

# Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project

---

**Harney County Project Advisory Team Meeting #4**

**Summary**

**March 10, 2010**

**4 – 9 p.m.**

---

Harney County Community Center

484 N. Broadway

Burns, OR 97720

## **Table of Contents**

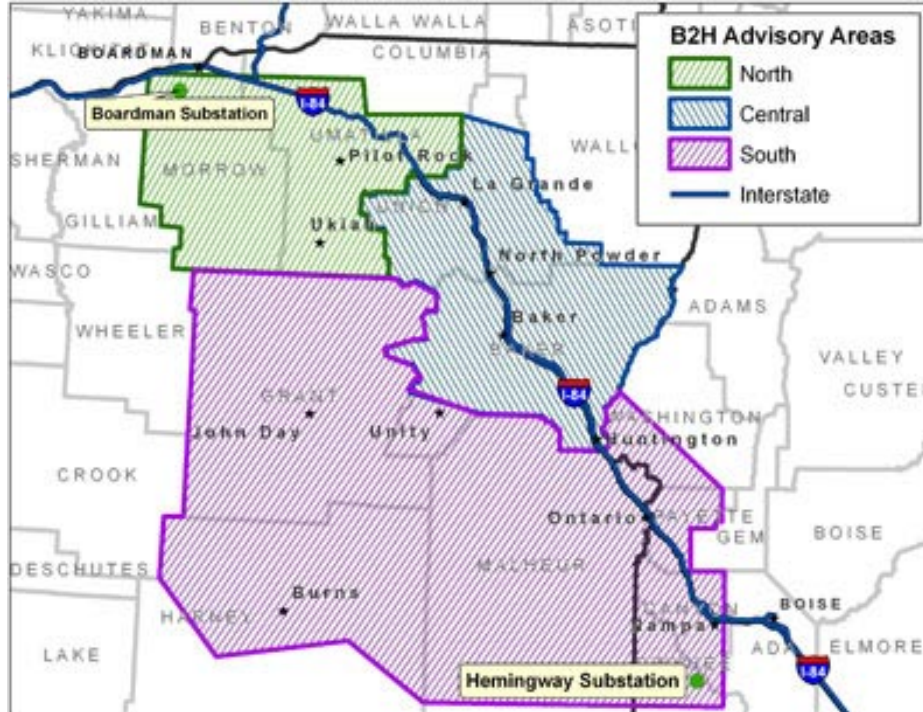
## Community Advisory Process Background

Idaho Power is committed to partnering with communities to identify proposed and alternate routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. The initial process of identifying a route began in late 2007 when Idaho Power submitted documents to the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and Oregon Department of Energy–Energy Facility Siting Council. Following public scoping meetings held in October 2008, these agencies received public input requesting that Idaho Power conduct more extensive outreach while identifying the transmission line route.

In response, Idaho Power initiated a process to engage communities—from Boardman, Oregon to Melba, Idaho—in siting the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. This process is called the Community Advisory Process (CAP). Idaho Power is conducting a comprehensive and inclusive public process to locate proposed and alternate routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.

The Project Advisory Teams will work closely with technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes.

As part of CAP, Project Advisory Teams (PATs) have been formed throughout the project area. Initially, one PAT was formed in the Central area, one in the North, and one in the South. Each PAT includes local officials, property owners and community representatives. The PATs are identifying community issues and concerns and working closely with technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes. *(Continued on next page)*



*(Introduction continued)* The Central, North and South PATs have met three times since Spring 2009. The third PAT meeting was a mapping workshop, in which PAT members identified potential routes for the transmission line. Idaho Power recorded these routes for evaluation.

Idaho Power invited community leaders from Grant and Harney counties to participate in the CAP in Spring 2009. Community leaders attended the early Central and South PAT meetings and stated that if these PATs ultimately recommended routes that affected their counties, then PATs should be formed in Grant and Harney counties.

At the Central, North and South mapping workshops in Fall 2009, PAT members asked Idaho Power to evaluate possible routes in Grant and Harney counties. As a result of the routes developed at the mapping workshops, Idaho Power hosted two public meetings in Grant and Harney counties in October 2009. The purpose of these public meetings was to give Grant and Harney counties the same opportunity as the Central, North and South advisory areas to learn about the project, see the routes proposed by the other PATs, and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line.

Idaho Power used input from the public meetings and community leaders to form a Grant County Project Advisory Team and a Harney County Project Advisory Team. All teams will work closely with Idaho Power and technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes for the transmission line.

## **Harney County Project Advisory Team Background**

### **Public Meeting**

On Oct. 22 Idaho Power hosted a public meeting in Burns, Oregon, for the residents of Harney County. The purpose of the public meeting was to:

- Give the public an overview of the project.
- Allow the public to ask questions and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line.
- Identify community members who wanted to join the Harney County Project Advisory Team (PAT).

The public meeting was conducted in an open house format. Attendees were given a meeting guide and comment sheet. Attendees were encouraged to view the nine display stations with information about the project. Idaho Power representatives were available to answer questions.

### **PAT Meeting #1**

The first Harney County PAT meeting was held Nov. 4, 2009 in Canyon City, Oregon. The Harney County PAT includes community leaders, business owners, landowners, elected officials and residents in Harney County.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Review project background, status and the Community Advisory Process (CAP).
- Discuss purpose and need for the transmission project.
- Provide overview of Boardman to Hemingway permitting process.
- Give update on CAP work.
- Identify community concerns and suggestions.

Team members were presented the regulatory and engineering criteria that would be used when developing possible routes for the transmission line. These criteria include state and federal regulations, policies and other standards that are applicable to development of a route. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Oregon Department of Energy-Energy Facility Siting Council (ODOE-EFSC) will use these criteria when reviewing proposed and alternate routes and determining whether they should authorize the project.

Community concerns and suggestions that were identified at the first PAT meeting were developed into community criteria. These community criteria have been used with the regulatory and engineering criteria to site potential routes for the proposed transmission line. These community criteria were presented to team members at the second PAT meeting for review and comment.

### **PAT Meeting #2**

The second Harney County PAT meeting was held on Nov. 18, 2009 in Burns, Oregon.

The purpose of the meeting and mapping workshop was to begin to identify a range of possible routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line.

