



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Baker Field Office  
3165 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Baker City, Oregon 97814  
<http://www.or.blm.gov/Vale/>

IN REPLY REFER TO:

**July 26, 2002**

**2862  
OR 56727**

**Dear Reader:**

**An Environmental Assessment and proposed Finding of No Significant Impact have been prepared for a proposed buried fiberoptic line in Baker County. The route of the line runs across public lands lying between Halfway and Brownlee Village on the Snake River. Most of the route runs along the Deer Creek Road.**

**A public comment period is now in effect until August 31, 2002. To be considered in final decision making, comments must be filed by that date with the Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 3165 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Baker City, Oregon 97814.**

**If you have any questions about this project, please contact Steve Davidson at 541-523-1349.**

**Sincerely,**

**s/Ted Davis for,**

**Penelope Dunn Woods  
Field Manager**

**Pine Telephone System, Inc.**  
**Halfway-Brownlee Fiberoptic Line**  
**OR 56727**  
**EA #OR-035-01-16**

**I. Introduction**

A. Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

Pine Telephone System, Inc., of Halfway, Oregon, has submitted a right-of-way application for the installation and maintenance of a buried fiberoptic telecommunications cable. The purpose of the project is to provide improved and more dependable service, including enhancement of communications in times of emergencies, to the residents of Brownlee Village. The village is located below Brownlee Dam on the Snake River and currently consists of 13 residences.

B. Conformance with BLM Land Use Plans

The proposed action is in conformance the Baker Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved July 12, 1989. The proposed route of the project lies within the Baker County Geographic Unit as designated in the RMP. Public lands are to be available for local rights-of-way. The route is not in an avoidance or exclusion area.

The RMP also states that new rights-of-way should follow existing corridors wherever practical. This proposed right-of-way would follow existing roads or a power line for virtually its entire length.

C. Relationship to Other Plans

Baker County has zoned the area Exclusive Farm Use. Local utilities are an outright permitted use in this zone.

D. Statutes, Laws, and Regulations Affecting the Proposal

The proposed project would be appropriately authorized under Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and regulations at 43 CFR 2800.

**II. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives**

The proposed facilities consist of a buried fiberoptic communications cable and the

necessary connecting boxes and pedestals for connecting and maintenance testing. The length of the right-of-way would be about 8.1 miles, most of it within or along a road. Permanent width proposed is 15 feet, with an additional construction width of 15 feet.

Subsequent to submitting the application, the applicant and its consultant determined that some maintenance or replacement of culverts on the road along the proposed route would be advisable. This work is also considered as part of the Proposed Action. It would likely be accomplished in a partnership arrangement with the BLM, since the road is normally maintained by BLM, with the BLM providing the culverts and the applicant the equipment and labor. The extent of this work and whether or not a specific culvert is replaced may depend on available funding.

The purpose of this work would be to protect the cable from damage resulting from "washouts" due to inadequate size or plugged culvert pipes. An additional temporary width to accommodate this work would be included in the right-of-way authorization. Attachments to this EA show the subject culvert locations and the proposed work at each.

The route of the project is described as follows. See also maps attached to this report.

The route enters public lands on the south shoulder of Pine Town Lane, Baker County Road #1128, about 2 3/4 miles east of the community of Pine, and 4 1/4 miles east/southeast of Halfway. The route continues on Pine Town Lane for about .3 mile to the entrance of a gravel pit, often referred to as the "Dead Cow Gravel Pit", where the county portion of the road ends.

Beyond the gravel pit, the road is maintained by BLM and is known as the Deer Creek Road or sometimes, the Brownlee Overlook Road. The fiberoptic route continues to follow the south shoulder to the head of Road Canyon, about five miles from its beginning. The road then becomes more primitive and the cable would be buried in its right (or south) wheel track for another two miles. After this total of seven miles, the route is now on the ridge overlooking Brownlee Dam and Brownlee Village.

At this point, the route leaves the road and follows the route of a 69kV power line down the steep side of this ridge toward the Snake River. After about 2000 feet, the power line veers off sharply to the right, while the proposed route of the fiberoptic line continues on down to the bottom of the slope. It then runs a short distance along a primitive road to Idaho Power's paved road running along the shore of the Snake River (or the upper end of Oxbow Reservoir, here). The route meets this road at about the point where it curves to cross the bridge over the Snake. The route then turns north and runs about 1/4 mile along the west shoulder of this paved road and through Brownlee Village. At the north end of the Village, it crosses the paved road to connect with an existing line coming from the north.

