impacts would be expected to be brief and would not result in any temporary site closures and would be characterized as low. Recreation sites that could potentially experience temporary access restrictions include campgrounds (Beaver Dam Campground), sportsmen access sites, Humbug Spires WSA, Black Sage WSA, Henneberry Ridge WSA, and the Raidersburg ORV trailhead.

Recreation sites crossed by the alternative route links include Toston Reservoir/Missouri River Proposed SRMA, Elkhorn Mountains Proposed ACEC, Pipestone Mountains Proposed ACEC, Mount Hagen Wildlife Management Area, Lower Big Hole River SRMA, Maiden Rock Fishing Access Site,

Lower Big Hole River SRMA, South Pioneers SRMA, Rocky Hills SRMA, and the Italian Peak Roadless Area. These areas may experience temporary access restrictions during construction. Access to these areas may also increase due to additional public access from improved roads or new roads. Impacts to these areas would be characterized as moderate.

Fishing access to rivers could increase at locations where the rivers would be crossed by alternative route centerlines. Fishing access to the Missouri River, the Big Hole River, and the Beaverhead River could be temporarily halted due to construction or may potentially decrease during construction, however, access to designated sportsmen access sites, with the exception of Maiden Rock Fishing Access Site, would generally not be expected to be impacted. Recreational boat traffic on the Missouri River could potentially be briefly impacted or halted during specific phases of construction at crossing sites. Impacts to these areas would be characterized as moderate.

Use of trails crossed by alternative centerlines, including the Lewis and Clark National Historic trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, could also be potentially halted or diverted during specific phases of construction. Use of these trails could potentially decrease during construction due to scenic impacts, noise, and dust generated by construction. Access to these trails could increase due to additional access from improved or new roads. Impacts to these trails would be characterized as moderate.

Access to Black Sage WSA, Humbug Spires WSA, and Henneberry Ridge WSA could potentially increase due to additional access from construction roads. Access to these WSAs would be characterized as low to moderate.

Access to the Big Sheep Back Country Byway could potentially be restricted by temporary road closures or construction traffic. The Project would not be expected to increase recreational use of the byway. Impacts to the byway would be characterized as moderate to high.

6.2 OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

6.2.1 PRESENCE OF A PROJECT COMPONENT WOULD DISRUPT LAND USES AT OR NEAR THE ALIGNMENT

Direct or high impacts on existing residences could result from the incompatibility with or removal of occupied dwellings and related structures from the Project right-of-way. The location of the Project right-of-way within platted subdivisions, mineral extractive areas, and Superfund remediation sites could result in initial high to moderate impacts where operation and maintenance would preclude or impair future development/remediation activities. Environmental protection measure 2.4 would

The Project will comply with all appropriate regulations of the FAA, and Form 7460-1 would be required of NWE pursuant to FAA Regulations, Part 77. Final locations, structures, and structure heights, including transmission lines, and construction related equipment or facilities that might impact air navigation, would be submitted to the FAA for the Project. State Aeronautics Divisions will also be contacted.

The transmission line could intersect or occur near MTRs where low-altitude military aircraft flights may regularly occur. Two MTRs IR 301 and IR 307 are approximately eight miles west from the western edge of the Clark Canyon Reservoir. They run along the same pattern and cannot be flown at the same time. IR 301 has a north heading flight pattern and has a route width ranging from 8 nautical miles to 5 nautical miles (approximately 9 to 6 miles wide from centerline). IR 307 has a south heading flight pattern and has a route width ranging from 5 nautical miles to 8 nautical miles (approximately 6 to 9 miles wide from centerline). Coordination/consultation with the DOD will be conducted regarding the location and potential effects/conflicts of the Project upon operations or training activities in military airspace. The owner/operator of private airports and airstrips potentially affected by the Project will also be contacted.

6.2.6 Presence of a Transmission Line Would Alter User Experience at Recreation Sites

Recreation sites crossed by the alternative route links include Toston Reservoir/Missouri River Proposed SRMA, Elkhorn Mountains Proposed ACEC, Pipestone Mountains Proposed ACEC, Mount Hagen Wildlife Management Area, Lower Big Hole River SRMA, Maiden Rock Fishing Access Site, Lower Big Hole River SRMA, South Pioneers SRMA, Rocky Hills SRMA, and the Italian Peak Roadless Area. Presence of the facility would alter the aesthetic value and visual experience for visitors to these areas and would prevent the user from experiencing a completely natural environment that is unaltered by man-made structures. High impacts to user experience would potentially occur in areas in close proximity to the facility, with impact levels decreasing to moderate and low with additional distance from the facility. Additionally, increased vehicle access could increase with new or improved roads and indirectly result in increased littering, illegal hunting, and other unauthorized activities that could negatively impact visitor experiences.