The Harney County PAT did not develop any routes at their mapping workshop. The Harney County PAT developed two routes at their mapping workshop.

Overall, 49 routes were developed by the South, Central, North, Harney County and Grant County Project Advisory Teams.

### **PAT Meeting #3**

The third Harney County PAT meeting was held on Jan. 20, 2010 in Burns, Oregon.

The purpose of the third Harney County PAT meeting was to:

- Present the analysis methods.
- Present the status of analysis for each PAT-proposed route.

Between September and December 2009, the engineers from Idaho Power and Tetra Tech recorded and labeled all PAT-proposed routes; determined the opportunity, avoidance and exclusion areas crossed by each PAT proposed route; and revised the routes to avoid exclusion and avoidance areas.

### **PAT Meeting #4**

The fourth Harney County PAT meeting was held on March 10, 2010 in Burns, Oregon.

A complete summary of the fourth Harney County PAT meeting is included in this document.

**Detailed summaries of all Project Advisory Team meetings can be found on the project Web site [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com).**

## **Project Advisory Team Meeting #4 Overview**

### **Background**

Overall, the five Project Advisory Teams developed a total of 49 routes (3,184 miles). The Harney County PAT developed two routes at their mapping workshop in November 2009.

Between September and December 2009, engineers from Idaho Power and staff from Tetra Tech, Idaho Power's environmental consulting firm, recorded and labeled all PAT-developed routes; determined the opportunity, avoidance and exclusion areas crossed by each PAT-developed route; and revised the routes to avoid exclusion and avoidance areas. The original PAT-developed routes were combined and revised to encompass 1,984 miles.

Idaho Power presented the revised routes at the third Harney County PAT meeting in January 2009. Throughout early 2010, Tetra Tech continued to analyze each revised route for the following factors:

- Permitting difficulty – Community criteria and relative difficulty of gaining necessary permits from the federal, state and local governments.
- Constructability – The relative difficulty associated with building the line in a given route. Considerations include terrain, road construction, clearing, equipment movement and accessibility.
- Mitigation cost – The relative cost associated with mitigation actions required by permitting authorities necessary to permit a route.

The route analysis determined three route alternatives that could be the relatively least difficult to permit and could be constructible; these three routes were labeled the eastern alternative, central alternative and western alternative.

In order to re-start the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, Idaho Power is required to submit one proposed route in their revised application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Idaho Power recommends that either the eastern, central or western alternative be submitted as the proposed route. Alternate routes may be submitted in addition to the proposed route.

### **Harney County PAT Meeting #4 agenda and format**

The purpose of the fourth Harney County PAT meeting was to:

- Review progress of the Community Advisory Process and discuss next steps.
- Present analysis of revised routes and alternative routes (Eastern, Central and Western).
- Give PATs the opportunity to give input on the alternative routes.
- Give PATs the opportunity to give input on a possible proposed route.

The meeting was held March 10, 2010 at the Harney County Community Center in Burns, Oregon.

Twelve people attended the meeting. A copy of the invitation letter, list of invitees and list of attendees is available in Appendix 1.

### **Presenters:**

- Kent McCarthy – Idaho Power, Community Advisory Process Leader
- Rosemary Curtin – RBCI, Facilitator
- Dave Perry – Tetra Tech, Routing and Siting Manager
- Jim Nickerson – Tetra Tech, Vice President, Energy Services

### **Handouts:**

The following handouts were provided to team members at the meeting. Copies of these handouts are available in Appendices 2 and 3.

- Harney County PAT meeting #4 agenda
- Idaho Power PowerPoint presentation
- Tetra Tech PowerPoint presentation
- A map of the three route alternatives (Eastern, Western and Central).
- Maps of the potential route alternatives that show evaluations of permitting difficulty, construction difficulty and mitigation cost.
- Mileage summary tables and data tables for each route that identify the number of miles that have:
  - Permitting difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)
  - Construction difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)
  - Mitigation costs (low, moderate and high)
- Comment forms:
  - “Alternative Routes” comment form
  - “Eastern Alternative Route Likes/Dislikes” comment form
  - “Central Alternative Route Likes/Dislikes” comment form
  - “Western Alternative Route Likes/Dislikes” comment form
  - “Proposed Route” comment form

## **PAT Input**

Team members were provided a series of comment sheets that asked for input on:

- The route analysis
- The three route alternatives (Eastern, Central and Western)
- A possible proposed route

To ensure team members had sufficient time to review the analysis and route alternatives, team members were given until March 25, 2010 to return their comments to Idaho Power via mail or e-mail.

## **Next Steps**

Idaho Power intends to submit their revised SF-299 application to the BLM at the end of March or early April.

After the March 25 deadline Idaho Power plans to:

- Review and summarize all comments.
- Distribute summaries to PAT members and post summaries to the project Web site [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com).
- Communicate results back to the communities.
- Hold public meetings throughout the project area in Spring 2010.

## **Presentations**

### **Project Update – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, CAP Leader**

McCarthy thanked team members for coming to the meeting and explained there were several updates on participation in the Boardman to Hemingway Project. McCarthy's presentation included the following information:

- Idaho Power's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) was submitted on Dec. 31, 2009. The IRP calls for the Boardman to Hemingway line to provide 250 megawatts (MW) of power in 2015 and an additional 175 MW in 2017. The line will have additional capacity available and it is expected that other power companies will participate in building the line.
- Throughout the Community Advisory Process, several other entities have shown interest in becoming partners on the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.
- Idaho Power has recently received permission to announce that the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and PacifiCorp are currently evaluating partnering with Idaho Power on the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.
- BPA provides energy to La Grande, Quartz and Baker City. BPA also provides energy to the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative and eastern Idaho.
- BPA services the La Grande area with a 230 kV transmission line that comes from the McNary Dam area. Currently, when BPA needs to service its McNary transmission line, it cannot use another route to directly provide power to its Oregon customers. If transmission is available, BPA must schedule the power to circulate across Montana and then come back into Oregon. Participating in the Boardman to Hemingway line would give BPA an alternative for supplying power to its Oregon customers, if needed.
- BPA is expected to present information to Idaho Power executive management regarding the decision of its Boardman to Hemingway participation at the end of March.
- PacifiCorp is also considering participating in the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. Currently, PacifiCorp and Idaho Power are jointly proposing a development called Gateway West that starts in Wyoming, crosses southern Idaho, and ends at the Hemingway substation.
- In February 2010, Mission West Properties, Inc. and CDH Consulting announced they will be developing a new data center property in Ontario, Oregon. The state of Oregon has provided incentives for the data center to locate in Ontario. The transmission line will help Idaho Power expand its capacity in order to serve large users, such as this data center.