The cable would be buried a minimum of 36 inches and be housed in plastic PVC conduit. On most of the route it is expected to be directly buried by a narrow (one foot wide) cable plow mounted on a heavy-duty crawler tractor. In rocky areas, it may be necessary to excavate a trench with a backhoe. In especially tough areas, it might be necessary to use a rock saw, or to use a hammer mounted on a track hoe to break up rock, then remove the pieces of rock with a backhoe. Some hand digging may also be needed in rocky areas.

On portions of the route where the direct-burial process is used, a heavy rubber-tired or track machine would follow the tractor and smooth and compact the trenched area with its tires or track. Backhoe trenches would be filled and compacted with hand-operated vibrating tampers.

The route crosses a number of draws which are culverted. Here, it is planned to install the cable under the culvert. A backhoe would be used to excavate on each side of the culvert, reaching in underneath as far as possible. Some hand digging may be needed to make the final connection of the trench. In a few cases, if the culvert is short enough, the route may deviate from the plane of the road shoulder somewhat and go out around the end of the culvert. In this case, the cable would be plowed in directly through the draw channel.

As stated earlier, there would be additional work done to the culvert itself in several locations. A number of culverts would be maintained, cleaned out and/or reset. Several would have extensions added to one or both ends. Contingent on available funding, a few would be replaced with larger diameter pipes, or a second one placed next to the existing one (to avoid the need for additional fill material to raise the roadbed over a larger culvert).

When removing the culvert is necessary, the pipe would be uncovered with a backhoe and lifted out. The fill material removed would be temporarily stockpiled on the road way. The channel bottom would be shaped to accommodate the culvert and aligned to minimize erosion. The pipe would then be reset and adequate backfill would be placed to protect the culvert pipe and thoroughly compacted.

Tail ditches would usually be cleaned by tilting the blade of a grader or dozer and running it along the ditch. If a great deal of material must be cleaned out, a backhoe may be used instead, straddling the ditch and removing material with the bucket.

The steep pitch down from the ridge above the Snake River may pose special problems. It is anticipated by the applicant that the crawler tractor can negotiate this segment and that the cable can be direct buried on this portion. If backhoes and other equipment are needed, it may be necessary to cable crawler tractors to them for additional stability and safety.

At its east terminus, at the north edge of Brownlee Village, the conduit would be

bored under the paved road.

Pedestal boxes would be installed as needed; it is anticipated there would be no more than six. They would be the typical green or orange color used on these facilities. They would be offset from the cable but within the 15-foot right-of-way. Warning signs would be installed as required to protect the cable. A marking tape would also be installed halfway between the ground surface and the cable to provide additional warning to anyone doing excavation along the route as in, for example, road or fence maintenance.

The application included a number of mitigating measures:

- adequate backfilling and compacting (to avoid creating a gutter that would channel water)
- sediment retention structures where needed
- erosion control structures where needed, including numerous waterbars on the steep slope above the Snake River
- seeding with an approved species mixture where needed (mostly the slope above the Snake)
- cleaning vegetation from equipment and vehicles before entering or leaving public land
- adequate spill prevention and response plan
- adequate fire prevention and response plan
- coordination with Baker County Road Department

Once installed, fiber optic lines are virtually maintenance free. It is anticipated that no maintenance would be necessary unless the line is damaged. Since much of the line is to be installed along or within a road that is occasionally maintained, it might be vulnerable to damage during that maintenance. However, the depth of burial, the warning markers and warning tape, and the encasement of the fiber in plastic conduit, makes that event highly unlikely.

Another potential source of damage is high runoff in the several drainages along the route. Again, the depth of burial and the planned culvert maintenance and replacement greatly reduces that possibility.

If maintenance of the fiber optic line is needed, it would be in site specific locations. The damaged portion would be exposed by using a backhoe or similar machine and the repairs made. The line would be re-installed in the trench, the backfill replaced and tamped, and possibly, depending on the location, the disturbed area would be seeded.

In addition to the installation of the fiberoptic line and related facilities, the applicant will also require a Temporary Use Permit for a staging area within the Dead Cow Gravel Site. That authorization would be within an existing compatible authorized use area and, as such, would qualify as a categorically excluded action. It will be treated separately under Categorical Exclusion Review procedures and will not be included in this environmental assessment.

