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US Bureau of Land Management withdraws approval of Rock Creek Wind Gen-Tie Transmission Line

*Right-of-way authorization revoked after agency fails to
follow federal public notification procedures*

Laramie, WY (October 25) — The Albany County Conservancy (ACC) together with retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Mike Lockhart claimed victory this week when the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) withdrew its decision to grant a right-of-way (ROW) for the Rock Creek Wind Gen-Tie Transmission line to cross federal public lands in southeastern Wyoming.

The Conservancy and Mr. Lockhart were plaintiffs in a legal challenge to the ROW decision where they argued that BLM “conducted its review of the project in secret - without any public notice or input whatsoever.”

The Rock Creek Wind Gen-Tie project is part of PacifiCorp’s massive electrical transmission build-out planned for habitat-rich lands in southeast Wyoming for the purpose of delivering wind energy to California. The power line will be constructed in the high desert ecosystem that connects multiple mountain ranges enclosing the Shirley and Laramie basins, **one of the most important habitat areas for golden eagles in North America**. PacifiCorp’s future power lines will include Gateway South, Gateway West, and Gateway D 2.2.

In an October 10, 2023 filing with the court, Rawlins BLM Field Office Director, Timothy M. Novotny stated that “The Bureau of Land Management has decided further NEPA analysis is warranted to give the public an opportunity to provide input on the potential environmental impacts of the right-of-way.”

“We are encouraged by the BLM’s action of voluntary remand without vacatur. However, it is astounding and disturbing that the BLM, a federal agency tasked with protecting federal lands, imperiled wildlife, and historic sites associated with this area, was solely focused on opening public land to exploitation by private interests without any public transparency,” said Anne Brande, ACC Director. “That is until we, a grassroots coalition of concerned residents, discovered that the decision was signed without public input. This is a strong testament to the strength of NEPA and its importance in facilitating public involvement with federal decisions.”