### **Welcome and Meeting Agenda – Rosemary Curtin, RBCI, Facilitator**

Rosemary Curtin welcomed team members, asked everyone to introduce themselves and reviewed the three objectives of the meeting:

- Present the analysis of the revised routes.
- Present the three route alternatives (Eastern, Central and Western).

- Collect input from team members about:
  - The route analysis
  - Likes and dislikes of each of the three route alternatives
  - A possible proposed route
- The meeting will be tape-recorded and transcribed. After all comments are collected, a meeting summary will be developed for each PAT meeting. The summaries will be distributed to team members and posted to the project Web site, [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com). Summaries and materials from all previous meetings are currently available on the project Web site.
- Idaho Power posted the route analysis materials to the project Web site one week prior to the meeting to give team members time to review the materials that would be discussed at the meeting. Team members were notified by e-mail that these materials were available on the Web site and were encouraged to review the materials before the meeting.
- Between March 2 and March 10, Idaho Power is holding five Project Advisory Team meetings in Central, North, South, Grant County and Harney County areas. The main objective of each meeting is to gather input about the route alternatives and a possible proposed route.
- Team members will be provided a series of five comment sheets. The comment sheets ask for input on the three route alternatives and a possible proposed route. Team members will be asked to complete their comment forms when the presentations conclude. When filling out their comment forms, team members will have the option to work in small groups or individually.
- Team members have the option of submitting their comment forms at the meeting or returning them to Idaho Power via mail/e-mail by March 25, 2010.
- No decisions will be made until all five PAT meetings have been completed and all comments have been collected and reviewed by Idaho Power.
- Idaho Power would like to submit its revised SF-299 application to the BLM at the end of March or early April. Submitting this application will restart the NEPA process.
- Idaho Power plans to hold public meetings for the Community Advisory Process in spring 2010. Scoping meetings will also be held in 2010 for the NEPA process. Idaho Power encourages team members to attend all meetings and stay involved in the process.

### **Community Advisory Process Review – Rosemary Curtin, RBCI, Facilitator**

Curtin explained to team members that the Community Advisory Process began almost one year ago. She reviewed the objectives of the past three Harney County PAT meetings. Her presentation included the following information:

- In Spring 2009, Project Advisory Teams (PATs) were formed throughout the project area. Initially, one PAT was formed in the Central area, one in the North, and one in the South. Each PAT includes local officials, property owners and community

representatives. The PATs are identifying community issues and concerns and working closely with technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes.

- Idaho Power invited community leaders from Grant and Harney counties to participate in the CAP in Spring 2009. Community leaders responded that they would become involved in the CAP if the other PATs proposed routes in Grant and Harney counties.
- At the Central, North and South mapping workshops, PAT members asked Idaho Power to evaluate possible routes in Grant and Harney counties. As a result of the routes Idaho Power has asked communities in Grant and Harney counties to participate in the CAP.
- In October 2009 Idaho Power hosted two public meetings, one in Grant and one in Harney County. The purpose of these public meetings was to give Grant and Harney counties the same opportunity as the Central, North and South advisory areas to learn about the project, see the routes proposed by the other PATs, and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line. The public meeting in Harney County was held Oct. 22, 2009 in Burns, Oregon.
- Idaho Power used input from the public meetings and community leaders to form a Harney County Project Advisory Team. Idaho Power hosted the first Harney County PAT meeting on Nov. 4, 2009 in Burns, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting was to:
  - Review project background, status and the Community Advisory Process (CAP).
  - Discuss purpose and need for the transmission project.
  - Provide overview of Boardman to Hemingway permitting process.
  - Give update on CAP work.
  - Identify community concerns and suggestions.
- At the first Harney PAT meeting, team members discussed and identified community concerns and suggestions about the project. The community concerns and suggestions identified by team members were developed into community criteria.
- The community criteria were used throughout the routing process, along with environmental, engineering and regulatory criteria, to help develop potential routes for the transmission line.
- The second Harney County PAT meeting was held Nov. 18, 2009 in Burns, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting was to begin to identify a range of possible routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line. During the mapping workshop, team members had the choice of mapping their routes on paper maps or working with GIS operators to lay out routes at computer stations. The Harney County PAT developed two routes at their mapping workshops.
- Idaho Power kept a detailed record of all routes developed by PAT members. Additionally, team members were asked to provide a written description and comments for each route they identified. This documentation helped Idaho Power understand the location and reasoning behind each route.

- The third Harney County PAT meeting was held Jan. 20, 2010 in Burns, Oregon. At this meeting, Idaho Power presented how the routes developed at the mapping workshops had been revised to avoid exclusion areas and significant constraints.
- The purpose of this meeting, the fourth Harney County PAT meeting, is to present the analysis of the revised routes and gather input about the three route alternatives and a possible proposed route.

### **Community Criteria and CAP-Developed Routes – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, CAP Leader**

McCarthy reviewed the community criteria that Idaho Power and PAT members developed for Harney County. He also presented how the PAT-developed routes were revised and analyzed. McCarthy's presentation included the following information:

- In Spring 2009, Idaho Power determined there was a large amount of opposition to the original route for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. In order to gather more public input, Idaho Power paused the NEPA process and implemented the Community Advisory Process.
- Idaho Power recognized that the location of the transmission line would have an impact on local communities. Community and regulatory criteria were given equal weight by Idaho Power and community members when proposing and considering routes.
- In September, PAT members were asked to develop possible routes for the transmission line based on community and regulatory criteria. Idaho Power evaluated all 49 of the routes proposed by the five PATs based on permitting difficulty, construction difficulty, and cost.
- Tetra Tech tried to maintain the original routes developed by the PATs in the mapping sessions as much as possible. Tetra Tech then combined routes with similar purposes in similar geographic regions.
- Idaho Power determined which routes were the most reasonable. The purpose of the fourth Harney County PAT meeting is to ask for input on the eastern, central and western route alternatives recommended by Idaho Power.
- Idaho Power will submit a proposed route and alternate routes as part of its NEPA application. The submission of the revised application will restart the NEPA process.
- In Fall 2009, Harney County residents raised the following concerns at the first Harney County PAT meeting:
  - A route through Harney County is not practical.
  - Benefits to Harney County are not certain.
  - The transmission line could negatively affect the environment.
- Harney County PAT members also provided suggestions for siting the transmission line. The suggestions included:
  - Use existing corridors.