The only alternative considered is No Action, in which case, the fiberoptic cable would not be installed. There are no other feasible routes crossing public lands. One non-public land route might be along Highway 86. This would be much longer, would have effects on Pine Creek (a bull trout stream), and be more vulnerable to damage because of highway maintenance.

### III. Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

#### A. General Setting

The first five miles of the proposed route cross gently undulating “biscuit-scabland” range country lying between Pine Valley and the west foot of the ridge which forms the west rim of the Snake River canyon. This portion of the route is on the shoulder of a relatively good road, the first .3 miles a gravel county road, then a good primitive road of dirt and native rock. The route crosses a number of shallow draws and intermittent streams. Elevations range from about 2500 feet at the west end of the route to about 3240 feet at the head of Road Canyon, which is where the route begins to ascend to the ridge overlooking the Snake River.

From this point on, the road is more primitive, at times little more than a two-track through the vegetation. It climbs the west slope and passes along the north side of Round Mountain, a prominent feature on the Snake River rim, to reach the crest of the ridge. It then runs generally north along this ridge for about 3/4 mile. Elevation of the ridge varies from about 3600 to 3700 feet.

The portion of the route from the ridge top to the Snake River is a long, steep slope. Elevation at the bottom, at Brownlee Village, is about 1840 feet.

#### B. Critical Elements

The following Critical Elements are not present on the project area or would not be affected by the Proposed Action, and are therefore not further discussed: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Environmental Justice, Prime/Unique Farmlands, Floodplains, Tribal Concerns & Treaty Rights, Solid/Hazardous Waste, Drinking/Ground Water Quality, Wild & Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness Areas.

The remaining Critical Elements would be affected or otherwise merit additional discussion.

##### 1. Air Quality

Air quality in the area is generally very good. It could be affected by the Proposed Action from dust being raised during construction activities. Any effects would be minimal, highly localized, and short-term. As soon as the activity is completed, it would quickly clear up.

##### 2. Cultural/Historic Resources

A cultural resource inventory of the route was completed by a contract archaeologist. Consultation letters and a draft cultural resource survey report were sent to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, Nez Perce Tribe, and the Burns Paiute Tribe for review.

No new archaeological sites were found along the route or at the staging area, but two previously recorded sites on the route were located and examined by shovel testing, from recommendations resulting from the above review. Testing along the cable route determined that the cultural deposits within the road prism are shallow and disturbed. Cable installation would be confined within the previously disturbed road bed in the vicinity of the sites, and would therefore have no adverse effect on cultural resources.

3. Threatened and Endangered Animals

A bald eagle nest is located several miles to the north near Oxbow Dam and there would be no impact to that site. Bald eagles are also known to use the Snake River corridor for foraging and roosting during the winter months. Since construction would take place during the summer or fall, there would be no impact.

4. Threatened and Endangered Fish

Most of the project area lies within the Deer Creek sub-watershed, which flows into Pine Creek. The route crosses the upper reaches of Deer Creek and several of its tributaries. All of these streams, including Deer Creek, are intermittent and non-fish bearing.

Bull trout, a listed species under the Endangered Species Act, is present in parts of the Pine Creek basin. A Biological Assessment prepared for the project reached a determination that it MAY AFFECT bull trout but is NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT bull trout populations or their habitat. Potential effects are from sedimentation due to vegetation removal during the installation.

Concurrence from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been received.

5. Threatened and Endangered Plants

A botanical survey was conducted for the portion of the route not in roadbeds (north of Round Mountain to Brownlee Dam). No special status plant species were found. The proposed action is unlikely to

affect any special status plant species.

6. Wetlands/Riparian Areas

The existence of these areas along the route is minimal, consisting of narrow strips of grasses and sedges along a few intermittent streams which may be influenced by the seasonal flow in these draws. There are no riparian shrub species present.

A minimal amount of this vegetation would be disturbed or destroyed during excavation and installation of the facilities, and would be largely replaced by the reseeding measures.

C. Other Environmental Components

1. Vegetation

Vegetation effects on the first five miles of the route would be minimal. This portion of the route is on the shoulder of a fairly good road. The only vegetation that would be disturbed would be a small amount which has encroached onto the side of the road. This consists mostly of bulbous and Sandberg's bluegrass, gumweed, lupine, and a number of other perennial and annual forbs.

