

Corridor EIS Archives

From: corridoreiswebmaster@anl.gov
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2006 11:18 PM
To: Corridor EIS Archives
Subject: Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Comment M0145

Attachments: Utah_Trout_Unlimited_energy_cooridor_map_comments_M0145.doc



Utah_Trout_Unlimit
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Thank you for your comment, Corey Fisher.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is M0145. Once the comment response document has been published, please refer to the comment tracking number to locate the response.

Comment Date: July 10, 2006 11:17:59PM CDT

Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Comment: M0145

First Name: Corey
Middle Initial: J
Last Name: Fisher
Organization: Trout Unlimited
Address: 401 B East Spruce St
City: Missoula
State: MT
Zip: 59802
Country: USA
Email: cfisher@tu.org
Privacy Preference: Don't withhold name or address from public record
Attachment: C:\Documents and Settings\Corey.Fisher\My Documents\Utah\Utah Trout Unlimited energy cooridor map comments.doc

Comment Submitted:
Please see attached comments.

Sincerely,

Corey Fisher
Energy Field Coordinator
Trout Unlimited
cfisher@tu.org

Questions about submitting comments over the Web? Contact us at:
coridoreiswebmaster@anl.gov or call the Preliminary Draft Corridor Map Webmaster at
(630)252-6182.



Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability
Room 8H-0333
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S. W.
Washington, DC 20585
Fax: (202) 586-1472

**Re: West-wide Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS Comments – Preliminary Draft
Energy Corridor Map
Submitted by fax and e-mail**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the preliminary draft energy corridor map.

Trout Unlimited (TU) is a non-profit conservation organization with more than 155,000 members nationwide dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Since 1959, TU has dedicated staff and volunteers toward the protection of sensitive ecological systems necessary to support robust native and wild trout and salmon populations in their respective range.

Trout Unlimited has a strong base in Utah with a membership of nearly 1,800 conservationists. Through passion, commitment and agency cooperation, these volunteers have been active for years in coldwater fisheries issues on the Uinta National Forest (NF). These activities have ranged from on-the-ground projects like the Indian Creek livestock fencing project and American Fork clean up, to advocating for the continued health and restoration of coldwater fisheries that the Uinta NF sustains. Aside from the fisheries restoration work of TU, many members enjoy fishing, hunting, hiking, and wildlife watching while taking in the intact landscapes that make up the recreation-rich Uinta National Forest.

Because of our connection to the Uinta National Forest, we are particularly concerned to see that a one of the proposed energy corridors bisects a backcountry portion of the Uinta National Forest approximately five miles south of Strawberry Reservoir. The sensitive fish and wildlife areas on the Uinta National Forest that this corridor encompasses include the headwaters of the Tie Fork, a stream identified to support a conservation population of Bonneville cutthroat trout. Other areas of importance are high and crucial value deer and elk winter range up Sheep Creek, high value deer and elk range in Willow Creek, and three Inventoried Roadless Areas that provide valuable habitat security for big game as well as backcountry hunting opportunities for sportsmen.

Bonneville cutthroat trout are a USFS Region 4 and state sensitive species and were petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act in 1998. A Conservation Agreement has been developed for this species within the state of Utah. The conservation and recovery for these species depends on eliminating or reducing the impact of activities that threaten the species existence. Because of the sensitive nature of this species and its

status in the Tie Fork, we feel that the designation of an energy corridor in its headwaters is unacceptable given the use such a designation would usher in, such as multiple pipelines (for oil, gas, or hydrogen) and related infrastructure, such as access and maintenance roads, compressors, pumping stations, and other structures.

We are well aware that there is already an electricity transmission line in the proposed energy corridor. However, the added impacts from additional pipelines and infrastructure are disconcerting. The harmful impacts of roads to coldwater fisheries are well documented (particularly by the Forest Service), causing decreased slope stability, increased sedimentation and increased surface runoff. Also of concern are impacts from increased habitat fragmentation and loss of habitat security due to roads and the increase in illegal OHV use.

One other concern - albeit off the forest - is that should a pipeline be placed using that corridor, the logical extension of that pipeline would run it across a section of the Strawberry River known as the "Wild Strawberry." This section of the Strawberry River has been designated as one of Utah's Blue Ribbon Fisheries and is known for the wild character of the river and the wild trout it sustains because of high water quality. Running a pipeline across this section of the Strawberry River would necessitate crossing a deep canyon (see enclosed photos) that, while not impossible, would pose some serious engineering issues beyond environmental concerns.

The proposed corridor in question runs east – west and appears to be primarily chosen for the transfer of oil and/or gas from the Uinta Basin to Salt Lake City refineries. A solution to the problems poised by the proposed energy corridor in question on the Uinta National Forest is to simply choose an alternate route that keeps the proposed energy corridor out of the backcountry and along existing transportation routes or along already existing pipelines. There are multiple options to do this and TU recommends going back to the drawing board and designating an alternative that keeps the corridor in question out of the backcountry, while still meeting the objectives of the West-wide Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS.

Thanks you for the consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Corey Fisher
Energy Field Coordinator
Trout Unlimited
401 B East Spruce St.
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 721-1002

Chris Thomas
President
Utah Trout Unlimited
962 Canyon Rd
Logan Utah 84321



Photo taken June 30, 2006 from the power-line right of way (center of photo) that the proposed energy corridor in question would follow should a pipeline project be initiated. This is the canyon that would have to be traversed.



Photo taken June 30, 2006 upstream from the Strawberry River towards the power line right of way (center of ridge) that makes up the proposed energy corridor on the nearby Uinta National Forest.