- Follow the I-84 corridor.
- Shadow an existing line.
- Site the line on public land.
- Consider wildlife areas.
- Use the most direct route from Boardman to Hemingway.
- Use Idaho Power's original route.
- Idaho Power developed the concerns and suggestions provided by team members into community criteria. When Idaho Power made adjustments to the 49 routes suggested by PAT members, it followed the community criteria closely. Below are the Harney County PAT's community criteria:
  - *Placement opportunities* include: Existing energy corridors; the I-84 corridor; areas with potential for wind power; direct route between Boardman and Hemingway.
  - *Avoidance areas* include: Wildlife habitats (i.e., sage grouse leks); undeveloped and/or wilderness land; riparian areas; Exclusive Farm Use land; private land; forests and timberland; roadless areas.
- During the route analysis, all revised routes were evaluated for constructability, permitting difficulty, and mitigation cost.
- Permitting is the first concern.
- Construction difficulty is often related to terrain. Building the transmission line in the forest requires that the 250-foot right-of-way be clear-cut.
- The construction of a power line requires the construction of many roads.
- Mitigation will be required if wildlife or another resource is affected.

### **Revised Routes and Proposed Route Alternatives – Dave Perry, Tetra Tech, Routing and Siting Manager**

Perry introduced himself as a landscape architect and explained that Tetra Tech has been assisting Idaho Power for almost two years with the siting process for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. He presented information about the process of determining the most reasonable route by comparing the factors of permissibility, constructability, and cost. Perry's presentation included the following information:

- During the mapping workshops, PAT members developed 49 routes that covered 3,184 miles.
- During the analysis, Tetra Tech divided the project area into 14 regions. The routes in each region were evaluated for difficulty of permitting, constructability and mitigation costs. After these three factors were determined for each route, the routes in each region were compared and the most reasonable route for each region was identified. Some of the regions included small lengths of route; others had 130 to 180 miles.

- For each region Tetra Tech developed a map of the revised routes and mileage summary tables and data tables for each route that identify the number of miles that have:
  - Permitting difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)
  - Construction difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)
  - Mitigation costs (low, moderate and high)
- The permitting analysis takes into account constraints and opportunities. The analysis of construction difficulty considers terrain, road construction, equipment movement, forest clearing and other variables. Mitigation cost is more abstract than construction cost and permissibility.
- The following three regions are in the Harney County area:
  - Southwest
  - Blue Mountain
  - Onion Creek

Perry reviewed the permitting and constructability analysis for each of the three regions in the Harney County area. Maps and data tables for each region can be found in Appendix 4. The maps and summaries of the permitting, construction and mitigation factors are also available on the project Web site, [www.boardmantoemingway.com](http://www.boardmantoemingway.com).

### *Southwest*

- The Southwest region includes four alternative routes. Tetra Tech labeled these four alternatives:
  - Route A (nodes GR3-GR4-HA1-HA2-MA6)
  - Route B (nodes GR3-GR4-GR5-HA1-HA2 MA6)
  - Route C (nodes GR3-GR4-GR5-HA2-MA6)
  - Route D (nodes GR3-MA4-MA5-MA6)
- Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty and mitigation cost, the analysis determined Route D to be more reasonable because:
  - It is shorter than the other routes.
  - It avoids the Devine Scenic Corridor.
  - It avoids 7.3 miles of occupied lek buffer.
  - It crosses 13.6 miles fewer of forested forestlands.
  - It allows for acceptable distance between transmission lines.
  - Old growth forests can be avoided during micro-siting
- Route D presents significantly less construction difficulty than the other three routes.
- Route A is not reasonable because it is 53.7 miles longer than the shortest route, requires 1,630 more acres of right-of-way, and it crosses the south fork of the John Day River, which is a wild and scenic river.

- Route B is not reasonable because it is 41.7 miles longer than the shortest route, requires 1260 more acres of right-of-way, crosses 7.3 miles of sage grouse leks and does not allow acceptable separation between 500 kV transmission lines.

### ***Blue Mountain***

- The Blue Mountain region includes two alternative routes: a northern route and a southern route. Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty and mitigation cost, the analysis determined the southern route to be more reasonable.
- Permitting difficulty factors:
  - The southern route avoids designated USFS visual quality partial retention areas.
  - The southern route avoids 17 miles of USFS special interest area for fish management.
  - Old growth forest areas would be avoided during micro-siting.
- Construction difficulty factors:
  - The southern route crosses 12 fewer miles of high construction difficulty area.

### ***Onion Creek***

- The Onion Creek region includes two alternative routes: the eastern route and the western route. The Onion Creek area is at the intersection of Union County, Grant County and Baker County. Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty and mitigation cost, the analysis determined the east route to be more reasonable than the western route.
- Permitting difficulty factors:
  - The western route includes several state scenic waterways that cannot be crossed. It also includes wilderness study areas, roadless areas, and other features that would prohibit the construction of the transmission line.
  - The western route is not reasonable because it crosses designated USFS visual quality objective retention lands and parallels in close proximity to a nationally designated scenic byway.
  - The eastern route crosses 4.8 fewer miles of the buffer of the Nationally Designated Scenic Byway.
- Construction difficulty factors:
  - The western route has approximately 43 miles of high construction difficulty.
  - The eastern route crosses 6.5 fewer miles of high erosion hazard lands.