The remainder of the route, which is largely the more primitive portion of the road and the slope above the Snake River, would see greater impacts to vegetation. Vegetation directly in the path of the cable route would be destroyed, while that immediately adjacent would be disturbed. The effects along the primitive road may be slight since it is intended to bury the cable in the right wheel track which is largely devoid of vegetation. However, some vegetation destruction is bound to occur. Major species include bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, junegrass, mountain brome, and a variety of forbs. A portion of the roadside has been seeded to crested wheatgrass.

The reseeding measures included in the application as a mitigating measure would replace destroyed vegetation. However, the species composition would be different than it currently is.

2. Soils

Soil map units on the route consist of the Robinette-Gwinly complex in the area between Pine Valley and the eastern ridge, Gwinly-Immig very cobbly silt loams on the west side of the ridge, and the Ruckles-Ruclick-Snellby complex on the east side of the ridge.

Impacts to the Robinette-Gwinly unit would be minor. The trenching and excavation in this portion of the route is expected to largely be in the fill material on the shoulder of the road.

Impacts to the other two units could be considerable greater. These soils are more erosive and the slopes on these portions of the route are greater, especially the long steep slope from the top of the ridge down to the Snake River. The trenching and excavation would be totally in the soil profile. Soils would be disturbed and displaced, and the profile would be disrupted. After backfilling, the loosened soil and lack of vegetation would make the soil more prone to erosion, especially on the steep east slope of the ridge. If the backfilled soil were to settle and create a "gutter" that would channel water, the erosion hazard would increase.

The mitigating measures contained in the application, such as adequate compaction of the backfilled soil, waterbars, and reseeding, would keep erosion problems to a minimum.

### 3. Water Resources/Hydrology

The route crosses a number of intermittent streams, including Deer Creek. None had any water when observed on June 22, 2001, a very dry year. In a more typical year, some of these draws may carry water into July.

It is expected that construction activity would occur in the summer after any flow has ceased, and there would be no direct impacts to water quality during construction. If excess soil or fill material is allowed to remain in a draw channel and cause channel blockage, this could be flushed out during the next storm or snow melt event and cause deposition downstream. The sediment control measures, as needed, included in the application, would prevent this from occurring.

The proposed culvert maintenance and replacement is expected to improve the flow in several of the intermittent streams. Presently, during high runoff events, the flow may be restricted by inadequate diameter culverts or partially plugged culverts. This causes the streams to occasionally overflow across the road and carry soil and sediment downstream. The proposed project should alleviate this problem and may have a slight beneficial impact to water quality in Pine Creek.

The route lies within about 200 feet from the Snake River at its east end. It is anticipated that the mitigation measures proposed would prevent any sediment from reaching the river.

4. Wildlife Habitat

The route crosses elk and mule deer range. Chukars inhabit the area, especially the Snake River breaks. A variety of songbirds would be expected; species observed include western meadowlark, horned lark, lark sparrow, Bullock's oriole, and Brewer's blackbird.

Bighorn sheep inhabit Sheep Mountain a few miles to the north and may occasionally reach the project area.

The noise and presence of men and equipment during construction would frighten away wildlife for a short time. After construction is completed, wildlife would return to the area and there would be no long-term effects. There would be a negligible loss of habitat, which would largely be replaced by the reseeding measures.

5. Livestock Forage/Management/Improvements

The proposed route lies within Pine Valley Allotment #3001. There would be a negligible loss of forage, which would be replaced by the reseeding measures. There would be no effect on permitted use or management within the allotment.

The route runs in close proximity to a fence for about ½ mile, and through another drift fence. These fences could be damaged during construction if care is not taken.

The route passes through the collection area of a developed spring on the west slope of Round Mountain. The headbox and trough are located on the north side of the road and there would be no impact to those facilities. However, tile pipe extends under the road to the south side to collect water and feed it into the springbox. Therefore, it is likely that some of this portion of the development could be damaged.

The route also crosses a cattleguard location at the west entrance to BLM lands and another one about 4½ miles along the route which is not yet installed as of this writing, but is expected to be by the time

this project is constructed. These facilities could be damaged if care is not taken.

6. Visual Resources

The visual resource management (VRM) classification for the project area is Class II. In this class, activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer.