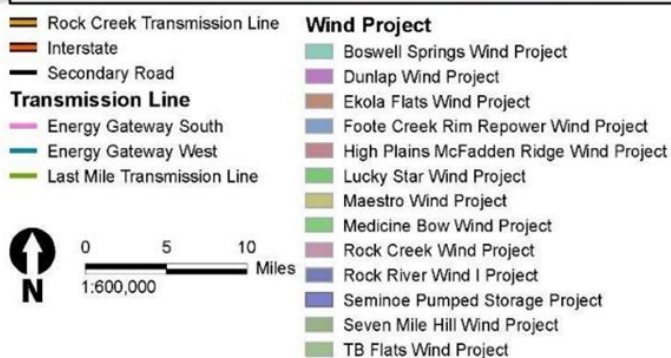
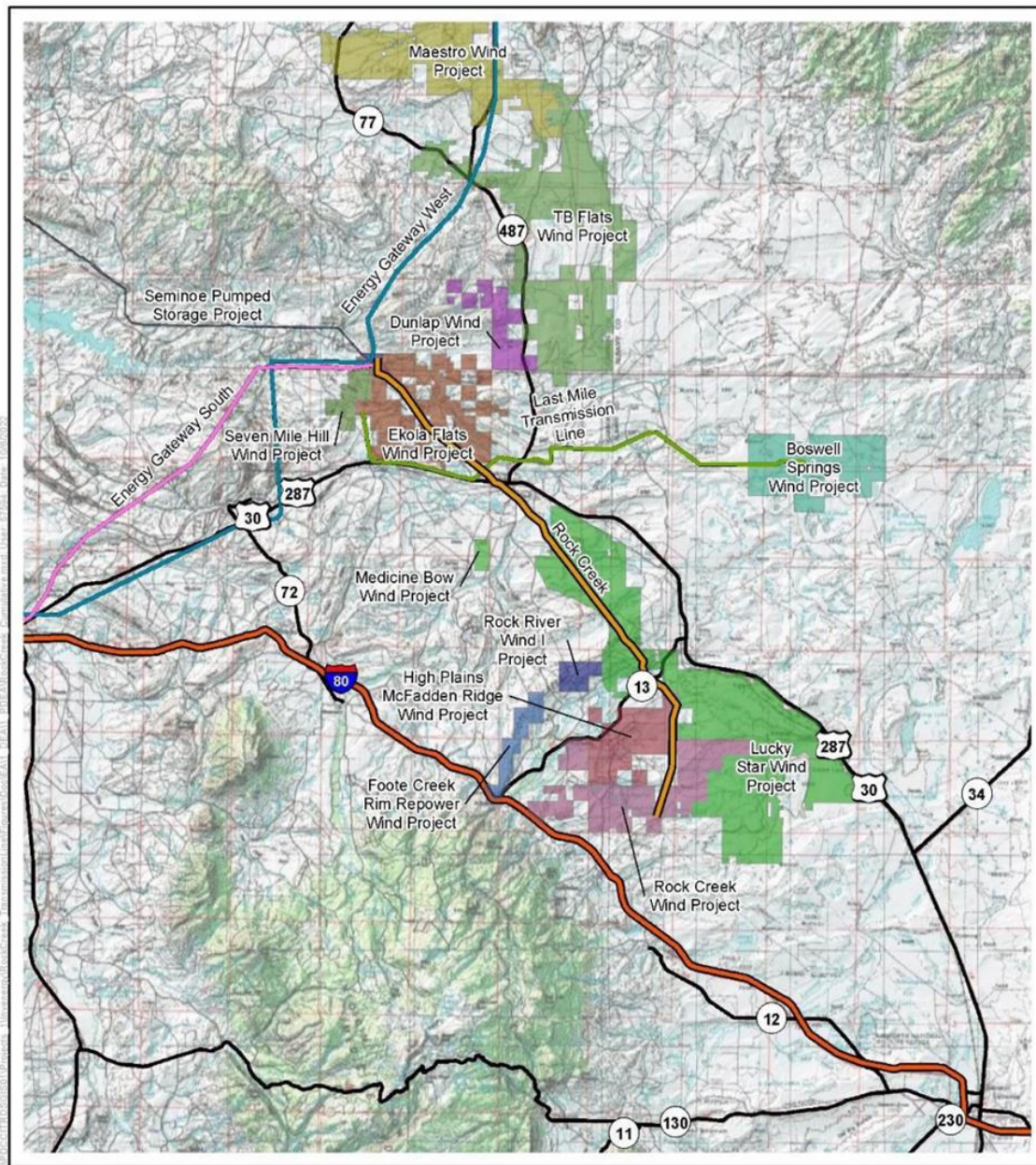
“This critical, year-round habitat for golden eagles is also home to many imperiled species including the greater sage grouse, mountain plover, black footed ferret, and the northern leopard frog,” said Mike Lockhart, research biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. “All these species are of enormous social and economic importance to Wyoming and the nation.”

With seventeen operating industrial wind energy sites and their accompanying industrial power lines and substations already in operation in southeastern Wyoming and a grand total, at present, of twenty-one sites approved, large swaths of Wyoming’s vital habitat areas are quickly transforming into an enormous industrial complex of exceptional danger to migratory birds and bats. (see attached map) The American public cannot afford to have its federal agencies ignore the environmental laws they are tasked with upholding. Sacrificing biodiversity in the name of climate change makes no scientific or moral sense.

The ACC commends the agency for its action and reminds the BLM and its sister agencies that they have an obligation to take care of the environment, prioritize the public interest, subject their decisions to transparency and scrutiny, and protect our natural heritage.

[Note, the quote by Mr. Lockhart has been updated. The status of species has been changed to ‘imperiled’ from ‘endangered.’]

The Albany County Conservancy is a grassroots coalition of Albany County residents dedicated to the preservation and protection of habitat, history, and wildlife through education, public policy initiatives, and legal advocacy. It is represented by the public interest law firm Eubanks & Associates, PLLC.



**Ongoing and Reasonably
 Foreseeable Future Projects in the
 Vicinity of the Rock Creek Gen-Tie
 Line**