## **Proposed alternative routes – Jim Nickerson, Tetra Tech, Vice President, Energy Services**

After Dave Perry concluded his presentation, Nickerson presented the Eastern, Central and Western route alternatives. He explained how the routes were narrowed down to these alternatives. Nickerson's presentation included the following information:

- There are three categories of why routes were not advanced:
  - Routes that did not meet the project's purpose and need.
  - Routes that were contrary to government or private-sector management plans or to the law.
  - Routes that had combinations of high permitting difficulty or another single factor.
- One specific route that did not meet the project's purpose and need is the route that would have gone east around Boise through Idaho, and north into the state of Washington. The route was considered not reasonable for the following reasons:
  - The route would be 100 miles longer than any other route or combination of routes.
  - Residents of Idaho are just as likely to be concerned about natural resource protection as residents of Oregon are.
  - Washington residents would likely argue the transmission line does not need to go through their state to connect Boardman and Hemingway.
  - Power is projected to be needed on the west side of Boise, not the east, in the near term.
  - In the long term, routing the transmission line east of Boise would require Idaho Power to build two substations and more transmission lines.
- Another factor that eliminated some routes from consideration was a barrier in the middle of the project area consisting of state scenic waterways, federally designated wild and scenic rivers, roadless areas, wilderness areas and other protected and scenic areas.
- Some routes were not advanced because they would be very difficult, if not impossible, to permit.
- Some areas near Boardman present high permitting difficulty issues:
  - The Naval bombing range must be avoided. Two flight paths into the bombing range have 100-foot height restrictions on towers.
  - Several areas around Boardman are under management by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Nature Conservancy for the Washington ground squirrel, a Category One habitat.
  - In general, a transmission line would have to go around the bombing range from the north or south.

- A western route from Grant County or Harney County must work around the Nature Conservancy managed area and must take into account another 500 kV line planned for that area.
- There appears to be a path for the transmission line around the bombing range but the routes that go through the bombing range will not be advanced.
- The Baker Valley area includes some key resources such as pivot irrigation and sage grouse leks.
  - Several sage grouse leks are concentrated at the southern end of the study area, affecting two of the routes.
  - The Baker Valley also includes a Wildlife Management Area and residential development.
  - Further study could possibly reveal more sage grouse leks in the Baker Valley area.
  - Several routes have been eliminated from consideration in the Baker Valley because of their potential impact on agriculture.
  - Idaho Power wants to avoid building the line through Exclusive Farm Use land or through irrigated farmland.
  - A route that closely followed I-84 through the Baker Valley was eliminated because it included an airport exclusion area that would prohibit construction of the towers.
  - One route would create a new corridor across the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.
- Several routes around the Snake River Valley will not be advanced for the following reasons:
  - Several of the routes proposed by the South PAT crossed both irrigated agriculture in Idaho and Exclusive Farm Use land in Oregon.
  - There is a 300-foot buffer around residences where the transmission line cannot be built.
- Many team members have suggested siting the Boardman to Hemingway line along the same corridor as the existing PacifiCorp Summerlake to Midpoint 500 kV line.
- Eliminating all the routes with high permitting and construction difficulty produced three alternative routes: Western alternative route, Central alternative route and Eastern alternative route.

### **Western alternative route**

- The Western alternative route is 275 miles long, making it the shortest of the three alternative routes. However, the Western alternative route would require creating the most amount of new transmission line corridor.
- The Western alternative route is characterized by natural resource issues:

- High quality streams
- Two national forests with no existing utility corridors
- Rugged terrain
- The Western alternative route crosses Grant County. Throughout the Community Advisory Process, residents of Grant County have commented that they are strongly opposed to having the transmission line built in Grant County, especially through the John Day Valley.
- The Western alternative route would require crossing two national forests that do not have any existing utility corridors.
  - The Umatilla National Forest management plan does not address transmission lines. It was written in the 1980s and is in the process of being updated.
  - The Malheur National Forest management plan does not address transmission lines. The plan was written in the 1980s and is in the process of being updated.
  - The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has a designated utility corridor. The management plan contains very clear language concerning the placement of transmission lines. A new transmission line will not be considered across the forest unless the capacity within the existing utility corridor has been exhausted.
- It is not clear to Idaho Power where the transmission line could be routed through the National Forest. The Forest Service would be required to accept an application from Idaho Power for any of its routes under their Federal Land Policy and Management Act and other regulations. It's unlikely the Forest Service would approve a new corridor through a national forest if the corridor through the Wallowa-Whitman still has capacity for transmission lines.

### **Central alternative route**

- The Central alternative route is 284 miles long. The route crosses rugged terrain and more streams than the western route.
- The main difference between the Western alternative route and the Central alternative route is that the Central alternative route is located within the Baker Valley.
- The Central alternative route has a high level of construction difficulty.

### **Eastern alternative route**

- The Eastern alternative route is the longest of the three proposed alternative routes by approximately 25 miles.
- The Eastern alternative route would run parallel to I-84 for 44 miles and also run parallel to existing transmission lines for 111 miles. The eastern route would require the least amount of new corridor (188 miles) and would be the least difficult route to construct.
- A disadvantage of the eastern route is that it could create concerns about the view shed from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

### **Comparison of alternative routes**

- The Western and Central alternative routes would use more public land than private land.
  - The Western alternative route would use 137 miles (50 percent) of public land.
  - The Central alternative route would use 110 miles (39 percent) of public land.
  - The Eastern alternative route would use 93 miles (31 percent) of public land.
- The Western and Central alternative routes would require more new corridor than the eastern route.
  - The Western alternative route would require 229 miles of new corridor.
  - The Central alternative route would require 224 miles of new corridor.
  - The Eastern Alternative route would require 188 miles of new corridor.
- The Eastern alternative route would possibly require crossing more irrigated farmland, but it would require less forest clearing.
- The Western alternative route would have the highest construction difficulty.
  - The Western alternative route would include 117 miles of high construction difficulty.
  - The Central alternative route would include 99 miles of high construction difficulty.
  - The Eastern alternative route would include 65 miles of high construction difficulty.

Maps and data tables for each region can be found in Appendix 3. The maps and summaries of the permitting, construction and mitigation factors are also available on the project Web site, [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com).

## **Harney County PAT Summary of Comments**

A series of five comment forms were provided to team members at the meeting. The comment forms asked the following questions:

- 1. Is there a revised route that you believe is permissible and constructible that should be considered? Why?**
- 2. What are your “Likes” about the Western alternative route?**
- 3. What are your “Dislikes” about the Western alternative route?**
- 4. What are your “Likes” about the Central alternative route?**
- 5. What are your “Dislikes” about the Central alternative route?**
- 6. What are your “Likes” about the Eastern alternative route?**
- 7. What are your “Dislikes” about the Eastern alternative route?**
- 8. Based on the analysis, is there an alternative you support as a proposed route?**

Team members were encouraged to complete all comment forms and return them to Idaho Power before March 25, 2010.