The pedestals and warning markers would be visible, but only at close range to travelers as they pass by them on the road. Otherwise, there would be virtually no visual impact on the road portion of the route. After the route is backfilled, compacted, and seeded, the scar would simply disappear into the shoulder or track of the road.

There would be a greater impact on the portion coming down the steep slope to the river. The scar would remain visible for a time. It would be especially visible from the Idaho side, particularly to travelers coming across the bridge below Brownlee Dam, as they would be looking right at it. However, their attention is more likely to be drawn to Brownlee Dam to the left and Brownlee Village to the right. After a period of time and the seeding takes hold, the scar would fade. It may always be visible on close inspection from certain angles, but would not attract attention.

7. Noxious Weeds

Rush skeletonweed and St. Johnswort are two species that could be expected here. The soil disturbance and removal of vegetation could encourage the spread of these two weeds. The proposed mitigation of “cleaning vegetation from equipment and vehicles before entering or leaving public land” would minimize the spread of noxious weeds to or from the project area. The reseeding measures would also retard the spread of weeds.

8. Land Uses/Rights/Facilities

The route runs alongside or within close proximity to a number of existing facilities, as listed below. None would be affected to more than a minimal extent.

- 69kV power line, authorized by right-of-way ORE 05129 to Idaho Power. The route runs beside this line at its west end, then follows it down a portion of the steep slope above the

## Snake River.

- Pine Town Lane, Baker County Road #1128. The route runs on the south shoulder of this road for the west .3 mile.
- Dead Cow Gravel Quarry, authorized to Baker County by free use permit OR 50433. The route runs through the designated pit area and adjacent to the actual excavated area.
- BLM road, reserved by right-of-way ORE 014703. The route runs on the south shoulder or wheel track of this road for about 6.7 miles. The road prism would be disturbed temporarily during construction but restored afterwards. The road appears to occasionally suffer minor damage during runoff from snowmelt or storm events, due to inadequate sized or plugged culverts, which causes water to flow over the road. The proposed culvert replacement and maintenance would reduce this possibility.
- 230 kV power line, authorized by a linear withdrawal to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and licensed to Idaho Power. The route passes underneath this line a few times and roughly parallels it as it runs up the west slope of Round Mountain.
- 69 KV line running parallel to the shore of Oxbow Reservoir, belonging to Idaho Power. The route passes beneath this line at the foot of the slope above the Snake River.
- Idaho Power's paved road along the shore of Oxbow. The route runs on the west shoulder of this road for about ¼ mile as it approaches and runs through Brownlee Village, then crosses this road at the end of the route.
- Gravel side road at south entrance to Brownlee Village. The route crosses this road. This road would be damaged if not repaired properly.

## 9. Access

Legal and physical access to the project area is provided by the Pine Town Lane county road from the west and Idaho Power's paved road at the east end.

Access on the road on the route could be temporarily disrupted during construction. There would not be any long-term effect.

## 10. Socio/Economic

The only effects would be to the residents of Brownlee Village who would be provided with improved communications service. Modern telecommunications and related services (internet access, fax, etc.) are important to function in modern society. These improved services may have a negligible impact in drawing tourists and prospective new residents to the area.

#### D. Cumulative Impacts

Impacts from this project would be added incrementally to impacts from uses already occurring along the route. These impacts include dust from travel on the road, vegetative impacts from livestock use, soil impacts from road use and maintenance, sedimentation from the road, and the visual impacts of the various facilities at Brownlee Village. The addition of the impacts from the project to this mix would be minimal.

Cumulative effects to archaeological sites include disturbance from past road construction and maintenance, and development and maintenance of a spring for livestock water. Installation of the buried cable is unlikely to contribute to these cumulative effects, since the right-of-way and construction area are confined to previously disturbed ground.

Cumulative impacts identified also include those related to the fact that, if this right-of-way is authorized, then fiberoptic cable would also be installed along the shoulder of Pine Town to the west of BLM land. Therefore, the impacts from the project on BLM land would be added incrementally to the impacts resulting from the project off BLM land. These impacts consist primarily of dust being raised, minor disruption of traffic, and a crossing of Pine Creek. All impacts are expected to be minimal and temporary.

#### IV. **Environmental Impacts of No Action**

Under this alternative, the above impacts would not occur. The residents of Brownlee Village may have to do with sub-par telecommunications service, or the applicant would have to choose another route, which would likely be longer, more expensive, and result in greater resource impacts.

