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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

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ACT/015/032 #2
ACT/015/004 #2

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SEP 13 1989

DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS & MINING

Sept. 12, 1989

Mr. Ira Hatch
Price District Ranger
Manti-LaSal National Forest
599 West Price River Dr.
Price, UT 84501

Attn: Walt Nowak

Dear Ira:

In regard to the proposed electric transmission line between Mill Fork Canyon (Beaver Creek Coal No. 4 Mine) and Crandall Canyon (Genwall Coal Mine) in the Huntington drainage, the following is offered for your consideration.

The project could impact summer (April 16 through November 30) and winter (December 1 through April 15) ranges for mule deer, as well as Rocky Mountain elk. Parturition for these animals occurs between May 15 and July 5. Raptor nest sites (February through August) could be impacted. Sediment pollution to Crandall and Huntington Creeks could occur, too. Both streams support self-sustaining populations of trout.

Construction that results in activity within a flood plain must not result in sediment pollution. Turbidity, measured as nephelometric turbidity units, should not be allowed to increase beyond 10% of background conditions. Erosion control fences (straw bales or filter fabric) should be temporarily placed at construction sites to preclude silt movement into waterways. Also, temporary silt sediment traps should be placed immediately downstream from stream crossing points.

Construction in areas distal to Utah Highway 31 should be timed to avoid the big game parturition period (May 15 through July 5). Wintering elk need to be protected from disturbance along the remote power line routes between December 1 and April 15. Low level helicopter flights, operation of heavy equipment and on-the-ground presence of humans are especially alarming to wildlife. Disturbance to wildlife from construction along U-31 is not an issue due to already existing impacts from the highway.

Each of the alternative overland power line routes that cross Mill Fork Ridge lie within a one-half mile radius buffer zone necessary to protect known golden

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eagle nests (note attached map and Table). Typically, the eagles occupy their nest territory between February 1 and July 15. Construction must avoid the nest territories (when active) and their buffer zones. Determination of nest status is the applicant's responsibility. Due to the remoteness and inaccessibility of the nests, a helicopter may be necessary to establish nest status. Such should be done in mid May. On-the-ground observations require lengthy periods of viewing from outside the buffer zones to make an assessment of nest activity. Regardless of technique, a qualified raptor ecologist must perform the work under authorization of a Division "Certificate of Registration". A Division raptor ecologist could be made available for a company funded helicopter assessment, but the time commitment for other assessment techniques exceeds our ability to assist.

All electric transmission line support towers should be designed to safeguard raptors from electrocution.

No new roads should be developed, If any are necessary, they should be permanently closed once the electric line is installed.

All disturbed areas need to be revegetated. Emphasis on expeditious soil stabilization is essential in, or proximal to flood plains. Forage requirements of big game, especially wintering elk, should be addressed by seed prescription.

Ira, the Division would prefer the buried alignment along U-31. An overhead alignment in the same corridor is acceptable, also. The overland alignments that cross Mill Fork Ridge all pose collision hazards for raptors. There is no reasonable mitigation for this situation.

Thank you for an opportunity to review and provide comment.

Sincerely,

Larry B. Dalton
Wildlife Program Manager
Resource Analysis/Habitat Protection

LBD/dd

cc: Ralph Miles, DWR
Clark Johnson, USFWS
Susan Linner, DOGM

Nest No.	Status as Either Active or Inactive
181.167	1981 - inactive (tended); 1982 - inactive; 1987 - inactive
181.168	1981 - active; 1982 - inactive; 1986 - inactive; 1987 - inactive (tended); 1988 - active
181.169	1981 - active; 1982 - active; 1986 - inactive; 1987 - inactive; 1988 - inactive
181.170	1981 - inactive; 1982 - inactive; 1986 - inactive; 1987 - inactive; 1988 inactive (tended)
181.171	1981 - inactive; 1982 - inactive; 1986 - inactive 1987 - inactive; 1988 - active

Ita
 1989 data can be
 secured. I don't have
 it on my side; but
 it was collected. If it is
 essential, call me. J. Falter