No comment forms were completed by the Harney County PAT members. One letter was submitted; the following pages provide a summary of the comments from this letter. Judgment was used to categorize the comments submitted. A verbatim transcription of this letter is available in Appendix 4.

All input provided throughout the Community Advisory Process will be used when Idaho Power submits its revised application to restart the NEPA process.

The summary is an overview of the themes and opinions expressed. The information is not intended to be statistically reliable.

Summaries of comments from all five PATs (Central, South, North, Grant County and Harney County) are available on the project Web site, [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com).

**Question 1: Is there a revised route that you believe is permissible and constructible that should be considered? Why?**

No comments were submitted for this question.

**Question 2: What are your “Likes” about the Western alternative route?**

No comments were submitted for this question.

**Question 3: What are your “Dislikes” about the Western alternative route?**

The following comments were provided:

- Does not follow existing energy corridors.
- Impacts forested resources.
- Does not cross the National Forest via an existing designated utility corridor.
- Would require construction of new roads.
- Difficult to access for maintenance.
- Many “high construction difficulty” factors.

**Question 4: What are your “Likes” about the Central alternative route?**

No comments were submitted for this question.

**Question 5: What are your “Dislikes” about the Central alternative route?**

The following comments were provided:

- Does not follow existing energy corridors.
- Impacts forested resources.
- Does not cross the National Forest via an existing designated utility corridor.
- Would require construction of new roads.
- Difficult to access for maintenance.
- Many “high construction difficulty” factors.

**Question 6: What are your “Likes” about the Eastern alternative route?**

The following comments were provided:

- Follows existing corridors.
- Reduces impact to forested resources.

- Crosses the National Forest via an existing designated utility corridor.
- Requires less construction of new roads.
- Easier to access for maintenance.
- Fewer “high construction difficulty” factors.
- Greater versatility of entry into the Boardman site.

**Question 7: What are your “Dislikes” about the Eastern alternative route?**

No comments were submitted for this question.

**Question 8: Based on the analysis, is there an alternative you support as a proposed route?**

- The route supported as the proposed route by the Harney County PAT member that submitted the letter was the Eastern alternative route. The Central alternative route was favored over the Western alternative route, but significantly less favorable than the recommended Eastern alternative route.

**Other comments:**

- Idaho Power’s thoroughness of engagement using the Community Advisory Process and consideration and analysis of the various routing alternatives suggested by the process has been appreciated.
- Idaho Power should file the Notice of Intent with the Oregon Department of Energy-Energy Facility Siting Council for only the Eastern Alternative route.

## Q&As and Discussion

*Below is a transcription of the discussion between team members and staff from Idaho Power and Tetra Tech that occurred after the presentations.*

**PAT member: I guess I'm amazed at the miles you have in your furthest route east. And I guess I'm curious that you don't have more acres of old growth and roadless areas shown on your map. What I know of that area is that you got a lot of roadless areas there.**

Perry: Well, we don't cross a roadless area with that route.

**PAT member: You have a different definition than what the Forest Service says then.**

Perry: Well, actually I'm going by the ones that they've defined. We do run into old growth forests, but when we went back and looked at those, those areas are usually small enough that we can avoid them through micro-siting. But you're right, there are a whole lot of them in this area.

**PAT: Well they will probably burn up this summer so they won't bother you any and it won't be an issue.**

Jared Blades, GIS operator: And if you like we can take a look at the GIS layers afterward and look at each one of those specific layers.

Perry: And we could definitely do that.

**PAT member: I'm just surprised you came in that easy in that stretch; that really amazes me. I figured when you hit the forest you would have tons of problems. You haven't met Karen Coulter yet, I assume.**

Perry: Is she with the Forest Service?

**PAT member: No, she's with Blue Mountain Biodiversity. She's going to oppose you every step of the way.**

Perry: Well, and quite frankly, we want hear about those comments. But all we've done here, Judge, is to show which route one we thought was the most reasonable in each region. And actually, we are taking additional comments tonight, for sure.

We also included this one slide, this purple line is the existing 500 kV transmission line that goes through the county. And these are sage grouse lek buffers, the dark blue and those with the crosses aren't occupied, to the best of our knowledge. Because of the location of these, it actually led us to move away from this existing right of way for quite a bit of the distance.

**PAT member: This is a smart comment and you don't need to hear it. I'm amazed that the sage grouse are within three miles distance of your power lines. How could that have happened?**

Perry: Well they are probably psychologically damaged birds.

**PAT member: They just walk in circles.**

Perry: A little later on, we are going to show you how quickly that data can change. In one area we had a set of data in December and by the time we did meetings in January it had shifted. I'm just showing this one to show that corridor and two, we've got an area right here where the corridor between a roadless area and the sage grouse leks is less than 3,000 feet. That could

create a problem with the Western Electric Coordinating Council and the separation of lines. They would rather not have multiple 500 kV lines in such close proximity to each other.

**PAT member: So looking at your summary there, I would surmise looking at the data, that the eastern route is the proposed alternative.**

McCarthy: Let Rosemary discuss that with you.

Curtin: And Jim don't go too far because they may have more questions. I'll just talk about next steps.

**PAT member: I am curious about one thing. Why would you identify ONDA as one of the listed categories? When did they get that kind of authority?**

Nickerson: I've been beat up on that at every meeting, I'm glad you brought that up. They didn't get that kind of authority, if you look at all the criteria we have, we just listed it as a very low avoidance issue. Just something that is mapped; we can't just ignore it, but it doesn't carry hardly any weight.

**PAT member: What do you mean as long as it is mapped? You got to know I have this hard spot in my heart; I've been fighting ONDA forever. It is beyond me that you would even list it up there. Sorry.**

McCarthy: You know, the reason we have to list it up there, is because we have to be aware of it.

**PAT member: So can we just start listing stuff and throwing it up there on the map? If anyone can throw stuff on the wall, there will always be something. It is just incredibly frustrating to me that you would pay that much attention to ONDA.**

Curtin: And Judge, you aren't the only one that has expressed that concern.