On-going effects on various resources along the proposed route from existing uses would continue. These effects include:

- Air quality may be minimally affected intermittently in the immediate area from dust raised by vehicles traveling on the Deer Creek-Brownlee Overlook road.
- The road may contribute a small amount of sediment into intermittent streams during storm or snowmelt events, which in turn may find its way to

Pine Creek, and thus have minor effects on water quality and bull trout habitat.

- Vegetation would continue to receive minor disturbance from vehicle traffic and livestock grazing.
- Current soil impacts consist of minor disturbance and compaction by vehicle traffic on the more primitive portion of the road.
- The road would continue to suffer minor damage from high runoff events, although it is expected that eventually, the BLM would maintain or replace several culverts and reduce or eliminate this damage.

## **V. Mitigation Measures**

The applicant should apply the following measures to prevent or reduce various impacts. Several of these were included in the application as part of the proposed action.

- Do not widen the road prism at any location. Exceptions may be made at certain culvert locations where a larger culvert or culvert extension is installed.
- Delay the start of construction until after spring flow in intermittent streams has ended.
- Compact backfill material adequately to prevent settling and the creation of a “gutter” that may channel water.
- Repair the road prism as necessary.
- At drainage crossings, remove all excess fill material and restore the contour of the channel to avoid a restriction in water flow and possible deposition of material downstream or erosion of streambanks. Also restore the streambank as needed to prevent erosion or cutting of the bank.
- Implement the following measures to prevent disturbance to archaeological sites:

Comply with BLM’s standard stipulation (included in all right-of-way grants) which requires protecting and reporting unanticipated discoveries.

Contact BLM before construction in the vicinity of the two known sites and arrange for the presence of a cultural resource monitor during said construction.

In the vicinity of the two known sites, install the cable within the tread of the road rather than along the shoulder. Allow no disturbance to occur outside of the road prism near these sites.

Do not place any pedestals or warning markers near these sites.

- When replacing or resetting a culvert, shape the channel bottom to accommodate the culvert, with both the channel and culvert aligned to minimize erosion. Place the culvert on the channel bottom so that water flows smoothly through the culvert and into the channel, without any fall of water onto the channel bottom.
- Place adequate backfill material over culverts that are replaced or reset.
- Do not do any excavation at culvert location no. 18 (see culvert location attachments). If any berm construction is needed, it must be constructed of weed-free material brought in from off-site.
- Confine tail ditch cleanout (all locations) to the existing drainage bottom.
- Construct waterbars where needed. This would include numerous hand-constructed waterbars on the steep slope above the river. This would control soil erosion.
- Place sediment control or retention structures where needed.
- Seed where needed with an approved species mixture. This would be largely on the steep slope above the river. It may also include, but not be limited to, stream crossings and stream banks, and certain areas along the ridge route and west slope of the ridge. This measure would replace destroyed vegetation, provide soil protection, and retard invasion by noxious weeds.
- Avoid any damage to fences or cattleguards. If damage does occur, repair adequately in a timely manner.
- If, possible, avoid damage to the tile pipe or other piping in the collection area for the Round Mountain spring development. If damage does occur, it must be repaired immediately in accordance with BLM instructions.
- Scatter and smooth any excess fill material. This would reduce the visibility of the project. Do not deposit any excess material in drainage channels, riparian areas, or borrow ditches.
- Clean vehicles and equipment of vegetative matter before entering or leaving public lands. This would reduce the chance of spreading noxious

weeds.

- Provide weed control on the right-of-way when needed.
- Comply with any requirements of Baker County concerning installing the cable along the county road portion at the west end of the right-of-way.
- Avoid any impact to structures on the electric power lines along the route.
- Comply with any requirements of Idaho Power concerning the installation of the cable along and under the paved road.