User experience for the Lewis and Clark National Historic trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would be impacted in areas where the facility would alter the visual experience, especially in areas where the trails would be crossed and structures would potentially be located in close proximity to the trails. The facility could dominate the visual experience in these areas and have a high impact on user experience. Similar impacts would occur at crossings of the Missouri River, the Big Hole River, and the Beaverhead River.

User experience in the Black Sage WSA, Humbug Spires WSA, and Henneberry Ridge WSA could potentially be impacted in areas near the edges of the WSAs where the facility would be in close proximity and the visual experience could potentially be impacted. Potential impacts are expected to be low due to the facility location outside the WSAs' borders and lower visitor expectations of a completely natural experience at these edge locations.

User experience of the Big Sheep Back Country Byway could potentially be impacted. In areas where the facility parallels or is in close proximity to the byway, the aesthetic value and visual experience for visitors could be negatively impacted. The facility would potentially dominate the visual experience at crossing locations. Impacts to the visitor experience would be generally be

characterized as moderate to low, due to the presence of existing transmission facilities along the byway.

6.2.7 Operation Would Not Impact Regional Supply of Recreation Opportunities

The Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) stated that the most popular outdoor recreation activities in Montana are walking, wildlife watching, attending sporting events, hiking, biking, attending festivals, swimming, picnicking, nature photography, fishing, motorcycling, hunting, camping, golfing, horseback riding and boating. Popular outdoor recreation activities in the region include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, river floating, skiing, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing and sightseeing. Due to public ownership of large tracts of mountainous habitat in the region, these activities are widely available.

Recreation sites crossed by the alternative route links include Toston Reservoir/Missouri River Proposed SRMA, Elkhorn Mountains Proposed ACEC, Pipestone Mountains Proposed ACEC, Mount Hagen Wildlife Management Area, Lower Big Hole River SRMA, Maiden Rock Fishing Access Site, Lower Big Hole River SRMA, South Pioneers SRMA, Rocky Hills SRMA, and the Italian Peak Roadless Area. Activities at these sites include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, horseback riding, river floating, skiing, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing and sightseeing, occur in these areas. Additional recreation sites within the study area that would be potentially impacted by the alternative route links include the Lewis and Clark National Historic trail and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, which provide hiking, biking, and horseback riding opportunities; the WSAs within the study area, which provide hiking, backpacking, and stock use opportunities in a non-motorized setting; rivers, which provide opportunities for fishing and river floating; and the Big Sheep Back Country Byway, which provides sightseeing opportunities. Due to the wide availability of these activities in the region and the limited impacts of the facility on recreation activities at the sites crossed, no impact to the regional supply of recreation activities is expected.

6.3 Maintenance Impacts

6.3.1 Transmission

Operation or maintenance personnel would require access to the right-of-way for routine maintenance and inspection activities or during emergency situations. Safe and reliable operation of the new transmission line will be maintained through regular inspection of the poles, conductors, insulators, access areas, and vegetation in the right-of-way. The inspections will consist of annual foot patrols and aerial patrols (six times annually). Special patrols will be conducted following storm conditions. Transmission lines normally require minimal maintenance; however, NWE will inspect the line on a regular basis to look for problems caused by weather, vandalism, vegetation regrowth, etc. NWE will manage vegetation on the right-of-way by a variety of methods, including trimming, mowing, and the use of approved herbicides, targeting species that are incompatible with the safe operation, maintenance, and access to the transmission system. Use of herbicides for vegetation control will be selective.

Measures to reduce the effects of these activities include the following:

- Application of herbicides will meet federal, state, and local regulations. Due to the selective nature of vegetation cutting, the limited use of herbicides, and the infrequent occurrence of maintenance activities, the potential effects on wildlife and water quality will be minimal.
- Required access for maintenance would have a temporary impact on those farmlands that are crossed by the transmission line. Effects to farmlands from temporary inspection and maintenance of the transmission line would be less than significant. NWE will coordinate construction schedules with landowners to ensure that maintenance does not interfere with farming operations.
- During maintenance, potential noise sources include the use of vegetation clearing equipment (aerial lift and chainsaws), erosion management equipment, and/or aircraft. Minor intermittent noise may be generated by vegetation and erosion management activities, and any associated minor earthworks. With the exception of emergency maintenance, the