McCarthy: The whole issue is that if we know something is there, we have to pay attention whether we go through it or not. And we know it is there, so we have to pay some kind of attention to it.

**PAT member: And this probably isn't the place to do this argument, but ONDA did a map of all the farms in Harney County and just eliminated all the good sites, and so now they are on this map. So if the feds or the utility companies are going to pay attention to that, we're done.**

**It isn't just drawing a map, or drawing circles on a map, the county government can't do it, the state government is hard-put to do it, but the feds can do it and ONDA can do it?**

Curtin: Other questions of Jim before I go to next steps?

**PAT member: Just one question for Jim, since all three routes that are proposed here are going to go through the northern part of Malheur County to begin with, has all of the Exclusive Farm Use area been avoided going through Malheur County?**

Perry: We are about 99 percent sure that it has. There may be one tiny little place where we cross between two irrigated places, but we went as far west, and then we went back to the east to go around it.

Curtin: Back to your question, that's what we want to consult with you about. I think the data kind of leads you to the technical analysis of what is permissible, constructible and what

mitigation costs are reasonable. So now the question comes back to you, and I know we're paper heavy, sorry, a series of questions. And these comment sheets are what we would like you to take the time to complete and get back to us.

We ask you the questions: Are these the three routes...have we missed anything... is there any other route you think should be considered. That's question number one. Then we follow up with three other questions on the likes and dislikes of these three alternatives. And it's really the dislikes that we are looking for because those are the kinds of things we would like to try to address if we know about them. So once again, any of the likes or dislikes regarding each of the three alternatives. And then the final question is back to you. Of each of these alternatives, is there one you could support? I don't think we want to say which one, we want to hear back from you first.

**PAT member: Well one of these three routes is what you are pretty well zeroed in on right?**

Curtin: I think the data and the analysis have led us to these three routes as the most...we could permit them, we could construct them, then again, given the caveats that we have heard, that is where our analysis has led us.

**PAT member: I already suggested this western route. I like it if you'll come down here to Harney County and build a substation.**

Curtin: And again, put those comments down. Does that answer your question?

**PAT member: Another question, the central and eastern routes both provide some versatility, but the western route doesn't have that much versatility. And I know this was talked about in the presentation earlier, as far as access goes, do we have a pretty clear vision of how to get into the Boardman site?**

Nickerson: There is another transmission line project being proposed by Portland General Electric called Cascade Crossing. It starts at Coyote Springs and it is going to go in and tie down to another substation that is going to be built in the area by another existing 500 kV line that is in the area now. So PGE is going to build a 500 kV line from Boardman that will go down to the Salem area. There is a preference for the B2H line to figure out how to get into Boardman from the north.

There is a lot of pivot irrigation and a lot going on in the south area, you can't really see it on that map. So the real preferred plan is to put the line inside the Navy property, and then it would still be a single circuit line, it would just have a heavier capacity conductor. It doesn't have to be twice as high or anything.

The Navy is not being easy with us, we are continuing to work with them. We submitted an application to the Navy and they said, "You can go across the southern part, no problem." In my opinion, that is just them being gratuitous because they know that this is all ground squirrel area and there are height restrictions and other sorts of things. So there is an ongoing discussion with the Navy about this. But if the Navy was to win, from a mission point of view, if they were to prove that they need this area for either their flights, or National Guard work in this area, then we would have to figure out how to come down and come in from the south.

Coming from the south we would have to work around the Nature Conservancy, that management plan, the deal they have with ODFW. And then we would have to come through the half pivots and come up. Basically, there are a lot of things that are still being talked about how to get into Boardman from the north or the south. And most of it is not quite clear yet.

**PAT member: The three routes that are still on the map, I assume the cost estimates are pretty narrowed down?**

McCarthy: We haven't done an exact cost comparison. You can look at the cost per mile, but more important is the construction costs and the permitting difficulty. We haven't done a detailed cost analysis yet, or a comparison basis.

Nickerson: You could, if you run the math out and say it is a million and a half for the steel and wires and everything, you end up with something like \$415 million to \$430 million for the longest route. And you are probably looking at \$40 to \$60 million in mitigation costs, environmental mitigation costs. And those tend to run higher on the western routes than on the eastern route. And the construction difficulty is going to be higher on the western route. The length can be deceiving, because the price can be a flip-flop on what you might think.

**PAT member: So for NEPA are you going to submit all three of these routes, or only one?**

Curtin: I don't think that has been determined yet.

McCarthy: We have to submit one proposed route, and then we can have additional alternative routes too.

**PAT member: That is different from what I know. Usually NEPA requires you to have alternatives.**

McCarthy: Well that's what I said. We have to have one proposed route and then we can have alternatives also.

Nickerson: Let me add a little bit to that. Idaho Power has to make a decision on what they consider their proposed route, or red route, to be. We've worked with the agencies and they have said, that since this is kind of a revision of what we did before, they have been very clear about coming back to us and they have told us that Idaho Power has to file with BLM what they propose to build.

After that there are choices. Idaho Power could submit other routes and say, "You know, we think these routes are not as good as our proposed route, but we would be willing to build it when we go through the NEPA process." Or they may just file some small variations of the proposed route. Some alternatives for issue areas, like around the Interpretive Center.

When BLM gets the application, they will get it before EFSC, they will do scoping, and BLM will look at everything Idaho Power sent in and they will decide if they want to add or subtract routes also. Then they will take that to scoping and everyone will look at those routes and there will be more comments and then more decision-making about the routes.

**PAT member: Just to put some more clarity on that, could Idaho Power submit just one proposed route to this process?**

Nickerson: Sure.

**PAT member: If Idaho Power submits a proposed route and an alternative or two, will the proposed route and the alternatives all need to be environmentally impact studied? Or will just the proposed route needs to be studied?**

Nickerson: If Idaho Power submits a second route, they are saying to the NEPA process that they want the other route studied. It would be very unusual for BLM to say, “Oh, you sent us a route, but we’re going to reject it.” Even if it’s an alternative. So Idaho Power has to think very hard and clearly about what it wants to do about the alternative routes.

**PAT member: I think what I heard you say is that if Idaho Power submits alternative routes, they have to be studied, or they should be studied.**

Nickerson: BLM would see no reason not to study them, unless the BLM concluded that they were just really unreasonable. When EFSC kicks in, that process asks that you only submit one route. For the sanity of everyone, BLM and EFSC have been trying to do this as a joint process, so that there aren’t two different processes going on at the same time.