## **VI. Residual Impacts**

With the application of the above measures, the following impacts would be expected:

- Minor, short-term, localized affect on air quality from dust.
- Minor disturbance and destruction of vegetation, replaced by the seeded species.
- Minor dislocation and disturbance of soil. Possible threat of soil erosion, minimized by compaction, waterbars, and reseeding.
- Possible minor short-term impact to water quality in Pine Creek, followed by negligible beneficial effect on water quality in Pine Creek (due to larger diameter culvert pipes installed on the Deer Creek - Brownlee Overlook Road).
- Minimal visual impact from pedestals and warning markers, also the scar on the slope above the Snake River.
- Small threat of noxious weed invasion, minimized by cleaning vegetation from equipment and vehicles, and by the reseeding measures.
- Possible temporary damage to side road at entrance to Brownlee Village.
- Possible temporary disruption to access on the Deer Creek - Brownlee Overlook Road.
- Reduced damage to the above road from high runoff.
- Improved service to local residents.

## **VII. Contacts and Consultations**

On June 29, 2001, the Baker County Planning Department was contacted regarding compatibility with county zoning on adjoining private land.

On September 7, 2001, letters were sent to the following advising them of the project and inviting comment:

All grazing permittees in the Pine Valley grazing allotment  
Idaho Power Company  
Baker County Road Department  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

On May 3, 2002, letters were sent to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and to the below listed tribes. This letter informed the recipients of the project and of the presence of the two archaeological sites.

Burns Paiute Tribe  
Nez Perce Tribe  
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Concurrence was sought and received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the effect on bull trout.

When this Environmental Assessment is completed, a notice of its completion and availability will be published in the Hells Canyon Journal and Baker Record-Courier. The EA will be posted on the Vale District internet site. Copies of the EA will be sent to the following:

Baker County Planning Department  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife - Baker City  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife - La Grande  
Department of State Lands - Bend  
The above named tribes

### **VIII. Participating Staff**

Steve Davidson, Realty Specialist  
Gary Guymon, Rangeland Management Specialist  
Clair Button, Botanist  
Gregory Miller, Wildlife Biologist  
Steve Coley, Fuels Specialist  
Mary Oman, Archaeologist  
Todd Kuck, Hydrologist  
Polly Gribskov, Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Jackie Dougan, Fisheries Biologist  
Mike Woods, Natural Resource Specialist

### **IX. Attachments**

Maps of route (4)  
Culvert/Ditch Work Descriptions (2 pages)

## Maps of culvert locations (2)

### **Culvert/Ditch work descriptions** **Refer to attached maps for locations**

In addition to the below described work, all culverts would be inspected for possible replacement, and cleaned and straightened as needed.

All work at the tail end of the culverts, and any replacement, installation, or realignment would be performed before the installation of the cable. Head end work would be done in conjunction with the installation of the cable.

Replacement or installation of culverts may depend upon available funding.

<b>Map Site Number</b>	<b>Mile Post</b>	<b>Existing Pipe Size</b>	<b>Work Needed</b>
1	0.934	18"	Straighten head end of culvert Add 4' extension to tail end Clean 80' tail ditch
2	1.127	18"	Add 3' extension to head end Add 3' extension to tail end Clean 70' tail ditch
3	1.269	18"	Add fill under and over tail end of culvert
4	1.408	18"	Add 3' extension to tail end
5	1.739	18"	Clean 70' tail ditch
6	1.927	18"	Add 4' extension to tail end
7	2.004	18"	Add 4' extension to tail end
8	2.086	18"	Add 3' extension to head end Add 4' extension to tail end Clean 80' tail ditch
9	2.240	18"	Plug borrow ditch at head end if needed Add 4' extension to tail end Clean 80' tail ditch

10	2.462	2-30" side by side	Replace with 72" culvert or similar size arch-type culvert
11	2.906	24"	Add 3' extension to head end Add 4' extension to tail end <b>OR:</b> replace with 36 " culvert Add to ditch berm at head end Clean 80' tail ditch
12	3.067	18"	Add 3' extension to head end Add 4' extension to tail end Clean 120' tail ditch
13	3.240	18"	Add 3' extension to head end Clean 80' tail ditch
14	3.273	18"	Add 3' extension to head end Add 3' extension to tail end Clean 80' tail ditch
15	3.356	24"	Add 4' extension to tail end <b>OR:</b> replace with 48" culvert
16	3.472	18"	Replace with 24" culvert Clean 60' tail ditch
17	3.758	2-24" several feet apart	Add 4' extensions to both tail ends <b>OR:</b> replace with 42" culvert
18	3.944	48"	Possibly add to ditch berm at head end
19	4.200	(none)	Install new 18" culvert, 24' in length
20	4.806	18"	Reset & lower culvert about 1 foot Clean 60' tail ditch