Sue Oliver, ODOE: If I can say something, the challenge between the federal and state processes is that the federal process generally always says, “We will do a higher level study of multiple alternatives. The state process is set up so basically you propose a route and when it comes to the EFSC council, you have already studied the heck out of it. That is going to be a very difficult process to do without stretching this out for 10 years. You somehow have to go through an entire federal process to determine the preferred alternative. Then you come into the state process and it would be possible for the state to say, “This route doesn’t meet our standards, go start over again.” That’s not going to work; it’s not practical.

So what we are trying to do is go into the scoping meetings, trying to match up the federal public involvement process with the state early on, and we are still in discussions with other state agencies and if they would be willing to do a phased study approach, where initially, because we haven’t dealt with a transmission line in over 20 years, where we could maybe accept some lower level studies and keep things moving forward. All the studies will eventually have to be done on a route, but because the way the council rules are is that they don’t tell you which route. They look at the route you bring and the EFSC council determines if it meets their standards.

**PAT member: One other question, when the BLM reviews the application from Idaho Power, can they propose alternatives that aren’t in the applications or do those alternatives go off their jurisdiction and into private lands? Or can they just look at alternatives on public land?**

Nickerson: They would propose, whether they be long alternatives or short alternatives, they would be continuous.

Oliver: The BLM is only required to assess the impacts of the entire length, even on private land. They can’t just look at certain pieces.

**PAT member: You’ve also got four or five county land use plans, which EFSC is supposed to homogenize, but it is extremely difficult to do that also.**

Nickerson: We actually just met with all the county planners from all the counties involved to start having that discussion on how we are going to deal with transmission lines. It’s not just the B2H line, it’s also the Cascade Crossing line. We will be having further meetings and further discussions.

**PAT: Just one other question. Kent, to fulfill my curiosity, at the beginning of the meeting you asked if any of us had heard about the incident up in John Day. Should that incident in John Day be something that we should be aware of while we're routing?**

McCarthy: No.

**PAT member: I have a question about that, what was the incident in John Day?**

McCarthy: Idaho Power received a letter, our CEO received a letter, we had our meeting Tuesday night and got the letter Wednesday morning. The letter was saying that some of our employees and contract personnel were in a restaurant having some pizza and drinking some beer after the meeting and they were saying derogatory and threatening things about the people of Grant County. Now that it has disseminated out through the Grant County area and out to Baker County and down to Malheur County.

Idaho Power has hired a private investigator and he has gone over and interviewed the people at the restaurant and interviewed all the contract and Idaho Power employees that were involved to figure out what actually happened. And Idaho Power is going to take action based on the investigation. We responded to the letter and tried to put an op-ed piece in the Blue Mountain Eagle, but they don't allow apologies in the opinion section. But on their Web page, we've posted a letter that apologizes for the impact this caused.

Curtin: I think the long and short of it is that Idaho Power wants people to know that what was said and what was communicated does not represent leadership's position from their company. I just wanted to reiterate that.

**PAT member: Well I read all the letters and everything, I just wanted to hear what your side of the story was and what went on there. I think it all sounds very unprofessional.**

McCarthy: We don't have a side of the story.

**PAT: So we'll be hearing more about this? I don't believe everything that comes out of John Day either.**

Curtin: Any other questions? Thank you all for persevering through this process, it doesn't sound like we are finished yet, but getting closer. Please give us your comments before you leave.

McCarthy: You can stick around tonight, or you can e-mail or mail your comments back to me. My address is on the bottom of the forms. We really need to have them by March 25. We intend, we plan, and we hope to submit our SF-299, which is the application for use of federal lands, back to the BLM to restart the NEPA process, at the end of this month or the beginning of next month. So if we could have those comments by March 25, we can go ahead and make our decision, and we can see where there is consensus, or at least we are aiming at which one of those routes should be a proposed line.

Again, like I said, we need a proposed route and we can have alternatives; they can be complete alternatives or segment alternatives. And then we'll file a Notice of Intent with the Oregon Department of Energy-Energy Facility Siting Council and that will start the EFSC process again. The EFSC process was at a natural holding point because we had already submitted a Notice of Intent, but we will submit a new one.

The BLM process, the NEPA process has been on hold, they haven't been doing anything while we go through the Community Advisory Process, the submission of the revised SF-299 will start up the NEPA process again. And we will continue to work with the community

members throughout the entire process. Even if our proposed line doesn't come through Grant or Harney counties, we will continue to communicate with you folks, and want you to continue to communicate with us that have been involved. We will communicate with you throughout the whole process as we go forward.

Because as we mentioned, once we do submit this stuff back to BLM and into the NEPA process, it is up to them which line they like best. Even if we proposed a line, they can actually come back and say, no we don't like that we would rather go this way. So we want to keep you informed and involved and make sure that if anything like that happens, you are informed of what direction the line will go.

**PAT member: Do you actually think that they would propose a route to use in lieu of yours?**

McCarthy: I don't think so, but they do have the ability to, and because of that...

**PAT member: They have steadfastly told us that they would never do that because they would get sued for making a decision for somebody. I've heard that said at least 10 times over the past six months.**

Perry: Other groups can bring in alternatives.

**PAT member: Well that's one thing I worry about, because you guys got so many routes, that the anti-groups, they are coordinated and they will just keep proposing different routes to the BLM.**

McCarthy: And we just want you to know that if that does happen we will let you know and you will be informed. We want to make sure that you are communicated with on a regular basis.

**PAT member: Will you drill down on a fairly tight scale for the part of that route that is in Harney County? Can you give us a map of that? I'd like to put it on a Web site for the county.**

Curtin: I'm not sure we have section level data yet. I think that is coming, and yes, we can certainly get that.

**PAT member: I'd like to make sure that any landowner in Harney County that is close to that route is aware of it.**

McCarthy: After this, probably at the end of April or early May, we are going to come back with a public meeting. At that point we will notify the landowners that will be involved, of this meeting. This information we showed you tonight is available on the Web site.

**PAT member: Well I can't even guess at where you are at with those maps that you have now.**

Curtin: We are going to put some section level maps up on the Web site.

*Meeting dismissed.*